

## Medical Director's Notes

The GP Support Hub hosted the final Phoenix GP session of this programme for those mid-career. I hope those who joined were inspired and feel re-engaged with new tools and skills for the next steps of their careers. Each session was led by an inspirational leader or GP and ranged from Strengths' Analysis to Engagement and Resilience.

I was particularly impressed with the straight talking from Dr Clare Gerada. She spoke on the future of General practice and her views on GPs as gatekeepers. I think this is likely an area which will be discussed a lot in the near future. Patient direct access to specialists, online self-diagnosis, referral tools and other digital technology such as remote monitoring seem to be hot topics currently alongside online access to personal health records.

It will be vital I believe, that we consider the true impact of these innovations alongside the benefits. That costs be clearly re-allocated if workload shifts and that clinical safety remains the priority. As a health and care system, we need to remember and value the expertise held in general practice, the benefits of gatekeeping such as avoiding unnecessary treatments and referrals and ensure that all parts of general practice are strong enough and supported to change where and when appropriate.



## Fed HR service – The experience from a practice/PCN perspective

Wickham Market Medical Centre and Deben Health Group PCN have been signed up to this service since it started in July 2020. The Fed provide HR support 5 days a week throughout the year.

The Covid period has seen an increase in staff HR issues. Just to be able to have easy access to someone to talk through simple as well as complicated staff issues relating to workforce management, disciplinary, grievance and capability has been reassuring. The team are kept up to date with current employment law regulations. A recent example being a request from a member of staff to apply for parental leave. This was our first experience of this type of request and the advice was very supportive and clear.

The HR Team were also able to provide additional support to the PCN when one manager left and before the new manager started. The impact from Covid has also seen an increase in mental health and wellbeing issues. The Fed team have access to many tools, as well as the experience of using them which has enabled them to provide much needed advice to support staff in practice.

Other specialist help has included referrals to an Occupational Health service and then discussing and agreeing the pathway forward for the member of staff.

The team has also provided invaluable advice regarding proposed organisational changes, training pathways and funding for staff. Some of the support has been practical as well with an offer to carry out one to one sessions, thereby providing an independent review on the current pressures they are experiencing etc. I also found it refreshing that the team challenged me on the impact and benefits of adopting the living wage instead of the minimum wage in April this year.

Jane Wallace – Wickham Market Medical Centre

If you are interested in discussing the service please contact [sarah.moody@suffolkfed.org.uk](mailto:sarah.moody@suffolkfed.org.uk).



## GP Support Hub (info@thegphub.org)

- Equipment Calibration – available at our stand during the East Training shutdown on Wednesday 1st March. No need to book just bring your equipment along.
- Later Career events – for anyone considering your options as you progress towards the later stages of your GP career?
  - Angel Hotel Bury Tuesday 7th March 7pm
  - Milsoms Dedham Wednesday 22nd March 7pm
- We will be holding more Red Whale GP Update Courses in May and November - booking information to be released soon.
- Please remember that coaching is available through info@thegphub.org we have two Coaches available to offer up to six one hour sessions available to GPs.

## General practice estates

Primary care estate is a pressing issue and is already a significant restriction on capacity. Its only likely to get worse. At the current rates of investment, it will take 30 years to bring an already inadequate estate up to levels needed today.

There are numerous reasons why we have got to this position. The traditional way practice premises development was funded has virtually stopped. Also, the NHS has changed how it treats developments and these have contributed to a large backlog of schemes.

Alongside this, the partnership owned property model is increasingly unsustainable. Fewer GPs want to become partners and property is often the reason.

We are hopeful that at some point the NHS might fund more development. The Fed are working with the NHS and other partners on options for how this might best happen. We hope to be report progress next month.

## News in brief

- **Diabetes outcomes audit** - The National Diabetes Audit has reported for 3 months to September 2022. It measures 28 outcomes split by Type 1 and Type 2. North East Essex, where the Fed continues to manage the diabetes service with practices, continues to have the best outcomes nationally. West Suffolk is highest locally in 2 of 28 measures, Ipswich & East 4 of the 28 and North East Essex 23 of the 28.
- **GP+** - the service has now returned to being face to face appointments only. The number of appointments is steadily increasing each month and utilisation remains high.
- **Fed IT investment** – we have nearly completed our £0.5m IT upgrade which we needed to ensure our systems remain secure and use current technology. It has been a mammoth job by our IT team. This included some of them working 24 hours to switch services from Riverside to our back-up facility at Walton Surgery which now can happen in a matter of minutes, compared to hours previously.

## Fed Board elections

Our Members' Agreement specifies that usually a third of the Board stand for re-election each year. Your Board discussed this in the light of the three new directors joining the Board last year after an open election process. We decided this year not to have further elections.

## Wellbeing self-referral data by practice

Given self-referral has been in the news as a way to reduce practice workload, we are presenting data you might find useful. The chart on the final page of this newsletter shows self-referrals to Wellbeing as a percentage of total referrals.

Patients can be directed by care navigators directly to Wellbeing via [www.wellbeingnands.co.uk/suffolk/](http://www.wellbeingnands.co.uk/suffolk/)

