



Royal College of
General Practitioners

GP activity/workload over the COVID-19 pandemic and now

Fieldwork from 6 to 23 July 2020

Overview

- Self-selecting sample of GPs from RCGP member direct email
- Online survey
- 859 responses

1. Have you worked in any of the following settings during the COVID-19 pandemic, outside of your typical, business as usual working patterns?

	Yes, in a new role	Yes, with increased hours	No
A phone or online service, e.g. CCAS, NHS111, NHS24 or an advice line	9%	4%	87%
A physical COVID-19 hot site, e.g. COVID-19 Assessment Centre, hot hub, or dedicated practice space	25%	12%	63%
A&E or other hospital settings	2%	1%	97%
Proactive work to support high risk and shielded patients	18%	22%	61%
Additional work in care homes, outside business as usual work	5%	8%	86%

2. How would you say your workload at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic (around mid-April) compared to your 'normal' pre-pandemic workload?

	Much higher	A little higher	About the same	A little lower	Much lower	Don't know	Net higher	Net lower
Business as usual clinical GP work	10%	12%	11%	33%	35%	0.4%	21%	68%
Business as usual administrative work	17%	11%	9%	27%	36%	0.5%	28%	63%
Activity relating to CQC inspections (England) or Health Inspectorate (Wales)	2%	4%	15%	14%	54%	12%	6%	68%
Activity relating to QOF or QAIF	1%	2%	12%	22%	59%	4%	3%	81%

3. How would you say your workload in the following areas now compares to your 'normal' pre-pandemic workload?

	Much higher	A little higher	About the same	A little lower	Much lower	Don't know	Net higher	New lower
Business as usual clinical GP work	20%	26%	32%	19%	3%	1%	46%	22%
Business as usual administrative work	17%	24%	33%	23%	4%	1%	40%	26%
Activity relating to CQC inspections (England) or Health Inspectorate (Wales)	3%	7%	37%	19%	20%	14%	10%	39%
Activity relating to QOF or QAIF	4%	10%	34%	29%	17%	6%	15%	46%

4. If you answered that any aspect of your workload were lower during the COVID-19 pandemic, please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree that this meant... If your workload did not change or increased please move on to the next page.

a) Lower clinical GP work

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Net agree	Net disagree
I felt less stressed or burnt out	20%	35%	13%	17%	13%	1%	56%	31%
I have been able to deliver better quality care	20%	24%	21%	21%	13%	2%	44%	34%

b) Lower administrative work

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Net agree	Net disagree
I felt less stressed or burnt out	31%	35%	15%	8%	8%	1%	67%	17%
I have been able to deliver better quality care	25%	27%	32%	12%	4%	1%	52%	16%

c) Lower CQC work

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Net agree	Net disagree
I felt less stressed or burnt out	29%	25%	18%	6%	6%	16%	54%	12%
I have been able to deliver better quality care	24%	20%	32%	5%	3%	15%	45%	8%

d) Lower QOF work

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Net agree	Net disagree
I felt less stressed or burnt out	22%	36%	20%	8%	5%	8%	58%	13%
I have been able to deliver better quality care	18%	20%	35%	11%	6%	9%	39%	17%

5. On average, what proportion of your general practice appointments over the past week would you say you have delivered using the following methods? Please sum to 100%

	Average
Face to face	11%
Full telephone consultation	61%
Telephone triage	16%
Online video consultation	4%
Home visits	2%
Care home visits	1%
SMS and email messages	6%

6. Have you/your practice started to use any of the following to help manage your clinical activity specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic?

	Yes, we have implemented this as part of our COVID-19 response	We already used this before COVID-19	No, we do not use this delivery method	Don't know
Enabling online appointment booking	7%	62%	25%	6%
Non-GP telephone triage	16%	36%	44%	4%
Online triage	27%	21%	47%	5%
GP telephone triage	42%	45%	10%	3%
Full telephone consultations	51%	46%	1%	2%
Video/e-consultations	88%	5%	5%	2%
Remote health monitoring tools	31%	16%	41%	11%

7. To what extent, if at all, would you say that delivering clinical care using different modes changes the efficiency in which you can work/deliver appointments?

