

25 March 2020

Dear Colleagues

I am getting in contact to firstly thank you all for what has been a truly amazing response to the crisis we find ourselves in. I think it is very fair to say that we have done more service redesign and implementation in the last week than in years beforehand. This is of course because we face what is likely to be the biggest challenge of our professional lives and unfortunately things are going to get a great deal worse before they get better. At every level of general practice, I have been staggered by the enthusiasm, determination and sense of common purpose. At practice level we have completely redesigned our delivery models and it is great to see the teams pulling together like never before. At PCN level the cooperation and support is impressive since these are still relatively new structures and the work, we have put in to make this functional is very visible. At System level Taurus is demonstrating its crucial roles as provider, voice of general practice but critically providing the network that binds us all together. The whole team I know are working incredibly hard on our behalf.

If we look at what our colleagues in Italy are going through, then we must be prepared for even the recent changes implemented to be overwhelmed. We have the bulk of the work still to do before we are likely to turn the corner on this pandemic, despite the amazing first steps we have taken. For the strength to face this we must look at our loved ones, patients and colleagues who will depend on us and commit at this stage to take the required steps to do the best for them in very testing circumstances.

I have made a career in fighting for the contractual rights of practices and GPs but it is time to make the focus getting the job done and saving as many lives as we can. We will make sure that nobody is disadvantaged but I ask you to ask yourselves what you can do personally and let's see this through together. GP partner, salaried and locum are contractual models but what is bigger is our sense of professionalism and the unity we have as GP colleagues. Let us stand shoulder to shoulder and support each other with a common purpose. I see this strongly in Herefordshire.

I need to ask you to do things that you would not normally do. As a practice we have stopped all leave, whilst understanding that rest is required to maintain our services and needs to be built in. I would ask that you look at your own circumstances and consider what can be done.

When a system starts to be overwhelmed it decompensates and we need to restructure to allow systems to once again compensate and become functional. We are likely to go through this process on a number of occasions as the challenge

increases. We must remember that there is no cavalry coming to bail us out. We will shortly need to consider moving to a rolling 7-day service to deliver truly 24/7 general practice. I would not ask you to do this if it was not necessary.

By the end of this, our service will have changed beyond recognition, but I do believe there is nowhere in the UK better to be a GP and where we can truly make a difference to those we made a commitment to when we first entered the profession. Working 7 GP sessions a week I will be at front line with you and again reiterate that I wouldn't ask these things if I did not think they are necessary.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you want to talk this through.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Fraser', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Nigel Fraser
Chairman of LMC/Taurus