

Tell us what you think about general practice

Write as much or as little as you like

A GP supports a patient through every stage of their life. What a patient needs from their GP and how a GP delivers care changes over time.

We want to learn more from you about what currently works well in general practice and what is missing. This will help us inform the future shape of patient care.

What do you value most about the GP patient relationship?

We believe that the most valuable aspect of the GP patient relationship is the continuity of care that it facilitates. This allows the GP to view their patients in the context of their wider health, family and social circumstances and to understand and enable interactions between different aspects of their health and social care. However, this relationship has, to some extent, been eroded by the development of larger practices in which patients are often not seen by the same GP, as well as a rise in weekend services delivered by consortia where the GP may have limited access to a patient's notes. These developments have resulted in greater fragmentation of coordinated care.

Is there anything you feel could enhance what a GP does for their patient?

An increased availability of rapid access services, in particular rapid access to diagnostics and reports, and rapid pathways for referral would enhance what a GP does for their patient. Easy access to personal data and improved information sharing – particularly in cases of chronic illness – would also be beneficial. An increased emphasis on integration with mental and social care and on PHE prevention programmes and health advice (such as screening, dietetics and smoking cessation) would also be valuable.

GPs do not work alone – they have a whole team behind them helping to deliver patient care in every community. We want to know how GPs can function best as a part of a general practice team, giving the best treatment to people day in, day out.

What do you think is a benefit of patient care being provided by a range of staff alongside a GP?

We believe that patient care being provided by a range of staff alongside a GP facilitates a system where those with the correct skills to deal with a problem can do so at an appropriate time and in the appropriate place. Working with a range of staff also means that much of the necessary care can be delivered in the community, saving the specific skills of a GP for those who need them. Such a system allows for a more integrated service between primary, secondary and social care.

General practice supports a whole system of healthcare professionals working in a variety of places.

We cannot discuss changes to patient care without looking at how care is provided across the entire healthcare system: from hospitals and care homes, to schools and prisons.

We want to know what general practice can do to ensure that all patients receive the best possible care.

How can the way in which general practice works with other parts of the healthcare system be improved?

In order to improve the way in which general practice works with other parts of the healthcare system, we suggest the implementation of integrated health and social care records from birth to death, incorporating all aspects of a patient's care, with the GP acting as a repository for all health and social care knowledge about a patient. We also believe there is a need to streamline healthcare – for example, nursing homes, prisons etc should be attached to one GP practice in order to ensure the most efficient use of GP time. A greater emphasis on integrated care would allow for more effective interventions delivered by staff with the correct skill set.

General practice has evolved and adapted over the years. We'd like to know which changes have positively impacted your experiences in general practice so we can build on this progress for the future.

What change, initiative, idea or process has changed general practice for the better for you?

There are several areas in which we believe general practice has changed for the better. These include: more targeted programmes, such as flu vaccination evenings and weekends; improved access for those in employment through longer opening hours and flexible appointment times for dedicated travel, vaccination and screening appointments; electronic prescribing and the transfer of prescriptions directly to a pharmacy; better management of repeat prescriptions; offering new healthcare interventions with robust evidence to support them; shared care of chronic illnesses, including malignancy, between primary and secondary care.