

October 2013



**A message from Charlotte Jones, Chair,
General Practitioners Committee (Wales)**

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to introduce myself following my recent appointment as Chair of the General Practitioners Committee, Wales. I am delighted and deeply honoured to have been elected to lead Welsh GPs through the many challenges we are going to face in the next few years.

To those of you who don't know me, I would like to take this opportunity to outline my background to reassure you that I understand the issues facing you in getting on and doing the increasingly complex and busy day to day job we have trained hard to do.

I was born and brought up in South Wales, qualified from St George's Hospital Medical School, London returning to Swansea to undertake GP training. Since completing GP training I had a short period of working as a locum then entered into a partnership at Uplands & Mumbles Surgeries. Since being a partner, I have held a number of additional roles including: clinical assistant in psychogeriatrics, GP appraiser, medical student tutor and VTS trainer, OOH manager (2004 – 2013), sessions in HMP Swansea and doing sessions for the OOH service. As you can see, there is not much I haven't experienced across the breadth of roles GPs can hold so I hope it gives you confidence that I understand the issues facing each and everyone of us whatever role we hold with NHS Wales.

- I know that Welsh GPs are passionate about providing excellent patient care and as GPs we are the only healthcare providers able to help OUR patients navigate through the complex NHS system and act as their advocates.

Ysgrifennydd Cymreig/Welsh Secretary:

Dr Richard JP Lewis, CStJ MB ChB MRCP MFFLM Dip IMC RCS(Ed) PGDip FLM

Cofrestrwyd yn Gwmni Cyfyngedig trwy Warant. Rhif Cofrestredig: 8848 Lloegr

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- I know how irritating it is to be constantly looking at contract reminders/filling in questionnaires/doing what is increasingly feeling like “tick box medicine” – all of which removes us from the art of General Practice.
- I know what it feels like to be faced with ever increasing transfers of work from secondary care/increasing paperwork and doing tasks that are of little value to patients, and even worse, take us away from seeing patients
- I know what it feels like to be constantly scrutinized and being given the clear impression that we are over paid and gaming the system.
- I know what it feels like working a full day in surgery starting usually before 8am to do paperwork and not getting home until after 7.30pm.
- I know that we are working harder than ever with diminishing resources, our morale is lower than ever and increasing numbers of GPs are reporting that they are actively looking at retiring/reducing sessions or leaving the workforce all together.
- I know that threats to remove MPIG are causing extreme distress to GP practices who rely on this income stream, and the adverse impact this threat is having on recruitment and retention.
- I know that the current premises are inadequate and that we need to invest in making sure we have adequate infrastructure going forward – this may mean better/improved surgeries or practices coming together in federations to share staff and work together.

I can reassure you that we are continuing to sort out these critical issues. We must not forget that despite these challenges, GPs in Wales still manage 90% of the consultations in NHS Wales for less than 10% of the funding. We must not forget Welsh GP QOF scores and patient satisfaction scores are excellent – outperforming those of our colleagues across the border. This shows how valuable we are to the success of NHS Wales so why is there such little new investment? Why is there no real enabling of Welsh GPs to demonstrate their flexibility and ability to innovate and develop?

So, what do I propose to do?

- I want GPs to be seen as the solution to the problems facing NHS Wales and being given the ability to demonstrate this – GPC Wales and LMCs are not by nature obstructive, however, we sometimes have to take a difficult stance to protect Welsh GPs.
- GPC Wales is going to have a clear vision of Welsh General Practice – you will be consulted on this and your views will count
- I will send regular updates on what is happening in brief “blogs” and use Twitter for key messages (follow me on [@MadameGPWales](#))
- The GPC Wales team will be undertaking regular surveys focusing on Welsh GP issues so that your opinions will be heard. You can email us at info.gpcwales@bma.org.uk or telephone the GPC Wales secretariat on 029 2047 4614.
- I want to meet more GPs across Wales and explore other mechanisms for ensuring you can tell me your views – I know that you are all often too exhausted to come to roadshows/meetings so whilst we will continue with these, I will explore with the BMA Cymru public affairs team how we can maximise use of other media to communicate and, if you would like me to come to the surgery/meet a cluster of practices, I will accommodate that where I can.
- I want to give you the tools to empower you to say “no” where this is needed – this will be achieved through being more accessible, continuing the close links between GPC Wales and LMCs, ensuring resources and advice is easily available through LMC websites and we are exploring development of the GPC Wales website.
- I want to resolve some of the issues facing peripatetic sessional issues including: individual NHS email accounts, individual prescribing numbers and also put on a sessional conference with a Welsh focus.

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What can you do to help?

- For things to change you need to get involved: this might just be reading the blogs/responding to a survey/ dropping us an email or tweet about the things that matter to you. If I/the team are getting it wrong tell us!
- I need you to really engage with using the tools/advice that we will provide that will enable you to say no and get on with the job that you love – being a GP
- Use your LMC to help you do the day job: they have a vital role in the links between individual GPs, the practices we all work in and with the Health Boards. I know many don't like taking up issues yourselves so use your LMC to do this, OR use me to do this but most importantly of all let us know

Who are the GPC Wales negotiating team?

We are a team of 5 elected from the GPC Wales committee i.e. your elected representatives from across Wales. The current team is:

- Dr David Bailey – Deputy Chair (GP in Caerphilly, my predecessor)
- Dr Phil White (semi-retired GP in N Wales but still working in practice)
- Dr Charles Allanby (GP in Cardiff)
- Dr Ashok Rayani (GP in Swansea)

Importantly we work closely with your local LMCs who keep us regularly updated on the local issues – local LMC details are below:

LMC Committee	Secretary	Chair
North Wales www.northwaleslmc.co.uk Tel: 01745 825780	Dr Phil White	Dr Eamonn Jessup
Dyfed Powys www.dyfedpowyslmc.co.uk Tel: 01597 860565	Mrs Jan Powell	Dr Laurence Williams
Morgannwg www.morgannwglmc.org.uk Tel: 01792 815954	Dr Ian Millington	Dr Alan Stevenson
Bro Taf www.brotaflmc.org.uk Tel: 02920 899381	Ms Fiona Ricci	Dr Charles Allanby
Gwent www.gwentlmc.org.uk Tel: 01495 764455	Mr Steve Parfitt	Dr Neil Statham

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I look forward to the challenge of taking Welsh General Practice forward.

Yours sincerely,



Charlotte Jones
Chair, General Practitioners Committee (Wales)

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