

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

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Dear Patient

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter from South Staffordshire Local Medical Committee which is the body that represents GPs in your area.

Your GPs are aware that some patients are finding it increasingly difficult to get the appointments and services they need, and feel you should be made aware of the reasons.

Over the past few years, successive governments have reduced the investment in General Practice from around 10% of the NHS budget to nearer 7%.

In spite of this reduction in funding GPs still provide 90% of consultations carried out in the NHS. There is access to GP services 24 hours, seven days a week and the demand to see GPs is rising dramatically. There are currently 340 million GP consultations a year, an increase of 40 million in the last five years.

This has not been matched by an increase in GP and staff numbers or an expansion in the infrastructure. Added to this GPs are expected to take on more and more work previously carried out in hospitals, and are obliged to attend meetings with the CCGs, NHS England management and spend hours preparing for and meeting the CQC. All of these mean less time to see patients.

In addition, GPs are faced with huge difficulties in recruiting new doctors and nurses to work in General Practice. Currently there is a shortfall of about 10,000 GPs across the country. It is impossible to see how this shortfall can be addressed when it takes a minimum of ten years to train a GP.

In short General Practice is in crisis.

We simply want you to know that your GPs are aware of the problems you have accessing some services and that they are working as hard as they can to provide those services. We hope you will bear with them as they strive to continue to provide quality General Practice.

Dr David Dickson