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Press Release
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Responding to a [letter from NHS England to GP practices](#) which instructs them that they must offer face-to-face appointments to patients, Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer, Chief Executive of Cambs LMC said,

“Cambridgeshire and Peterborough GPs and practice teams have been working incredibly hard to keep their services as accessible as possible during the Covid-19 pandemic. NHS England encourages all surgeries to undertake virtual triage of patients as their first point of contact, to minimise the numbers of patients having to be physically brought into surgeries to be examined, lest it put them at risk. Practices are not closed – according to NHS Digital in July 2020, Cambs GPs offered 398,206 appointments across our 86 practices – and NHS Digital believes this represents an under-estimate. Where face to face appointments are offered, they need to be both necessary and safe.”

“Cambs LMC strongly protests against NHS England using a letter to paint an utterly false impression of the vast majority of GPs who have taken their professional responsibilities to their patients extremely seriously, at some considerable personal cost and risk to the GPs themselves.”

“Surgeries across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough should be commended for adapting so quickly and seamlessly to what was – and remains - a massive shift in their usual working pattern. Government needs to do much more to recognise and support practices in doing this, especially since local hospitals have advised they are not presently able to operate at their usual capacity.”

“There will always be a need for some patients to see their GP or another clinician in person. Where it is both safe to do so and clinically appropriate, practices will always ensure this is facilitated. Practices across Cambs remain committed to making sure their services are accessible to those without access to digital consultations, or who struggle to use technology.

“Cambs practices are seeing in excess of 10,000 patients every single day – their workload has significantly increased as a result of the ongoing impact of the pandemic on other NHS services and the unprecedented number of people waiting for postponed procedures. NHS England and Government have so far failed to recognise the significant impact this is having on general practice and should be tackling this as a priority for our patients.

“Technology can support GPs and their teams deliver good quality care to their patients, and improve access at the same time but it is clearly not a complete solution – as we have always maintained. This winter we will need to vaccinate an extra 110,000 Cambs residents. Whilst we remain under enormous pressure, and without additional resource from government, Cambridgeshire general practice remains open and GPs continue to give communities the care they need.”

ENDS