

Dr David Wrigley (Lancashire GP)

I have just come from another conference nearby: 400 GPs are gathered over the crisis and the collapse in general practice. There were a lot of angry doctors over there.

General practice is on its knees. We have GPs having breakdowns, GPs having panic attacks, they are depressed, they are resigning, they are retiring early. We see one million patients a day in primary care. That is an incredible amount of patients. We are getting less and less resources. This government ignores everything doctors say. They are not interested.

The funding for general practice as a percentage of the NHS budget has been reduced from around 12% of the NHS budget, down to around 7% – a systematic de-funding of general practice, and it is being coordinated by our politicians.

There is a crisis of recruitment in general practice. Training places are unfilled. GPs are resigning early. One in three are considering retiring early.

Hunt has caused a scare, with patients not now going to hospital at the weekend because they think it's closed or there are no doctors there. Of course doctors have always worked 7 days. But now patients are turning up on a Monday at their GPs or A&E even worse than they were at the weekend. This is down to Jeremy Hunt and all he is doing.

General practice used to be the jewel in the crown for the NHS. It costs around £140 per patient per year. That gives you unlimited access to a GP. It costs more to insure your puppy. Yet politicians just ignore us. They are not interested.

How do we tackle this? You have got to lobby your MP, even if they are a Tory. Write to local papers, that's really important to get local stories in the papers. They love stories around health and the disaster that's happening in social care. Go on demos. Speak to other people. It's always worrying about hearing bad stories, but there are plenty of things we can do working tougher to save general practice. But we have to, because it's on the brink of collapse.