

29<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Dear Colleague

## **The Somerset General Practice Board**

We are writing to inform you of recent developments that we believe will ensure both better representation of Primary Care in discussions with other organisations involved with the development of the Somerset STP (Sustainability and Transformation Partnership - note the change from “Plan”), and improve communication with practices about what the implications might be for them.

There have been discussions recently between the LMC, Somerset Primary Healthcare Ltd (SPH) and Dr Rosie Benneyworth, who acts as the Primary Care advisor to the STP, as to how we can present a more united front and ensure consistency and rigour when discussing any changes that might have an impact on Primary Care. The very nature of the way that General Practice has developed into such a variety of differing sizes, locations, and contract types over the years has enabled individual practices to flourish, but hindered collaborative working as a group with other organisations. We believe there are good reasons why neither the LMC nor SPH can act in isolation as the voice of Primary Care in the STP process.

In addition, the STP process itself has become immensely complex, both in terms of the workstreams, and the governance structures. All this against a background of severe financial pressure and increasing workloads across the system has meant that we must use our small number of experienced and knowledgeable executive team members in the most effective way possible. The LMC has the statutory representative function for all GPs, and all practices are shareholders with SPH. Rosie Benneyworth has extensive experience and built up a wealth of knowledge working for other health bodies (such as the Academic Health Sciences Network) that will be invaluable.

There is far more that unites us than divides us, and we have decided to form the Somerset General Practice Board (informally known as Team GP), as a body that will represent the interests of Somerset practices, and act as a “go-to” group for other organisations in the STP who wish to consult with Primary Care. We can coordinate attendance at meetings where we need to be, and an important function of the group will be to ensure that the impact of every decision that has any impact on Primary Care will be clearly quantified in a transparent and consistent manner. The Board will also liaise with GPs working in other roles within both provider and commissioning organisations. It is important to recognise that the constituent bodies will still retain their independence (the LMC will still need to act to represent an individual practice that might find itself in disagreement with other organisations, for example).

We have agreed our terms of reference and reporting structures within our own organisations, and

are seeking an early meeting with Niall Dickson and Pat Flaherty, who are leading the local STP, to introduce the new Board. We will also report on a regular basis to practices to outline and explain important developments as they occur.

You may be aware that there have been significant leadership changes at senior levels of the CCG, Taunton and Somerset Trust, and Somerset Partnership, and this feels the right time to be presenting a cohesive and consistent voice that we believe will best serve the interests of all Somerset practices and their patients.

Please do not hesitate to contact either Nick, Sue or Rosie if you have any questions or comments.

Best wishes



**Dr Nick Bray**  
Chair, Somerset LMC



**Dr Sue Roberts**  
Non-Executive Chair, SPH



**Dr Rosie Benneyworth**  
GP Provider Representative, Somerset  
STP Programme Executive Group

**C/O Somerset Local Medical Committee**  
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