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Philip Mynes <PMynes@bma.org.uk>

**BMA NI GP contract negotiations stall**

To

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Dear PAC members,

You will be aware from our evidence to the inquiry into Access to General Practice that the BMA's NI GP Committee were in negotiations with the Department of Health for the 2025-26 GP contract. In the negotiations, NIGPC were asking the Department of Health to agree a 1% uplift in the core GP contract, an indemnity solution for general practice, and cost recovery for the increase in employers' national insurance contributions.

Today the BMA has announced that these negotiations have stalled, without a commitment from the DoH for additional core funding for general practice.

GPs in Northern Ireland will from 1 May be asked to vote in a referendum on whether they would accept or reject the proposals from the Department.

Please see press release below. If any of you would like to speak to Dr Frances O'Hagan or Dr Ciaran Mullan please let me know and I am happy to arrange this.

Best wishes,  
Phil

## **BMA GPs contract negotiations stall**

GPs contract negotiations with the Department of Health for the 2025-2026 GP contract have stalled, with BMA representatives saying they cannot move forward without a firm commitment from the Department for additional core funding for general practice.

GPs across Northern Ireland will now be asked to vote in a referendum on whether they would accept or reject the proposals from the Department as they currently stand.

Speaking about the situation, BMA NI GP committee chair Dr Frances O'Hagan said, "We are deeply disappointed that we have got to this point, however it became clear in the negotiation meetings that the Department were not

listening to our asks for more core funding, a full indemnity solution for all GPs and urgent funding to address the increase in National Insurance costs.

“Our asks are simple and will help stabilise general practice and without more funding we will see more contract hand backs as some practices will no longer be financially viable.

In the negotiations BMA was asking for the Department of Health to agree a 1% uplift in the core GP contract, full indemnity for all GPs and full cost recovery for the increase in NIC contributions.

Dr O’Hagan added; “The Department has focused on access issues for patients in the negotiations. Increased access is something we all want, but the Department’s proposals on access that were presented very late into the negotiations, have not been costed. There is also no evidence base to suggest that they will improve access and some of their suggestions would also pose significant patient safety issues.

“We were clear in discussions that we are happy to work with the Department on access proposals throughout the next year, but that was not acceptable to them.

“We asked the Department for a final offer to put to GPs, as we have made a commitment that GPs across Northern Ireland will be able to vote on this year's offer, but the Department have not replied to our most recent letter. Therefore, we have no other option but to ask GPs whether the proposals as they currently stand are enough. We are keen to hear the views of the profession to give us a mandate and advise us on the steps to move our negotiation forward.

“Without more funding there is a real risk that more practices will decide they have had enough and will close their doors for good. Others will have to take a hard look at their costs, including staffing costs and will have to decide if they can survive with fewer staff.

“Morale among GPs is at an all-time low. We already see 200,000 patients per week, 1 in 10 of the population, but we are being asked to see even more with less funding. It has really put the profession at breaking point.

“It’s time now for GPs to tell us their views and we are encouraging all GPs to take part in our referendum, have their say and give us insight into what we do next.”

The referendum will be open from 1<sup>st</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

ENDS

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