

# 5 key risks in GP succession planning



Changes in a GP partnership can have a de-stabilising effect on the practice. Partners retire, leave or become unable to work. It is important to plan ahead to ensure a smooth transition. Below we highlight some key risks and considerations. Our expert teams can assist with all aspects of partnership disputes and succession planning so please get in touch with one of our experts if you need assistance.

## PROCESS AND PARTNERSHIP DEED

Your Partnership Deed should set out a clear process for a partner leaving, including notice periods and how to value the share for buy out. Provisions can also prevent other partners leaving within a set period to avoid a 'crisis' situation.

*Tip: Ensure you have a current Partnership Deed covering key points and update it to reflect new joiners to minimise partnership disputes.*

## PREMISES

Property can be a significant asset in the partnership. When a property owning partner leaves it can change how the practice legally occupies the premises which can also affect rent reimbursement. For tenants, formal changes may be required to the lease to protect the partnership and exiting partner.

*Tip: Take legal advice on the effect on practice property and implications.*

## STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT

Partnership changes may give rise to unexpected staffing challenges where practice staff and salaried GPs may transfer to the "new" provider.

*Tip: Consider who is currently engaged and their terms and obtain legal advice on any transfer of employment issues.*

## NHS CONTRACT

You may need to inform the commissioner or amend the contract to reflect the changed partnership. Failure to do so properly can be a contract breach and may create future difficulties over payments.

*Tip: Engage early with NHS England / the CCG to keep them informed and obtain any assistance available.*

## ATTRACTING NEW PARTNERS

With more general practitioners favouring a salaried model and flexible locum opportunities, it can be difficult to find new partners and safeguard the stability of the practice.

*Tip: If buying into premises ownership is a 'block', consider sale and lease back arrangements. Consider making working patterns and any interview process appealing for prospective partners.*

*If you have any queries, please contact our specialist GP team:*



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