



14th January 2022

Dear colleagues,

We understand this has been a difficult Christmas for all those working in the NHS. Some of you will have been unwell or isolating, with you or your family suffering from COVID-19. We know a huge effort has gone into covering and supporting each other when rotas are pushed. The current wave of Omicron is also exacerbating the record high waiting lists and, sadly, gynaecology services are amongst the worst affected. We know this is having an impact not just on patients but on RCOG members who may be constrained in being able to help women, often with debilitating and worsening conditions. Thank you for all of your efforts speaking to and arranging additional medical care for the women you look after as they wait longer.

We appreciate that there are serious concerns around the waiting list backlog, staffing crisis and burnt-out workforce. A credible recovery strategy backed up by sufficient funding and staff is being considered and prepared. Amanda Pritchard, the Chief Executive of NHSE, will be placing increasing emphasis on recovery which we anticipate will address the impact of prolonged waiting for gynaecological services on the women we care for.

That being said, we recognise the pressures we are all facing and we wish to reassure you that we are doing all we can to support you and the profession during this challenging period.

The latest wave comes on the back of almost 2 years of Members and Fellows of RCOG and the wider health professions having to repeatedly respond to waves of COVID-19, and the direct and indirect harms to patients that this causes. Long, chronic, wearing emergencies like this can take a major personal toll for all, as well as interfering with training for many. Although demands are high, we encourage you to prioritise your personal rest and recovery as much as possible and support one another to do so. Take up any formal support that is available to you and spend time talking to your colleagues to ask how they are coping and in return show that you recognise and value their efforts. We know in normal times we all go the extra mile to look after those we care for but at the moment we need to work extra hard to support each other. There are some wellbeing and other resources available on the RCOG's Supporting our Doctors webpage, and we encourage you to make use of these: <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/careers-training/workplace-workforce-issues/supporting-our-doctors/>.

If you have suggestions about ways to alleviate the pressures, please [contact us](#). We would be happy to listen and feed these back to our colleagues in government and the NHS.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Edward Morris
President, RCOG

Professor Chris Whitty
Chief Medical Officer for England

Professor Lucy Chappell
Chief Scientific Adviser, DHSC