



Institute of General Practice Management
Survey of managers in general practice 2021

www.igpm.org.uk/membership

Introduction and summary



In October 2021, with the pressures on general practice still ongoing, the IGPM issued a survey to gauge the current feelings of those working as managers in general practice in the United Kingdom.

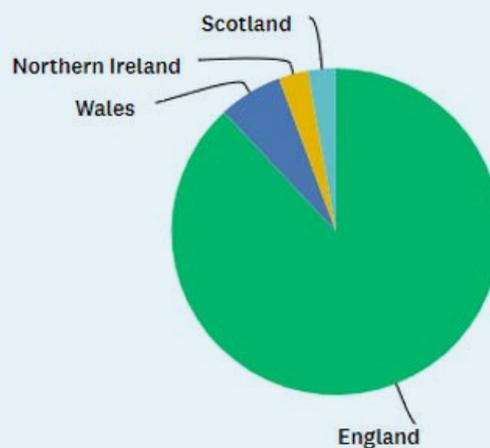
The survey consisted of four sections: wellbeing, changes in the NHS structure, the IGPM, and some general thoughts from managers.

The survey was open for the month of October and was publicised by the IGPM regional reps on the General Practice Managers UK Facebook page and via Practice Index.

A total of 1,620 people responded to the survey and the regional split was as follows:

Region where you are working

Answered: 1,350 Skipped: 270



Key Highlights

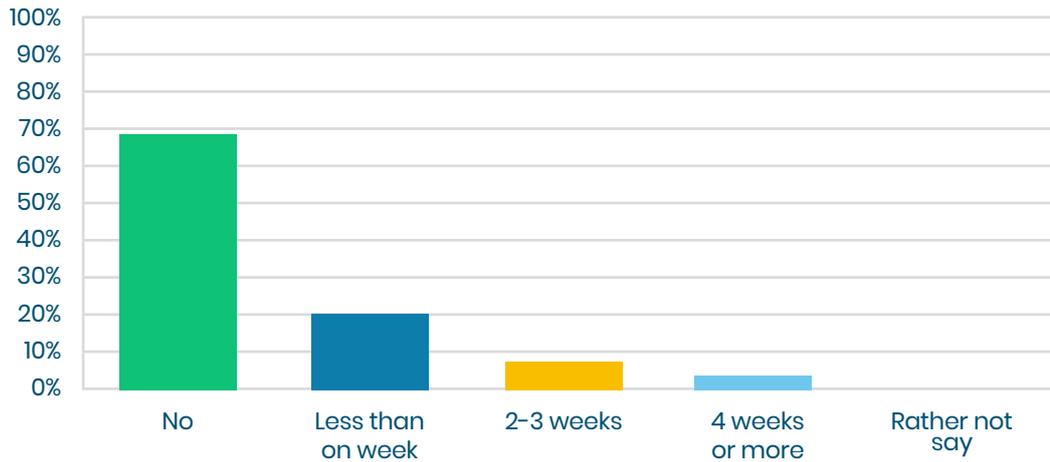
- 52% of respondents stated that they did not feel able to take time off for annual leave
- ¼ of respondents said that they were more than 50% likely to leave general practice management in the next 12 months
- 92% of respondents felt that there are insufficient measures in place in the wider NHS system to protect them and their teams from abuse
- 85% of respondents felt that practice managers have not had a voice in the changes that have been implemented in general practice
- Over 50% of respondents felt that their commissioning body does not support general practice
- 30% of respondents are already members of the IGPM



Question 1

Have you taken any time off sick in the last 12 months?

