

**Engaging with you – LMC Secretaries Symposium, Thursday 5 March 2020**

Dr Douglas Moederle Lumb, Chair of GPDF

Good morning, and I am delighted to be with you today.

Communication is a two-way process. If anything I say today is considered inaccurate or you have issues you wish to raise or another point of view, please speak with me at lunchtime.

The last 2 years have been transformational for GPDF as it has evolved from an organisation which overlapped with the BMA and indeed the GPCs, resulting in blurred areas of responsibility, into an LMC led organisation with complete independence of structure and much more clearly defined responsibilities.

Throughout this process of evolution, we have sought to place the views and priorities of LMCs at the very heart of what we do, and to ensure that we are playing our part in doing the very best we can for General Practice.

That isn't always easy as the needs of LMCs differ significantly; that is why we have needed to spend time and effort surveying you and inviting you to the workshops. Some LMCs are keen for us to fund activities which other LMCs say are fundamentally local responsibilities, and then go on to say that if the GPDF does fund them they will stop contributing.

You may be aware that some LMCs have not been contributing their quota, for a variety of reasons, and there is understandable frustration amongst those who do pay, that they are in effect subsidising those who don't pay. There has been considerable effort to answer all questions and resolve all hesitation, and it has been pleasing that a number of LMCs have recognised our very positive progress of transformation and have recommenced their contribution.

A very small number – in effect 3 LMCs – continue not to contribute to the common good and while we will continue to engage with them, it is only appropriate that these LMC should not continue to enjoy the full range of benefits received by those who pay.

You will have seen the increased efforts and activity in seeking to engage with LMCs. We have gathered your views and opinions via consultation, surveys and workshop sessions, and we have also increasingly shared information with you via our website and regular newsletters.

As an example of my efforts to be accountable, I have researched motions submitted to recent conferences regarding GPDF, which were not debated. You will be receiving a newsletter shortly containing my responses to the issues raised by those motions.

We know that despite these efforts not everyone is 100% clear on the role of GPDF so just to recap very briefly –

- We strengthen the 'voice' of GP's and Local Medical Committees at a nationally representative level by providing funding to enable GPs to participate in GPCs

- We fund interventions in legal and other related matters that benefit Local Medical Committees and general practice, in issues of national significance
- We make available funding for initiatives that support effective functioning of Local Medical Committees.
- And we engage in dialogue with LMCs, the GPC, the BMA, and others to share knowledge and learning, and to promote unity across the profession.

LMC views have been fundamental in shaping the recent activity of GPDF and will continue to do so.

We are currently making changes to the Company's Articles of Association. The key changes from the current Articles are:

- The GPDF's "Objects" (which summarise the purpose of the GPDF) have been rewritten in more simple language, in order to reflect more closely the current practice of the company.
- Several changes have been introduced to the composition of the Board, including:
  - a. We will be increasing the number of Independent Directors to allow for a greater range of skills and experience to be brought to the Board;
  - b. We will be reducing the total number of directors from 11 to 10; and
  - c. We will better define the members who can serve as a director of the GPDF in order to avoid conflicts of interest.
- In time and subject to the Board's agreement, Members may be able to attend members' general meetings by attendance at a "satellite meeting", in order to widen participation in members' meetings and increase accessibility. I do have to point out, however, that whilst this topic is on the Board's Agenda, we do need to ensure that technology can deliver the required result at a sensible cost.
- The new Articles are easier to navigate, with the introduction of a table of contents and sub-headings and grouping all common provisions together in a more logical order.
- They are (where possible) now written in plain English so that they are easier to read.

We have taken the opportunity to address three issues which have recently been drawn to our attention:

- Ensuring members of GPC Wales are not disadvantaged by what was a drafting ERROR in the earlier revision
  - Provision that one member of EACH of the national GPCs may be an elected member of the Board
- And,

- Ensuring a clear and transparent process is in place, including recourse to the Members, should it be necessary to suspend or exclude an LMC nominee from the GPDF membership.

