



"A big thank you to yourself, the Cameron Fund and its trustees for their unwavering support. This has been invaluable in providing the stability that I needed at a very challenging and difficult time."

Message received from Dr Thomas*, a ST3 GP Trainee, who contracted Covid-19 during a period of ill health was subsequently off work for over a year. When he contacted the Fund, his sick pay had run out and he was living on Universal Credit. The Fund was able to support him with a monthly grant and Money Advice. He has since returned to work and is looking forward to completing his training.

** Name has been changed for confidentiality.*

Christmas Appeal 2021: Why your support is more vital than ever.

Dear Colleagues

It is always good to receive messages of thanks like these, it makes our work at the Cameron Fund all the more worthwhile. Dr Thomas's story is an illustration of how life events can leave GPs or GP Trainees and their families in financial hardship. Many of our beneficiaries suffer a combination of circumstances through no fault of their own, for example ill health combined with relationship breakdown, stress and loss of earnings due to the illness of a family member.

Last year, partly due to Covid, the Cameron Fund awarded a record amount of £304,871 to colleagues in hardship. This was primarily paid as monthly grants to enable GPs and their families to meet their essential expenditure but also included Money Advice to help applicants to improve their situation. In a few cases, where applicants had assets but no available cash, we provided interest free loans.

Once again, this year has been an incredibly challenging time for primary care. GPs have continued to work tirelessly through the pandemic, trying their best to deliver high level patient care, while under restricted working conditions.

Responding to a recent media campaign, Professor Martin Marshall, Chair of the Royal College of GPs and a GP in East London, said: "... *general practice is overwhelmed. Supply has fallen way behind demand and our workforce is not sufficient to deliver care and meet the complex needs of a growing and ageing population. GPs have been running on empty for too long*".

BMA Chair, Richard Vautry also warned that the profession was "*on its last legs*" after coming into the pandemic with a significant shortage of GPs and a work force already



pushed We are seeing more and more of our limited workforce leaving the profession due to burnout."

Sadly, this increased pressure on the profession is likely to mean more GPs taking time off work suffering from stress, burnout, anxiety and depression.

If a colleague is struggling to work with their own personal crisis and/or has been unable to work, it's likely that this has impacted negatively on their financial situation as well as their health. If you know a GP or GP Trainee who is struggling financially, please encourage them to contact us at the Cameron Fund.

The Fund's aim is to help GPs get back to work (or continue with their GP Training) as soon as they are able. The support we give is tailored to an individual applicant's needs and in line with their plans. This year has proved to be the worst possible time for GPs and we need to ensure we are there for every single one of them who needs our support.

As we come up to Christmas, I would ask that you spare a thought for those colleagues experiencing hardship, for whom this time of year can be particularly difficult. In the spirit of Christmas giving, please consider a donation to help us support them.

As always, I would like to thank all the LMCs and individual members who continue to support the Cameron Fund, your generous support is greatly appreciated.

We are dependent on Local Medical Committees, other medical organisations and individual GPs for about 50% of our income. At a time when General Practice is in crisis and fundraising somewhat restricted, your donations to the Fund are more important than ever.

Please can I ask you to distribute this letter and ask all your LMC and constituent GPs to consider giving their support to the Fund? If your LMC has not given a donation in the past, or for some time, please will you consider this an urgent appeal for funds?

We gladly accept donations made directly into the Fund's Account (CAF Bank Sort Code 40 52 40, Account Number 00015215) or by cheque if you prefer.

Wishing you, and your family, a happy Christmas and healthy New Year.

Dr Ian Winterton, Cameron Fund Treasurer