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Dear UCLH interface colleagues (both consultants and general practitioners)

It has been an exceptionally challenging 2 years and we are now facing further challenges heading towards Spring with a high community prevalence of the Omicron variant, staff absence from COVID infection or contact, a vaccination programme which presently has quietened down but will reignite and staff fatigue. We would like to thank our General Practice and community colleagues for your hard work and professionalism throughout this time. We are incredibly grateful for your leadership and resilience in what has been one of the most challenging periods in all of our careers.

What has undoubtedly helped at UCLH during this time is the #oneteam approach where we have all pulled together for each other and patients. As we move towards Spring, we must continue to support our partner colleagues as well, particularly those in primary care. The success and ongoing collaboration at our interface meetings allows us to explore the system pressures and there have been many positive outcomes. UCLH are committed to strengthen this during 2022 and restart some face to face relationship building workshops.

GPs have faced some harsh and unfair criticism in the media. This, alongside rising patient demands and expectations, verbal and physical abuse plus the stresses of the pandemic, damage the morale of our valued primary care colleagues. There are many ways we can continue to support each other. Please actively have conversations with patients in order to maintain public confidence in primary care. There are other practical ways UCLH can help too, including supporting our teams to organise tests in UCLH or moving forwards community phlebotomy clinics, referrals, follow-ups, or check results at UCLH, rather than asking GPs to do this. Making the whole system work together more efficiently will improve patient experience.

We appreciate there are huge pressures on UCLH services too, and we are already asking an enormous amount from our teams, but by everyone in the NHS working together we will be in a much stronger position to deal with the challenges ahead. So we ask our UCLH teams to bring primary care into our #oneteam and give them our support.

In addition to the monthly operational update to GPs about UCLH services we are going to provide the system with a UCLH summary or "bird's eye view" detailing where there are specific issues for consideration with a service and these will be shared with the interface group.

As always, thank you for everything you are doing – we are proud to work alongside every one of you.

With best wishes

David Probert
Chief Executive

Dr Tim Hodgson
Medical Director
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Luke O'Shea
Director of Innovation

Kate Petts
Deputy Director of Strategy