Answered: 1,617 Skipped: 3

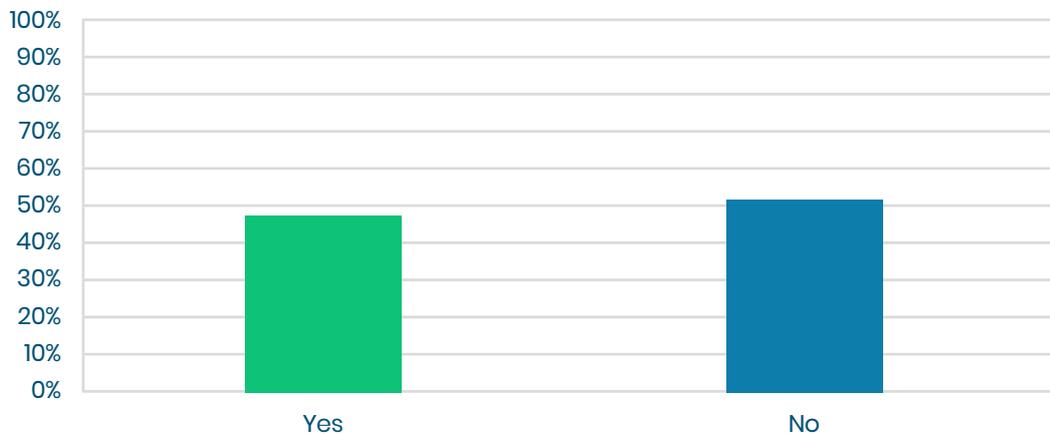


Despite the pressures of the last 12 months, a majority of managers had not taken any time off due to sickness.

Question 2

Do you feel able to take time off for annual leave?

Answered: 1,617 Skipped: 3



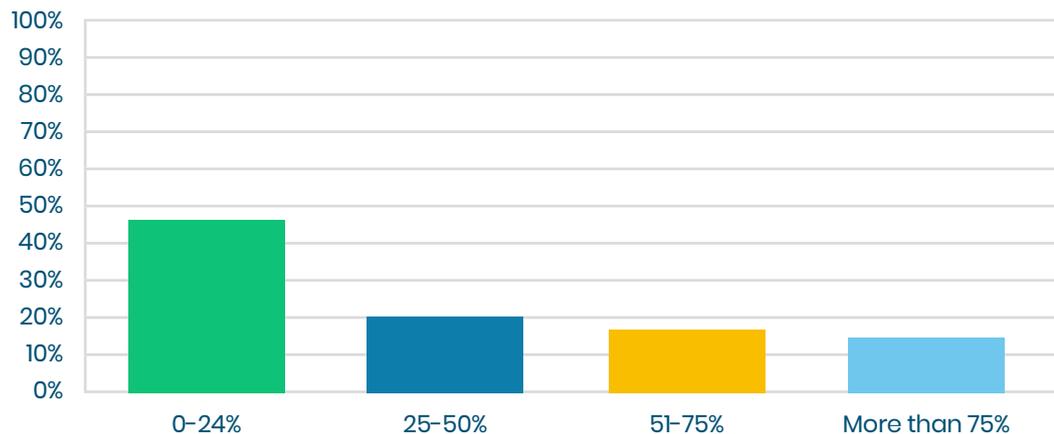
Worryingly, more than half of the responding managers reported not being able to take time off for annual leave. The reasons given by respondents largely centred around workload including emails, the pressures of their workload, being short staffed, demand, and the fear of coming back to work that would accumulate whilst being on leave. Guilt was also cited as a reason by a number of respondents.



Question 3

Realistically, how likely are you to leave practice management in the next 12 months?

Answered: 1,618 Skipped: 2



Almost 33% of managers responded by saying that they are likely to leave practice management in the next 12 months. Common responses to explain why included stress and workload pressures, but some respondents also commented that patient demand and not having enough time were also contributing factors.

Question 4

What keeps you going?

Answered: 1,593 Skipped: 27

This question was not a numerical answer and common themes cited by managers included:

- Working in a great team or colleagues/staff were mentioned over 700 times
- Support of their GP partners or the practice came up over 230 times
- Other themes included:
 - o Patients
 - o Making a difference

Reassuringly, some managers also commented that they like their job!



Question 5

What did you do to protect your own well-being?

