



2016 NASGP GP locum chambers survey - wellbeing, recruitment and retention

GP locum chambers were the brainchild of NASGP, first conceived in 2002 when a group of 30 NASGP sessional GP group leads from across the UK met at the RCGP head office in London one rainy Saturday, and came up with the model whereby GP locums could work as part of a team.

Locum chambers are small, independent groups of local self-employed locum GPs all working together through a shared management structure to support NHS GP practices to maintain, and in some cases improve, local GP services.

Broadly speaking, locum chambers:

- Provide educational programmes for local GPs (not just their members!), crowdsource local clinical information and spread best practice.
- Employ experienced managers or clerks to take care of all non-clinical aspects of working as a locum GP (e.g. booking, confirming, rates negotiations, SEAs, complaints, cancellations, certificates, usernames/passwords etc), enabling the GPs to focus on providing clinical services.
- Host regular member-only clinical governance meetings to discuss SEAs, complaints, best practice, underperforming practices, clinical cases, rates, strategy etc. And also regular social events for their members.
- Support all aspects of appraisal relating to their members.
- Create an environment that allows their GPs to have a flourishing portfolio career, including also working in salaried posts and as an intermediary position between GP partnerships.

Members from the following chambers were approached

- Greenfields Medical Chambers
- Pallant Medical Chambers
- Sterling Medical Chambers
- Yorkshire Medical Chambers
- Cumbria Medical Chambers

We had 77 replies, summarised here.

Being a chambers member means...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I'm still a GP	51	20	4	2	0
I've not burnt out	41	25	9	2	0
My local chambers plays a part in where I live	20	21	22	11	3
I've delayed retirement	9	7	33	13	15
I feel more fulfilled as a GP	25	27	18	7	0
I feel more fulfilled as a person	28	28	17	4	0

Comments

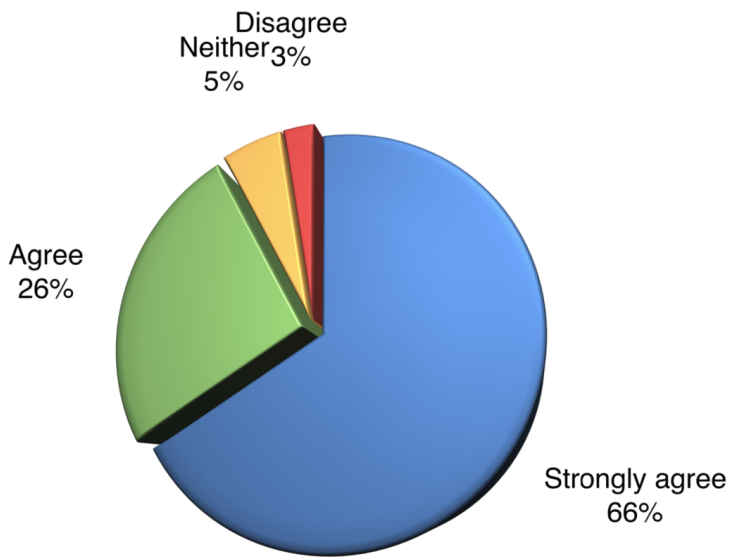
- I would have left if not for chambers
- I have never been happier working as a doctor as I am now.
- Given my particular circumstances, joining a chambers allowed me to continue to practise as a GP without being isolated. It is also useful to be able to support and be supported. If I had been able to remain a partner I would have done so. I was fortunately able to take my pension, but had I could not afford to remain a partner financially, physically (high BP as a result of stress) or mentally (burnout)
- I really had burnt out as a partner, and when I read about chambers I looked them up on Google, put the house on the market, and the rest is history!
- Never thought I would still be practising at 66!!
- I can still be a GP but in a more manageable way. Without it I would be considering an alternative career!
- I feel more supported
- Chambers helps support me and I feel part of a professional team - as well as taking the hassle out of being freelance. I can choose my workload, share problems with colleagues and continue my learning within a peer support group. Being part of a practice these days is higher and higher risk as systems, services and staff become more stressed.
- Being in a chambers gives you the support and access to education that you need to fulfill for appraisal and ongoing learning but allows you to have good work life balance that is virtually impossible as a partner/salaried gp.
- I left general Practice last year feeling burnt out, recharged my batteries before joining my local chambers. I believe that peer discussion and review on a regular basis is vital in

maintaining good practice, I am not sure I would have felt prepared to work as a locum without this support.