	Increases it a lot	Increases it a little	Makes no difference	Decreases it a little	Decreases it a lot	Net increase	Net decrease
Enabling online appointment booking	11%	33%	35%	12%	9%	44%	21%
Non-GP telephone triage	16%	51%	18%	12%	3%	66%	15%
Online triage	23%	42%	17%	13%	5%	65%	18%
GP telephone triage	35%	41%	11%	11%	3%	76%	13%
Full telephone consultations	39%	31%	12%	12%	5%	70%	18%
Video/e-consultations	23%	44%	15%	13%	5%	67%	18%
Remote health monitoring tools	16%	58%	17%	6%	3%	74%	9%

8. How would you rate the following health monitoring tools in terms of each of the following issues? (Please rate each from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest and 5 being the lowest).

a) Effectiveness in delivering quality of care

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Pulse oximeters	33%	24%	15%	5%	12%	11%
Blood pressure monitors	43%	20%	10%	8%	15%	4%
Motion sensors and wearables	8%	3%	8%	7%	12%	63%
Home monitoring apps and software	7%	7%	9%	9%	9%	59%
Tablets/ipads	13%	9%	12%	7%	10%	49%

b) Effectiveness in reducing workload/patient demand

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Pulse oximeters	18%	18%	16%	11%	13%	24%
Blood pressure monitors	28%	21%	22%	11%	10%	8%
Motion sensors and wearables	7%	4%	5%	5%	15%	64%
Home monitoring apps and software	7%	6%	8%	7%	11%	60%
Tablets/ipads	10%	8%	14%	6%	9%	53%

c) Need/shortness of supply

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Pulse oximeters	22%	7%	15%	5%	15%	37%
Blood pressure monitors	19%	11%	20%	7%	14%	29%
Motion sensors and wearables	8%	2%	6%	2%	8%	74%
Home monitoring apps and software	7%	4%	6%	4%	7%	71%
Tablets/ipads	9%	6%	8%	4%	9%	63%

9. To what extent do you expect the following to affect your clinical workload over the next 6 to 12 months?

	Increase it a great deal	Increase it quite a lot	Increase it a little	No change	Don't know
Appointments for patients who are either on a waiting list for secondary care treatment or waiting for a referral because of delays due to COVID-19	61%	31%	6%	0%	2%
Appointments for patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are now experiencing longer-term health conditions	21%	30%	41%	2%	5%
Appointments for patients who were in ICU for COVID-19 and are now experiencing longer-term health conditions	17%	21%	47%	6%	9%
Appointments for patients who postponed getting help or treatment during COVID-19 because they did not want to risk leaving the house or seeing a GP	53%	38%	7%	0%	2%
Appointments for patients who are suffering from wellbeing/mental health issues such as anxiety, stress or PTSD because of COVID-19 and the social constraints that have been in place	64%	28%	6%	0%	2%
Appointments for patients who are experiencing significant social adversity because of the financial impacts of COVID-19	46%	40%	11%	2%	2%
General practice staff leaving or reducing their hours	18%	26%	21%	23%	12%

10. To what extent do you expect patient demand to increase or decrease over the next 12 months?

Increase a lot	74%
Increase a little	20%
Stay about the same	4%
Decrease a little	1%
Decrease a lot	0%
Don't know	2%

11. To what extent, if at all, are you currently experiencing delays in getting secondary care treatment for your patients once you refer them?

Always	34%
Usually	49%
Sometimes	13%
Rarely	1%
Never	0%
Don't know	3%

12. To what extent, if at all, would you say that the delays you are experiencing now are better of worse than during normal, pre-COVID-19 pandemic times?

A lot better	1%
A little better	3%
About the same	4%
A little worse	18%
A lot worse	71%
Don't know	3%

13. Considering patients in your practice recovering after being diagnosed with COVID-19, please rate your concerns about their care, 1 being the highest concern.

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Physical health care (e.g. treatment fatigue, breathlessness, deconditioning)	28%	24%	24%	7%	4%	14%
Mental health care (e.g. treating depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress)	31%	31%	15%	5%	6%	12%
Cognitive functioning (e.g. treating memory loss, difficulties concentrating)	9%	18%	29%	14%	8%	22%
Access to rehabilitation services	26%	18%	16%	10%	9%	21%
Access to social care	23%	20%	20%	8%	11%	18%

14. Of your patient list, are you aware of any patients discharged after severe COVID-19 requiring critical care?

Yes	39%
No	45%
Don't know	16%

15. Considering patients in your practice recovering after a COVID-19 related critical care stay, please rate your concerns about their care, 1 being the highest concern.