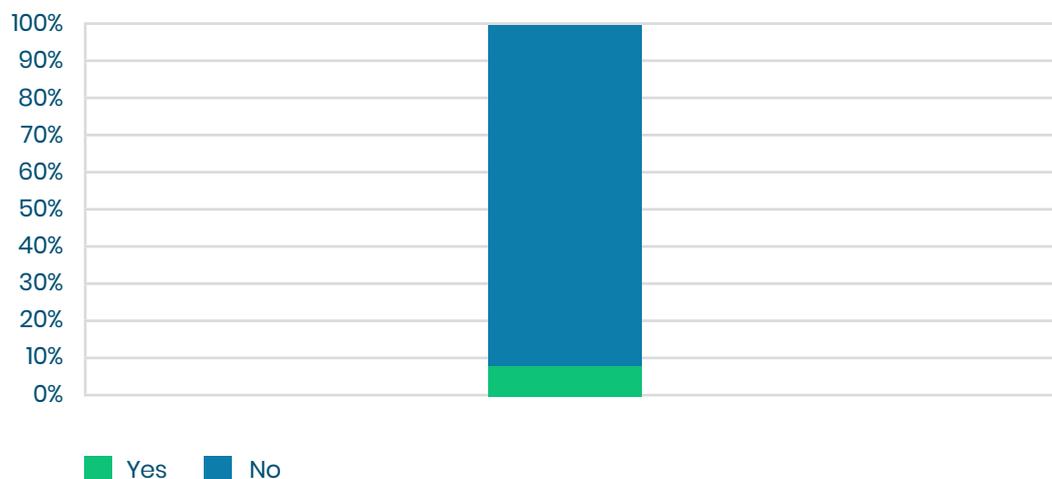
Answered: 1,587 Skipped: 33

Responses to this question included exercise, working at home, weekends and other support mechanisms outside work such as family and friends.

Question 6

Do you feel that there are sufficient measures in place in the system to protect you and your staff from abuse?

Answered: 1,616 Skipped: 4



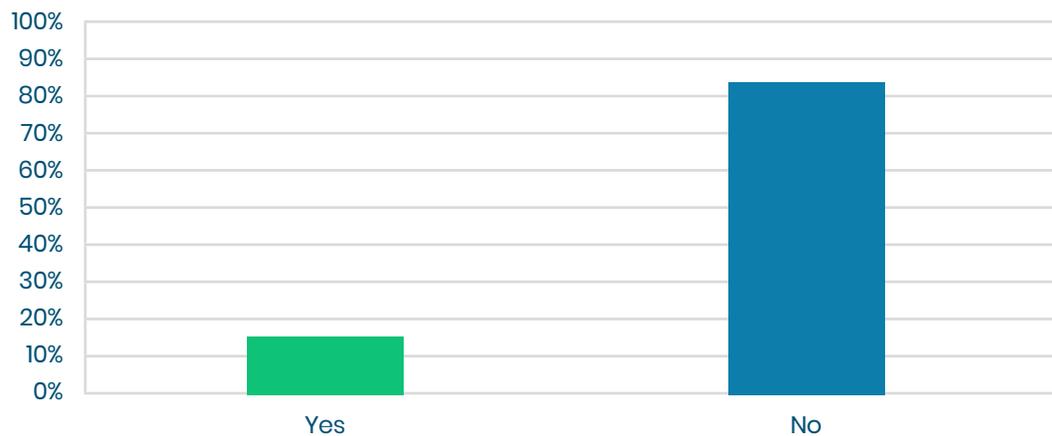
The overwhelming majority of managers did not feel that there are sufficient measures in place in the wider NHS to protect practice staff. Comments included the increase in abuse from patients, with large numbers also mentioning comments in the media and those made by members of the UK government.



Question 7

Do you feel that practice management has had a voice in the changes that have been implemented in general practice?

Answered: 1,495 Skipped: 125



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Yes	15.18%
▼ No	84.82%
TOTAL	

[Comments \(1047\)](#)

Practice managers play a key role in the delivery of services in primary care and are responsible for ensuring that the practice they work in functions on a daily basis. It is disappointing, therefore, that over 80% of managers who responded did not feel that they had been given a voice in the changes that have been implemented in general practice by the wider NHS.

