

# Update on Access to GP Services

I have received the enclosed update from the Government:

Dear John

I am writing to you following publication of Our plan for improving access for patients and supporting general practice.

First and foremost, I'd like to thank our GPs for the outstanding work they've done during the most difficult 18 months in living memory. Throughout the pandemic, General Practice was forced to adapt in order to continue delivering care to our communities, keep vital services going and put millions of jobs in arms.

As we emerge from the pandemic it is vital that we continue to support General Practice teams to provide the best possible care to patients. I'm determined to ensure that patients are able to see their GP in the way they want, no matter where they live. The plan we have announced today is a statement of recovery and reform, not just for this winter but for the years to come.

We are investing £250m in a Winter Access Fund to improve the availability of GP practices and increase the number of face-to-face appointments, while also investing in technology to make it easier for patients to see or speak to their GP. Although the latest data shows that there are 1,200 more full time equivalent GPs serving our communities than there were two years ago, we will not be complacent when it comes to our recruitment efforts.

Last year a record-breaking number of doctors started training as GPs, and we're committed to further increasing the number of training places to 4,000 a year. We will draw on our fantastic community pharmacists and their teams through greater use of the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service, allowing them to use their expertise to advise and treat more patients, freeing up more of GPs valuable time to look after patients.

The UK Health Security Agency has carried out a review of Covid control measures for GPs and primary care providers, and has published recommendations which will further enable face to face consultations, where it is safe to do so.

We're making practices more accountable to the communities they serve by automatically sending patients a message following their appointment to give them the opportunity to rate their experiences of accessing support. GP appointment data will also be published at a practice level by spring next year, with the NHS increasing its oversight of practices with the most acute access issues.

We know how challenging the past 18 months have been for GPs and their teams, including the disgraceful incidences of staff facing abuse and violence while trying to do their jobs.

This Government has zero tolerance for this utterly unacceptable behaviour. To support practices we are providing £5m of capital funding for them to invest in extra security measures.

Our plan recognises that General Practice is the cornerstone of our NHS, and demonstrates this Government's commitment to helping staff deliver for patients. The full plan can be found here: [Coronavirus » Our plan for improving access for patients and supporting general practice \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

Yours ever,

SAJID JAVID  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care