

Survey aims to understand why South West GPs are leaving their jobs

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Fewer junior doctors are opting for a career in general practice.

As the UK faces major challenges in sustaining the GP workforce, a new research project sets out to understand why some GPs are leaving their jobs to take early retirement or career breaks.

The ReGROUP project, led by the universities of Exeter and Bristol, is a comprehensive programme to develop strategies and policies for the NHS in seeking to support the GP workforce. It is funded by nearly £500,000 from the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR).

The Government has recognised that new approaches are needed to sustain the GP workforce over the next few years. The UK faces a potential shortage because of a number of factors, including fewer

medical students and junior doctors opting for a career in general practice. In tandem, some experienced doctors are considering taking [early retirement](#) or a career break within the next five years, while a significant proportion of doctors taking a career break are not returning to the workforce, or are returning part-time. Meanwhile, the ageing general population has increasingly complex health needs, placing additional demands on GP time.

John Campbell, Professor of Primary Care at the University of Exeter Medical School, who is also a GP, said: "We are addressing an urgent need for the NHS to better understand the reasons behind the loss of both experienced GPs and those taking a career break. This is important because it takes at least 10 years to train a GP, and recruiting sufficient numbers of trained GPs will not adequately fill the shortfall. It is therefore crucial to learn what support the current GP workforce wants and needs and to explore how this might be delivered. More GPs is not an immediate solution; understanding how we can support the workforce is essential."

In April, a short [workforce](#) survey will be sent by post and by email to all GPs in the South West. The survey is supported by NHS England. The survey is an important part of the programme of research commissioned by the National Institute for Health Research.

Provided by University of Exeter

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