"Status quo won't solve problem' of GP shortage"

Andrew Street

NHS England confirmed the position: "We've lost more than 5,000 GPs since 2010, and we need to recruit more GPs in the coming years." However, the current shortage is expected to last a few years longer.

GPs who spend much of their time dealing with the day-to-day challenges of running a general practice have been left feeling frustrated.

"The current situation is unsustainable," said one GP. "We're seeing a peak in demand and we're not seeing an equivalent increase in staff."

NHS England and its local partners are working hard to address the shortage, but it is clear that more needs to be done to support them in the long term.

"We need to see a significant increase in the number of GPs and other primary care workforce, and we need to see a sustainable funding model," said Dr. John Brown, chair of the Primary Care Association.

NHS England offers reassurance to patients'

Caroline Thelwall, Local Director for NHS England, said: "We're working hard to ensure that patients continue to receive the care they need."

"However, the current shortage is expected to last for several years," she added.

In the meantime, patients are encouraged to consider alternative options, such as telephone consultations and online access to medical information.

"These are not permanent solutions, but they are helping to reduce the burden on GP practices," said Dr. Brown.

Existing patients 'unaffected'

A conference for NHS staff and local GPs in Suffolk, hosted by the Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, addressed the issue. "We are working hard to ensure that patients continue to receive the care they need," said the group's chief executive.

"We've been working closely with local partners to address the shortage, but it is clear that more needs to be done," she added.

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