



Lancashire & Cumbria Consortium of
Local Medical Committees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGE FACING PRACTICES IN LANCASHIRE & CUMBRIA

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Executive Summary

General practice stands at the forefront of the National Health Service (NHS), embodying the essence of accessible, continuous, and patient-centred healthcare. This document serves to highlight the critical role that general practice occupies within the NHS and to address the pressing issue of how extremely precarious the financial position of our local practices currently is in Lancashire and Cumbria.

Historically, most of the attention on funding issues within the NHS has focused on secondary care and hospital trusts. Primary care, and General Practice, in particular, has always fallen outside of the spotlight due to difficulties in collating a collective picture of the financial difficulties that practices face. This was the basis for us embarking on a piece of work that would assess the state of finances amongst the GP practices in Lancashire and Cumbria.

Through a short and simple survey, we asked GP Partners and Practice Managers about the current financial challenges facing their practice. We provided a key for a financial RAG (Red Amber Green) rating and asked practices to anonymously rate themselves accordingly. This formed the basis of our 'Financial Barometer'. We achieved a great overall response rate, where over 84 percent of our member practices responded to the survey.

The results from both Lancashire and Cumbria areas are alarming. Those who work within General Practice will not find the results surprising as concerns have been raised within the profession for some time.

Of the 191 practices who responded to the survey 10 place themselves now at immediate risk of closure. A further 111 reported financial stress either in terms of reduced income / rising costs and the inability to afford to recruit staff. Seven out of the 9 legacy Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) areas have more than 50% of practices that consider themselves at some form of risk. At-risk practices cover a patient population of 1.35m (1.13m for Lancashire and 215 000 for Cumbria).

The responses and results highlight several serious concerns about the issues facing general practice locally and there is definite cause for concern. The future of General Practice, collectively and individually, is at stake here. If action and serious attention is not given to this pressing issue, there is a very real possibility of mass practice closures and patients finding that access to a GP will worsen significantly. In this briefing, we make a number of recommendations to address some of the most pressing issues.