

Your general practice and the family doctor service in general is under threat.

The government is taking steps which doctors believe will harm patient services. It is encouraging commercial companies to set up and provide GP services, but many family doctors are concerned that if this happens, company profits will come before your needs.

- The services you get from your local doctor's practice are some of the best in the world.
- Many other countries are looking to copy our local health services because they set high standards and are good value for money.
- Doctors are always trying to improve patient care. Every year a nationwide survey tells doctors how you feel about the work they do and helps them to plan and improve the care they can offer.
- The great majority of people value their local doctor's practice and the role it plays in their local community, and most are very happy with the services that they receive.

High quality care

Providing you with the best care possible is your doctor's priority. In the last few years all GPs have been working especially hard to achieve new standards of care for a wide range of illnesses. It means your care keeps improving and that long-term health conditions like asthma and diabetes are better controlled and treated. GPs have provided better care than the government ever expected them to do.

Lifelong care

Your doctor's practice looks after you and your family from the time you enter the world to the moment you leave it. They hold a record of every injury, illness, appointment and referral you have throughout your life and act as the central point of contact for all your health care.

Every doctor's practice aims to help you build a long lasting and consistent relationship with your doctor. This is especially important if you have a long term health problem.

Your doctor is also there to speak on your behalf and to make sure you get joined up care. It is difficult to put a price on having a doctor whom you trust and who knows you.

Out-of-hours

The out-of-hours service in some areas has got worse. The media and some politicians have blamed GPs for this. It is your local primary care organisation that has responsibility for out-of-hours care. GPs work for these organisations to make sure you will always be able to see a doctor if you need to.

Value for money

Did you know that on average your doctor's practice gets just 20 pence a day for each patient to provide all their services and care?

Or that in total each appointment with your doctor costs the NHS just £20? That's compared to up to £300 for an outpatient appointment at your local hospital or £75 for a visit to accident and emergency.

Your doctor's practice is great value for money.

Your local practice is vitally important to the community. It isn't always perfect but is striving to get better. We want to improve the care we provide. This is your practice and we value your support.

Produced by the General Practitioners Committee of the British Medical Association