GPs across England have overwhelmingly voted to reject the announced Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England changes to the 2024/25 national GP General Medical Services (GMS) contract.

More than 19,000 GPs and GP registrars took part in the BMA’s referendum, with 99.2% voting ‘no’ to the question: Do you accept the 2024/25 GMS Contract for General Practice from Government and NHS England?1

The contract changes, which will be imposed by the Government and NHS England from the 1st April 2024, include a national practice contract baseline funding uplift of just 1.9%, or £179m, for England’s general practices, way below inflation in recent years, meaning many practices will struggle to stay financially viable over the next six to 12 months and risk closure.

The changes also include contractual incentives, which push practices further away from traditional GP-led care and access to GP and practice nurse appointments.

As planned, following confirmation of the results, the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) for England is meeting today to discuss the referendum outcome and the profession’s next possible steps.

Some 2,400 GPs have joined the BMA since the beginning of February.

Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer, chair of GPC England at the BMA, said: “When I qualified as a GP in 2008, general practice was ‘the jewel in the crown of the NHS’. Fast forward to 2024, we are witnessing a ‘constructive dismissal’ of general practice across England where £1.4bn of Treasury funds for practice staff are forbidden to be spent on recruiting more GPs and practice nurses.

“This is despite almost 2,000 fewer GPs, more than 1,300 lost practices and six million more patients in the past decade. In fact, we now have hundreds of GPs unemployed  – this is madness. The unanimity of the vote in our referendum demonstrates the depth of feeling among the profession. In 20 years, I’ve never known GPs to be so frustrated, angry and upset. We are unable to offer our patients the care they want and need.

  “Today’s overwhelming result signals the start of our fight back, and we will bring our patients with us. GP teams across England have almost 1.4 million patient contacts a day. That’s a lot of conversations, and we all want the same thing: access to continuity of care with their family doctor in a local GP surgery that has the right balance of GPs, nurses, and other staff, and is well-resourced to meet their needs today, tomorrow and in the months and years ahead. It’s what patients want, and it’s what GPs want too.

  “GPC England meets today, to consider the profession’s next steps, in a move emboldened by 2,400 newly registered BMA GP members.”