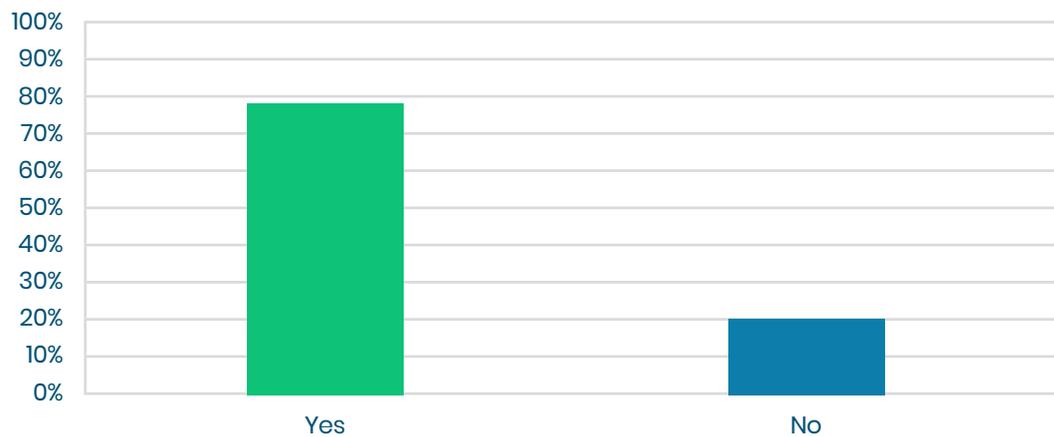
Comments made included instances where the opinions of practice managers had been sought but then they were told that that is not the way that something would be done, the fact that managers receive huge volumes of emails but that this does not represent a voice for change, and that there is no collective voice for general practice and that it is all about 'large trusts'.



Question 8

Do you feel supported by your partners?

Answered: 1,494 Skipped: 126

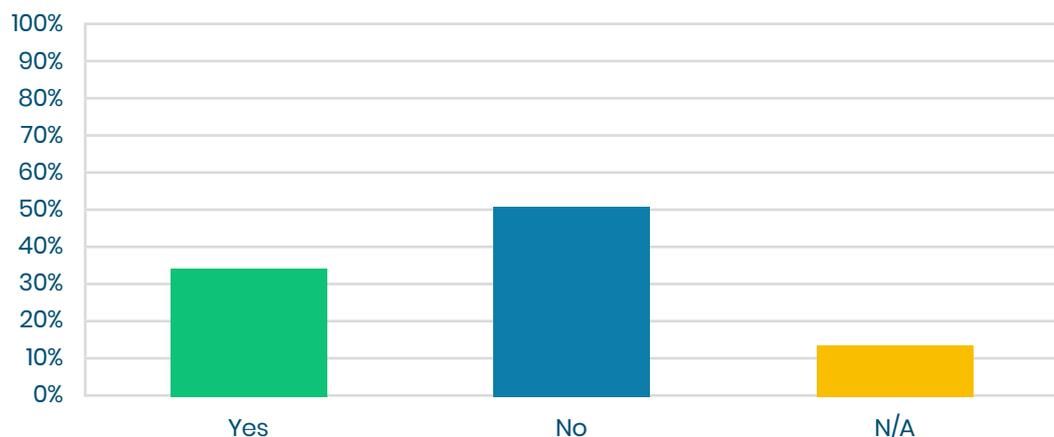


Whilst managers feel unsupported by the wider system, the majority felt that they did receive support from their practice partners.

Question 9

Do you feel your commissioning body supports general practice?

Answered: 1,488 Skipped: 132



This question's results were clear with just over 50% of managers feeling that their commissioning body does not support general practice. The comments made included it being difficult to access the right information when it is needed and there being large amounts of red tape with pointless data-collection exercises.

