

Leadership requires compassion

Sitting on the back row of the recent business fundamentals course focused on workforce development and planning it was clear that the role of GP partners as organisational leaders was testing many minds.

The concerns were real, HR systems that were lacking or inadequate for many years; staff who needed motivating when the volumes and complexity of their workloads were ever growing; and partners who wanted to tackle leadership issues but were absorbed by their day to day patient caseload and finding it virtually impossible to find the time to lead.

So how do you cut through and find time to support your staff and lead?

The reality is the more you do it the easier it gets.

Start by setting a vision for your enterprise and your team and support each member of staff to understand what it is that they do to enable that vision to be delivered. The infamous quote from the janitor President Kennedy saw when he visited the **NASA** space centre made it clear - JFK saw the janitor carrying a broom and walked over and asked what he was doing. The janitor responded: 'Mr. President, I'm helping put a man on the moon.

Underpinning all leaders should be empathy and compassion. Kings Fund fellow Michael West has for some time been advocating the importance of [compassionate staff leadership](#). His research showed that high levels of staff engagement improve quality of care.

Key to his thinking is to start with compassion. We do this for our patients. We seek to empathise with their pain, their reality before offering our guidance or prescription. We need to do this for our staff too. Michael West explains “Compassionate leadership in practice means leaders listening with fascination to those they lead, arriving at a shared (rather than imposed) understanding of the challenges they face, empathising with and caring for them, and then taking action to help or support them.”

At the LMC our service seeks to support you and your practice. We hope to listen compassionately to your concerns and challenges, and we have a specific offer in the form of our [pastoral care service](#) – which is there for all GPs who need some help or support.

Experience has shown that doctors who run into problems with performance issues or partnership disputes can be struggling with their own health. Our specialist team can help you – be it advice about an unusual dilemma from clinical practice to a more personal matter about your own circumstances. We understand the importance of our role in this regard and have a suitably qualified and robust pastoral care team who operate on a completely confidential basis.