

## **UK LMC Conference Summary – Dr Savita Ghattaora**

Dear colleagues,

I recently attended the UK LMC Conference in Belfast, which brought together representatives from across the four nations to discuss the most pressing challenges facing general practice. The overarching theme “Everything Needed Urgent For Today” felt very fitting.

Below is a short summary of the **key messages and what they mean for general practice**.

### **1. General Practice at a Tipping Point**

There was a strong and consistent message throughout the conference:

- General practice is under **unprecedented pressure**
- GPs continue to **hold the system together despite rising demand and workforce shortages**
- The NHS is increasingly reliant on primary care to absorb work from across the system

Encouragingly, there was also a clear sense of **professional unity** around a shared focus on safeguarding the future of general practice.

### **2. Workload & Safe Working**

A major focus was **unsafe workload levels** and the need for change.

Conference agreed to:

- Push for **clear, evidence-based safe workload limits**
- Support practices to **cap demand where patient safety is at risk**
- Move away from access targets towards **quality, continuity, and patient outcomes**

This represents a significant shift towards **prioritising safety over volume**.

### **3. Primary-Secondary Care Interface**

Many colleagues raised concerns about the interface, particularly workload being shifted from hospitals into general practice. Changes agreed include:

- Clearer **clinical accountability in hospital correspondence**
- Named clinicians and contact routes for advice

This supports our ongoing work locally to **improve interface working and reduce inappropriate workload transfer**.

### **4. Digital Access & AI**

There was strong debate about digital-first models and AI tools. Conference agreed that:

- AI must be **properly regulated, transparent, and safe**
- Patients should be informed and able to **opt out of AI use**

- “Unlimited digital access” risks increasing demand and even **widening inequalities**
- GPCE should be lobbying govt to move away from 'google reviews' for GP practices similar to current models for schools.

The message was clear: **digital innovation must support care, not drive unsustainable demand.**

## 5. Workforce & Training

Workforce sustainability remains a key concern. Key points included:

- Growing pressures on GP trainers and risk to **training capacity**
- Need for training to have a stronger focus on **leadership, supervision, and real-world general practice skills**
- Continued support for the **partnership model**, but with reform to improve sustainability

## 6. Funding & the Future of General Practice

There was significant and controversial debate about the current GP contract and future models of care.

- Many feel **current arrangements are no longer sustainable**
- A controversial motion exploring Dentistry style **hybrid NHS–private models (“Plan B”)** was passed

While not policy, this reflects growing concern about **long-term viability and sustainability of general practice.**

## 7. Patient Safety & Risk

Across multiple discussions, there were concerns about:

- Increasing **clinical risk being transferred to GPs**
- Expansion of services without funding
- Gaps in areas such as **mental health crisis care**

Conference supported measures to:

- Strengthen GP leadership and supervision
- Improve access to mental health crisis services for patients
- Allow GPs to **challenge unsafe discharges**

## Key Takeaways

- **Safety is now a central issue** in general practice
- There is strong momentum to **push back on unfunded workload transfer**
- Digital and AI must be **clinically led and properly governed**
- Workforce pressures, especially training and partnerships, are **critical risks**

- *There is emerging discussion about **future models of general practice***

*These themes are broadly in line with the issues that Wandsworth LMC committee members are tackling on your behalf locally, particularly around safety and workload transfer. Despite the challenges, the conference reinforced the **strength and commitment of the GP community**. There was a clear collective determination to:*

- 1. Protect patient care*
- 2. Support the workforce*
- 3. Shape a sustainable future for general practice*

*If you would like to discuss any of these topics further or share your local experience, please do get in touch*

*Dr Savita Ghattaora*

*GP, Trevelyan House Surgery; Vice Chair Wandsworth LMC.*