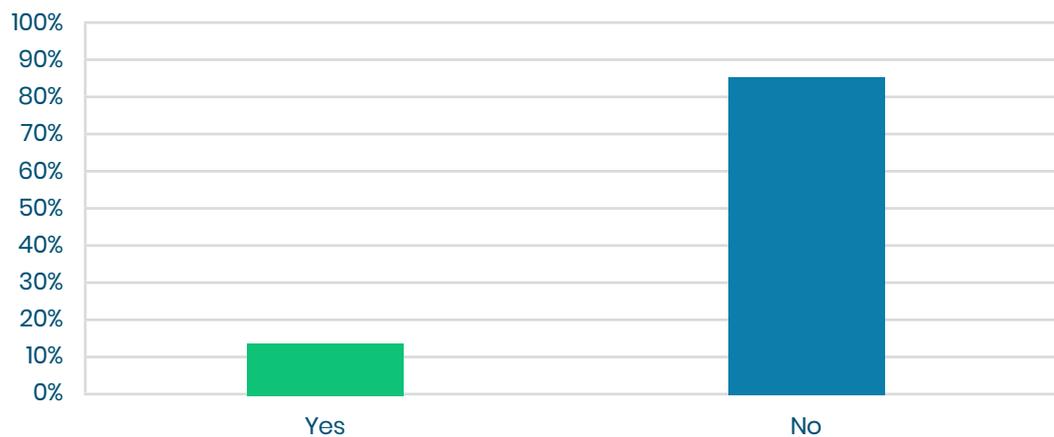
The comments also made it clear that the landscape is different depending on where you are in the country, with some commissioners being highly praised for being supportive in the comments section following this question.



Question 10

Do you feel the national NHS body in whichever area you live (e.g. NHS England, NHS Wales, NHS Scotland, HSC (NI)) supports general practice?

Answered: 1,482 Skipped: 138



The results for this question were clear with over 85% of managers feeling that the national NHS bodies do not support general practice. There were wide-ranging comments made on this question including feeling that there is poor communication, with practices often finding out about changes in the media first, and unrealistic targets and pressures.

Question 11

If you ran your national NHS body, what would be the first thing you would change for the benefit of Practice Managers?

Answered: 1,322 Skipped: 298

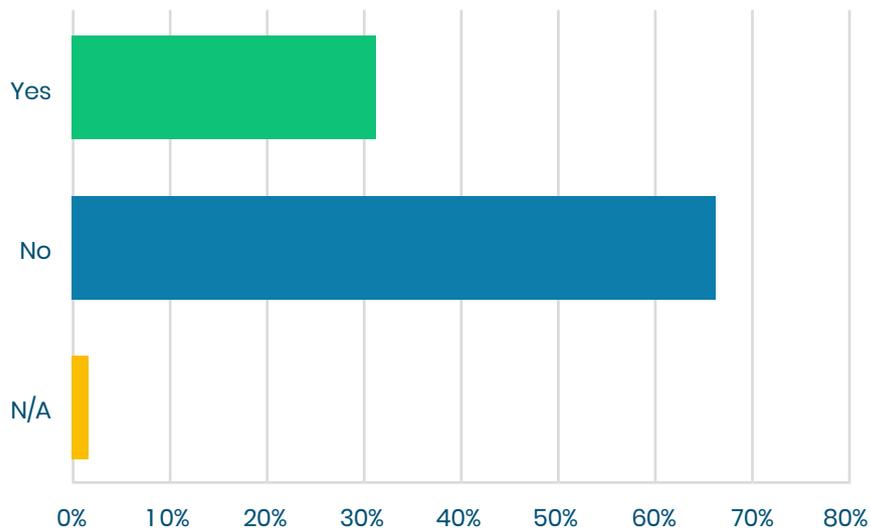
The managers who answered this question cited additional support for practices, better communication and reduced bureaucracy. There were also calls for practice managers to have a voice and representation in decision-making and to be listened to. In addition, managers stated that they would implement a national campaign to highlight how GP surgeries run and would take action to make dealing with non-clinical complaints less time-consuming.



Question 12

Are you an IGPM member?

