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Pulse Power 50 2015

2 September 2015, Pulse

“ *Dr Nigel Watson was nominated for being an ‘LMC legend’ and running what his peers called ‘the best LMC in the country’.*

And the New Forest GP certainly has an enviable reputation, ensuring Wessex GPs have a seat at the very top table, influencing the direction of policy in the region and bringing in much-needed new investment.

Dr Watson led a seven-day access bid for the Prime Minister’s Challenge Fund and won ‘vanguard’ status for seven practices – including his own – in South Hampshire.

The scheme will see GPs teaming up with a small community hospital to set up an extended service to some 70,000 patients, including the frail elderly and those with mental health conditions.

Dr Watson said of the experience of setting up the extended service: ‘It was lots of work to get GP buy-in and engage with many different organisations – but there’s now massive potential to deliver change and make general practice sustainable. GPs are beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel.’

This coming year will see Dr Watson lead on the opening of a seven-day primary care centre and pilot a musculoskeletal extended scope practitioner to help practices add capacity.

But he has to get through his own practice’s CQC inspection first...

“ *Dr Laura Edwards is a quietly spoken GP, still in the first five years of her career, but she has shown some mettle as medical director of Wessex LMCs.*

She was nominated for ‘her work with trainees’, including a survey of 1,400 GPs last year that showed massive gaps emerging in the Wessex workforce, as half of trainees did not want to stay and 14% of GPs wanted to retire.

Dr Edwards has also forced talks at a national level between NHS Property Services and the BMA after raising the alarm over ‘overly onerous’ contractual terms being forced on practices.

She has also challenged Simon Stevens directly at the LMC Secretaries conference over the effect of GP-bashing by the national media on morale and on the future workforce.

She says she loved hearing that the work she has done locally has made a real difference to colleagues, but particularly enjoys the pastoral aspect of her work: ‘It means a lot to support colleagues who give so much to their patients every day – it feels like we are giving them something back when the system they work in currently doesn’t.’

She is definitely one to watch in the coming year.

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