



30 September 2021  
cressida.dick@met.pnn.police.uk

Dear Dame Cressida,

### **Urgent – Security concerns for General Practice staff across the Capital**

Following reports of verbal and physical attacks on GPs and their staff teams UK wide, and within the Capital, I write on behalf of the representative body for GP practices in London who are increasingly worried about the volume of abuse GPs and their teams are being subjected to daily.

The majority of Londoners have been fantastic in their support for their local GPs, but abuse is growing among a minority of patients and we are receiving reports of London practice staff receiving profanity-filled text messages and emails, abusive letters, and threats of violence. Whilst I imagine that this will be familiar to your own officers, the response and comments which we have received from GPs following reports of further physical assaults of GPs and their receptionists, resulting in broken bones and hospitalisation, indicates that there is genuine increasing concern and fear.

We are considering trying to develop a safety toolkit for practices in London, and I wonder whether the Met would be able to work collaboratively with us in this endeavour? Would this be feasible?

I am also keen to try to give some comfort to family doctors working across the Capital, and I would be grateful for your expertise and advice on the following points:

1. What advice does the Met offer to practice staff facing actual or threatened verbal or physical abuse in their place of work?
2. At what point is it reasonable or acceptable to report threats against practice staff to the police, and what action should staff expect to be taken when a report has been made?
3. We are aware that a number of practices have already reported threats of, or actual, violence from patients which has occurred on practice premises. How are such threats on medical practitioners and their teams recorded and do you track how many have been reported and whether these figures are increasing?
4. Are you able to share examples of action being taken following a report of abuse or threats of violence reported by staff within a general practice?

GPs and practice teams were already practising at the limits of patient safety even before the pandemic due to longstanding disparities between supply and demand, and workload and workforce. It is not within GPs' gift to resolve these issues that lie at the heart of public discontent. As the data shows, GPs are working incredibly hard and the current increase in conflict is undermining morale and resilience amongst some practitioners; GPs and practice staff are increasingly reducing to part time, or leaving the service, in order to safeguard their mental health.

I would be very grateful for the opportunity to discuss attacks on GPs and their staff with you and your team directly. If you are happy to speak, I would be grateful if you could kindly contact Laurelle Hughes ([laurelle.hughes@lmc.org.uk](mailto:laurelle.hughes@lmc.org.uk)) to arrange a convenient time. I am always available to discuss pan-London issues affecting the profession, our practices and our patients.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Lisa Harrod-Rothwell**

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