Moving on, we have recently introduced a series of initiatives that extend to the structure and corporate governance of the GPDF itself.

A recurring theme from LMCs has been a request for ever more transparency, which we have heard loudly and clearly, and will continue to enhance.

We have heard criticism in relation to the determination of payments made to members of the GPDF Board and management team. We are addressing this head-on by setting up an entirely independent Remuneration Committee. There will be an experienced chair who has no connection with the medical sector, supported by two individuals from LMCs none of whom is connected with GPDF – that is none of the three individuals will be members of the GPDF Board nor will they be Nominees or Members of the company.

If you would like to apply to be one of these two LMC representatives on that committee, please contact us for further details. Please note these people will not be appointed by me, the GPDF Board or Management Team, but by the independent chair.

Another key decision taken following engagement with LMCs was the reduction of 25% in the level of the 2020 Quota which has been reduced to 4 pence per registered patient, which is on top of a 10% reduction last year.

And there was also a quota rebate of almost £1,000,000 in October last year for LMCs to use as they consider appropriate.

Regarding the development of LMCs, there has been a suggestion which has been made by several LMCs during our engagement activity, for the development of an LMC handbook containing helpful best practice and how to achieve it. Indeed recently, a joint application from three LMCs has been made to the grant fund, for a project somewhat similar to this endeavour. We are in preliminary discussion with those LMCs together with others to develop this idea. We will keep you fully informed as this project develops and are committed to harnessing the ideas of all LMCs.

The GPDF Board has an ambition to evolve into a broader and more diverse group that more accurately represent the composition of general practice. There will be elections to the Board later this year and we want a wide and diverse range of candidates to step forward and stand for election. Therefore, I encourage LMCs to support this with careful consideration as to who should be their Nominee.

The GPDF is currently consulting with the BMA regarding future grant funding. This includes ensuring value for money. We are jointly reviewing how we can use our resources efficiently. You are entrusting us with the money gathered from your GPs and it is incumbent upon us to ensure that this money is used appropriately and with accountability, for the best possible outcome for general practice.

This review may or may not result in changes, but we would stress this is not intended to be merely a 'cost cutting' exercise but aimed at ensuring value-for-money and effective representation for ALL GPs across England, Scotland and Wales. It will address the areas of the Meldrum report which have not yet been actioned as well as the implications of the recent Romney report. I consider it another example of the strong, positive relationship that has developed between the BMA and GPDF.

We may need to consult with your nominees and more widely with LMCs regarding our deliberations for a proposed 3-year agreement and the level of grant to the BMA as any agreement will have significant financial implications.

The board will need to ensure that LMCs support the proposed level commitment before any agreement is finalised. Please watch out for more details.

As a Board, the Directors of the GPDF are focussed on providing the very best support we can deliver to LMCs, GPs and general practice, and have recently focussed on reducing our operating costs by completing a tendering exercise related to legal advice, audit and IT support.

Looking forward, we have begun the process of developing our objectives for the next 3 to 5 years. As part of this process, we shall seek your input and views as to how general practice and LMCs will evolve over that time so that we can plan our support accordingly.

Date for the diary. - The GPDF's AGM this year will be held in London on Friday September 11<sup>th</sup> and we will announce the venue before long. We look forward to welcoming as many Nominees of the company as possible at that meeting.

There is more detail on all these subjects on the GPDF website and in our Newsletters. We have a stand in the refreshment area here today, and my colleagues and I will be around the stand at lunch time, if anyone has a specific question or issue, they would like to discuss.

Thank you to my team at GPDF for their continued guidance. Thank you LMCs for the challenges you bring to me and your feedback, either negative or positive, particularly if it is courteous. Thank you especially to those of you who have contacted me with personal messages of support, it is truly welcome.

Enjoy the rest of the day.

Thank you.

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Dr Douglas A Moederle-Lumb