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8th May 2022

Thank you for your time and allowing me to provide the committee evidence on what the Scottish Government are doing on Alternative Pathways in Primary Care.

Please see below my response to the follow up questions asked by the committee and I hope they find this information helpful.

1. Up-to-date data on whole time equivalent numbers for GPs

The 2019 General Practice Workforce Survey showed a WTE General Practitioner workforce of 3,613.

The next General Practice Workforce survey will be conducted this month with results published in October 2022. The survey will be conducted on an annual basis from this year onwards.

2. Data on the increased use of NHS Inform

The monthly average users of NHS Inform for the 2020-2021 period was 5,756,311. In 2021-22 the average monthly users of NHS Inform increased to 9,201,898.

3. Data on the use of NHS Near Me

Currently there are around 3000 NHS Near Me consultations per month, with the majority of remote consultations being undertaken by telephone.

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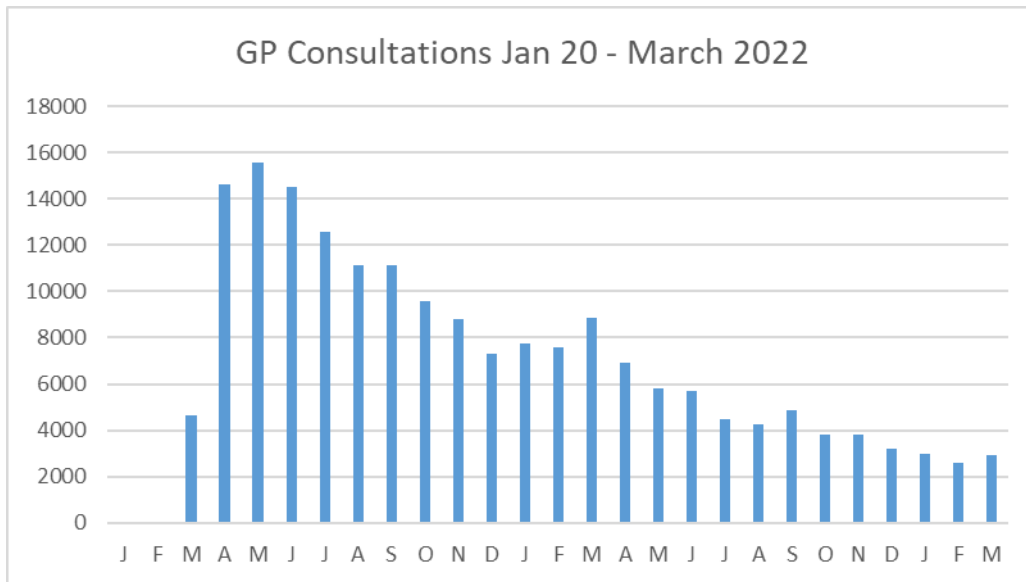
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4. An update on ScotGEM

The Scottish Government is committed to both recruiting more GPs into the workforce, and retaining its existing workforce.

The Universities of St. Andrews and Dundee offer 55 places on ScotGEM, which is Scotland's first Graduate Entry Medicine Programme. The programme is tailored to meet the current and future needs of the NHS in Scotland and focuses on rural medicine and healthcare improvement. ScotGEM places include an offer of a 'return of service' bursary for those who commit to stay and work in the NHS after graduation.

5. Information on the GP receptionist campaign

Communication plays an important role in encouraging responsible use of NHS services by providing clear guidance of preferred pathways.

Qualitative research on Health, Wellbeing and the Covid-19 Pandemic identified a range of frustrations and misunderstandings around patients' interaction with GP receptionists which create barriers. These include:

- The receptionist can be perceived to be a gatekeeper and some people feel they are more of a block than a helpful guide/navigator.
- There are concerns about confidentiality and any indiscretions demonstrated by receptionists unsettles people and undermines confidence.
- Questions can cause problems with receptionists being considered 'nosey', invasive, unprofessional and accusatory. A perceived lack of empathy, sympathy and patience was a problem.
- There are doubts about the value of giving all the information, then having to repeat it with the doctor.

With a system built around multi-disciplinary teams, the role of GP receptionists is increasingly important due their role as care navigators who signpost the public to the right care.

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To avoid ongoing public frustrations, abuse directed at GP receptionists and to ensure a smooth running service within GP surgeries, the 'GP Receptionist' campaign was created.

The target audience was all adults 18+ who use primary care services. The research showed that resistance and frustration with GP receptionists was evident across all life stages.

I hope that the committee find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely,

HUMZA YOUSAF

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