



From your BMA GPs committee chair

Making sure GPs' voices are heard



Dear ,

It's a crucial time for general practice as I take over as chair of the BMA GPs committee in England and GPC UK.

We face many major challenges in the year ahead and we must redouble our efforts to secure a resilient, sustainable and vibrant general-practice service in a fully funded NHS – a service with flexible working arrangements, the independence to develop your practice as you see fit and the right to decide on safe workload limits to protect your patients and your own mental health.

We operate in an unsettled world, with a weakened Government at Westminster that sticks stubbornly to the rhetoric of austerity whose attention is fixed on negotiating the UK's exit from the EU.

We will therefore need to be bolder in our campaigning to ensure our voices are heard amid the political turmoil.

The priority is to deal with spiralling **indemnity costs**. A failure to address this could lead to a collapse of the GP urgent-care services and make it impossible for many GPs to work as they would want to during the winter. We are in discussions to try to find a resolution.

We should also recognise that general practice is changing, with new ways of working in local areas around England and different contractual models developing elsewhere in the UK. There is much we can learn from developments in all four nations of the UK and I will be working closely with the chairs of the BMA Northern Ireland GPs committee, BMA Scotland GPs committee and BMA Wales GPs committee to ensure we do this.

We must make sure that any and all who choose to work in larger collaborative arrangements in the future have their terms and conditions set and protected nationally. We need long-term funding commitments, not short-term fixes, to enable a genuine expansion of the primary- and community-care workforces, so that we can build sustainable teams to work with GPs to meet the growing needs of our patients.

To deliver high-quality general practice and community-based services we must have good premises – and yet in too many situations, it is issues relating to the premises that jeopardise the future of the practice that works in it. We need a fundamental review of this problem and it is something that we will lead on.

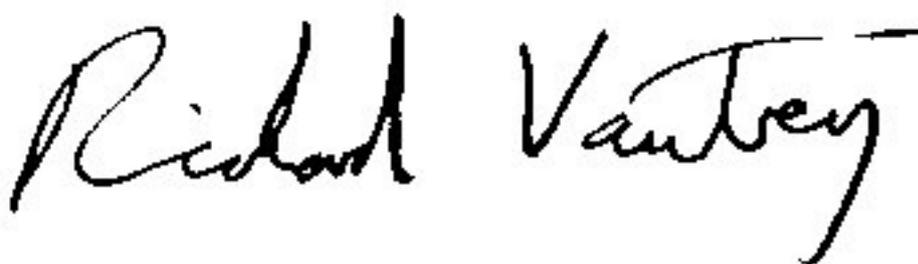
If this is beginning to sound like a long list for GPC's attention, it is. There is much to do and the need for rapid improvements is pressing. We will only be able to achieve these things with active support from

and engagement with local medical committees, working hard in every area to make the tangible changes GPs need to see.

GPC represents the whole profession and I will ensure that it continues to do so, as I did as its deputy chair. I have been overwhelmed by the many messages I have received offering good wishes since my election last week and I am grateful for your support.

Can I also take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Chaand Nagpaul, for all that he has done for GPs in the past, and wish him all the best in his new role as BMA council chair.

I'm optimistic about the future for our great profession. I believe GPC in England and across the UK can make life better for all GPs and I'm ready for the challenge ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Vautrey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Vautrey
BMA GPs committee England chair
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