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Physical health care (e.g. treatment fatigue, breathlessness, deconditioning)	30%	18%	10%	5%	5%	32%
Mental health care (e.g. treating depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress)	27%	25%	9%	3%	5%	30%
Cognitive functioning (e.g. treating memory loss, difficulties concentrating)	13%	15%	22%	7%	8%	36%
Access to rehabilitation services	21%	15%	15%	8%	6%	36%
Access to social care	19%	15%	15%	6%	12%	34%

16. Considering your existing patients who have postponed their treatment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please rate your level of concern with regards the following conditions/activity and where focus should now be in making up lost ground (1 being the highest concern)

	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Assessment of red flag symptoms (suspected cancer referral)	68%	14%	7%	5%	6%	1%
Diagnostics (urgent)	53%	28%	9%	5%	5%	1%
Diagnostics (routine)	23%	29%	32%	10%	6%	1%
Phlebotomy (for long term condition management)	9%	18%	32%	17%	24%	1%
High risk drug monitoring	19%	29%	20%	12%	19%	1%
Deteriorating mental health conditions	45%	34%	12%	5%	3%	0%
Cervical smears	11%	25%	31%	17%	14%	2%
Vaccinations	25%	21%	23%	12%	17%	2%
Chronic disease reviews, including repeat medication reviews (for QOF, if relevant)	10%	24%	32%	22%	11%	1%
Reassessing condition of patients who could not refer to secondary care due to routine referrals being 'turned off'	30%	31%	22%	7%	7%	3%
Children/adolescent mental health issues	38%	30%	18%	7%	5%	2%
Full contraceptive services (LARCS)	13%	26%	31%	16%	13%	2%

17. To what extent, if at all, would you say your experience of working in general practice during the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on your wellbeing?

Very positive	4%
Quite positive	21%
Neither positive nor negative	27%
Quite negative	34%
Very negative	12%
Don't know	1%

18. Have you accessed any wellbeing support or resources through the COVID-19 pandemic period?

Yes	19%
No	81%

19. What has this included?

NHS Practitioner Health Service (England only, previously known as the GP health service)	4%
Health for Healthcare Professionals (Wales only)	0%
Trust occupational health services	1%
Self-treatment	22%
General access resources	5%
RCGP online wellbeing resources	2%
Wellbeing apps (e.g. Headspace, Sleepio, Unmind)	11%
Support helplines/text services (e.g. Samaritans, NHS people support line)	1%
Bereavement support helpline	0%
Staff common rooms	12%
Spoken to a mentor, coach or supervisor	7%
Spoken to a colleague	31%
Taken time off work because of wellbeing	4%

20. Have you accessed the RCGP COVID-19 resources hub?

Yes, and I found it useful	45%
Yes, and I did not find it useful	9%
No, I know about it but haven't accessed it	36%
No, I was not aware of it	10%

21. How well do you feel the RCGP has supported you through the COVID-19 pandemic

Very well	12%
Quite well	54%
Not very well	11%
Not well at all	5%
Don't know	18%

22. Which of the following best describes how you plan to change your GP sessional commitment over the next 12 months

Increase it	4%
Keep it the same	60%
Decrease it	24%
Stop, as I plan to leave the profession	7%
Don't know	6%

23. Have you or your practice had to delay, or experienced a delay in hiring any staff roles during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes, a GP	15%
Yes, a member of the wider clinical team	22%
No	50%
Don't know	20%

24. You said you/your practice had experienced experienced a delay in recruiting, which roles did this include?

GP partner	21%
Salaried GP	43%
Locum GP	14%
Registrar/trainee GP	5%
Social prescribing link workers	7%
Clinical pharmacists	21%
Physician Associates	10%
First Contract Physiotherapists	16%
Pharmacy Technicians	13%
Health and Wellbeing Coaches	5%
Care Coordinators	6%
Occupational Therapists	1%
Dieticians	0%
Podiatrists	1%
Don't know	1%
Other (please specify)	40%

About you

Which region do you most usually work in?

East of England	12%
London	9%
Midlands	12%
North East and Yorkshire	13%
North West	10%
South East	11%
South West	11%
Northern Ireland	3%
Scotland	12%
Wales	7%

What is your gender?

Female	61%
Male	38%
Other	0%
Prefer not to say	1%

What is your age?

25-34	6%
35-44	26%
45-54	38%
55-64	29%
65+	2%

What is your ethnicity?

White	83%
Black / African / Caribbean / British	3%
Asian / Asian British	9%
Mixed / multiple ethnicity	3%
Other	2%