Answered: 1,459 Skipped: 161

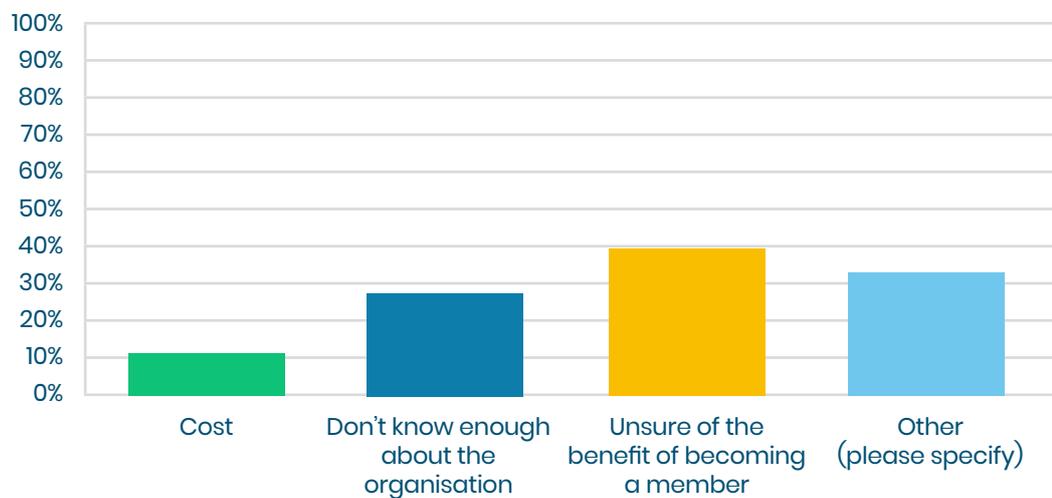


Approximately 1/3 of respondents are already IGPM members.

Question 13

If you are not an IGPM member, why not?

Answered: 1,120 Skipped: 500



For those who are not members of the IGPM already, the reasons given were not knowing enough about the organisation and being unsure of the benefits of being a member. Other comments included simply not having had time to get around to joining and feeling that the IGPM is not yet recognised widely enough to make becoming a member beneficial.



Question 14

How can the IGPM offer you support as a member?

Answered: 1,146 Skipped: 474

Comments in response to this question included providing a voice for practice managers, support and lobbying. There were also calls for providing training, CPD and career progression, and pushback on the additional work that is being expected of practices.

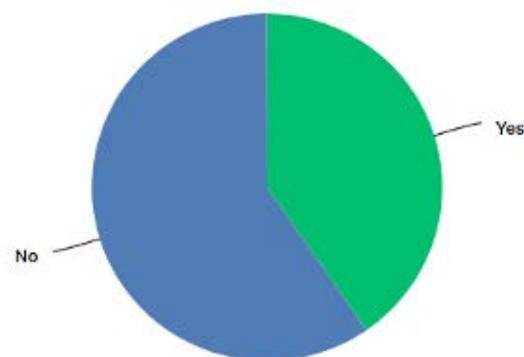
Managers also felt that the IGPM could have a role in campaigns to educate the public on the crisis in general practice and also to raise the profile of practice managers.

In addition, there were a number of encouraging comments made to continue what has already been started!

Question 15

Do you know your regional representative is? (Your regional representative can be found at <https://igpm.org.uk/our-reps/> and you can also contact your representative through the web page.)

Answered: 1,446 Skipped: 174



Well over half of the responding managers did not know who their regional representative was.



Question 16

If a friend of yours was considering a Practice Management role, would your advice to them be and why?

Answered: 1,362 Skipped: 258

Whilst there were many comments that simply said 'don't do it', there were also a significant number of managers who would recommend being a practice manager and who commented that it can be a rewarding role. There were words of advice, though, about being prepared and putting safeguards in place to try and maintain a work-life balance.

Question 17

What is your most meaningful part of your job?

Answered: 1,347 Skipped: 273

Common themes in response to this question included:

- Patients – well over 35% cited this reason in one form or another
- Staff – in one form or another, more than a further 30% gave 'staff' as the most meaningful part of their job
- Other comments included:
 - Making a difference
 - Being appreciated

Question 18

Just for fun.... What is your other superpower apart from your current role?

Answered: 1,207 Skipped: 413

As you might expect, there were a wide range of answers to this question, with 'being a parent' being one of the most common answers, along with 'cooking' being popular among the practice management population, and the ability to juggle and being a mind reader.

Conclusion



It is clear that managers in general practice are under pressure and many are considering leaving their job altogether. The results of this survey must be shared with the wider NHS to highlight the importance of the practice manager's role and also the concerns that exist about the sustainability of the workload.

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