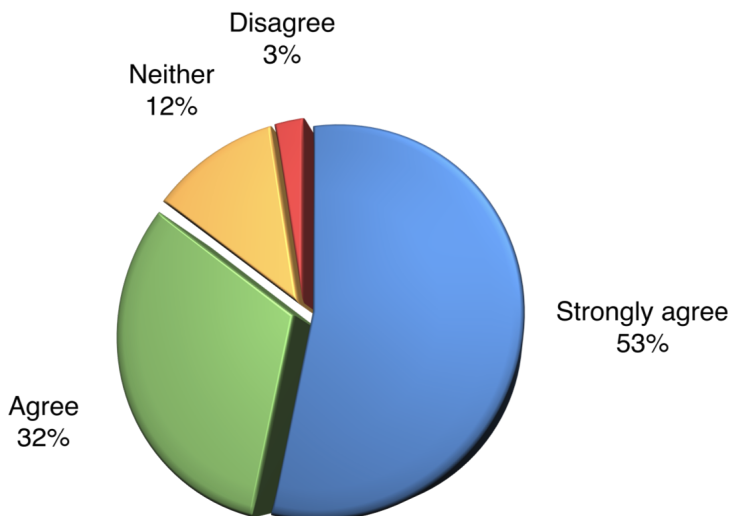
- Having previously been both a freelance locum and a salaried GP, and then joining a locum chamber 8 years ago when I had young children, I cannot imagine how I could work as a GP without being in a chamber. It has allowed me to stay sane, be with my family, whilst also making a meaningful contribution to patients, practices, my locum chambers colleagues and, I believe, my whole profession and GP workforce by being able to stay on. In short, it's been a win-win.
- I have not enjoyed work this much for many years. Was a partner for 17 years before joining chambers
- I do it to prevent burnout
- Manageable workload and having colleagues to discuss issues with and learn from is the main positives for me.
- It's let me see how other practices work and encounter a different type of patient. It's well paid and supports my holiday fund. I do the sessions I can and still work part time in my own practice.
- I moved from Scotland where I had been in practice for many years and felt constantly stressed and overwhelmed by paper work. Now I feel that I am a far better GP and person
- Having total flexibility in my workload and a superior level of work/life balance together with colleague support means I now enjoy my job again
- Having been salaried and a partner, I faced a stark choice. Working in an area with significant lack of GPs put huge pressure on local practices. My health suffered and I never saw my children. I decided to leave medicine. I had been qualified for 7 years. A friend persuaded me to join chambers and I did expecting to just get some space to think. Instead I got more peer support than I had had since VTS. I got a chance to share experiences with like minded committed colleagues. I got monthly CPD. I got a dedicated team to deal with my bookings, pension and paperwork which felt overwhelming otherwise. My view on the running of the chambers was actively sought. I could be the doctor I wanted to be and finally concentrate on my patients. Almost two years on I have a brilliant portfolio career. Chambers has supported me above and beyond. Good Chambers with genuine peer support, mentoring and education is the future of independent contractor status in general practice as far as I can see. Without it I would be just another GP lost to the workload pressures.
- I work as a locum to be able to afford to be a part time partner which helps me avoid burnout.
- Invaluable as a locum, educational meetings, support for significant events, all the admin managed, can share info about practices and feed back to the practices
- Being part of a chambers is good for me as I want my work commitment to be very very flexible, and I like the way they do the billing/admin.
- As a 1st year newly qualified GP most of the questions are not applicable to me.

Appendix - charts

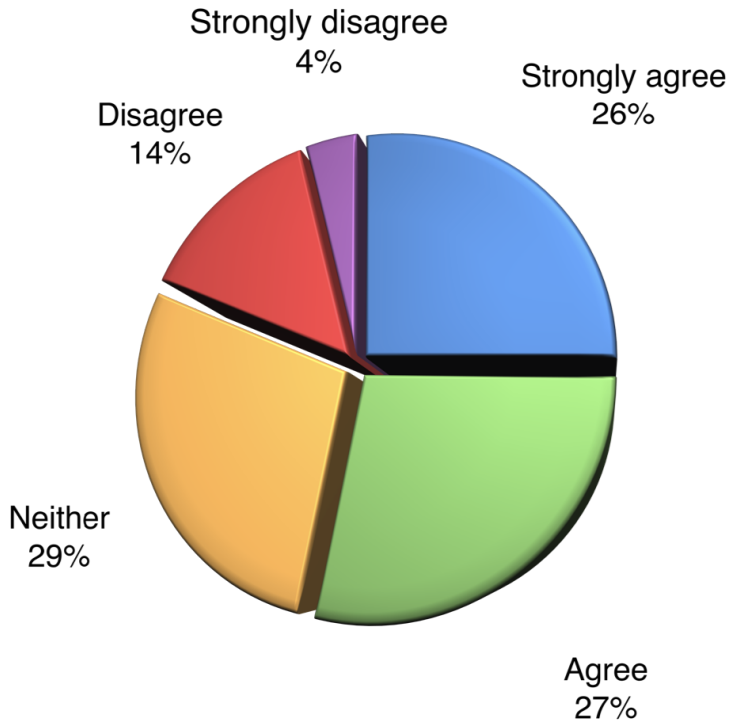
“Being a chambers member means I’m still a GP”



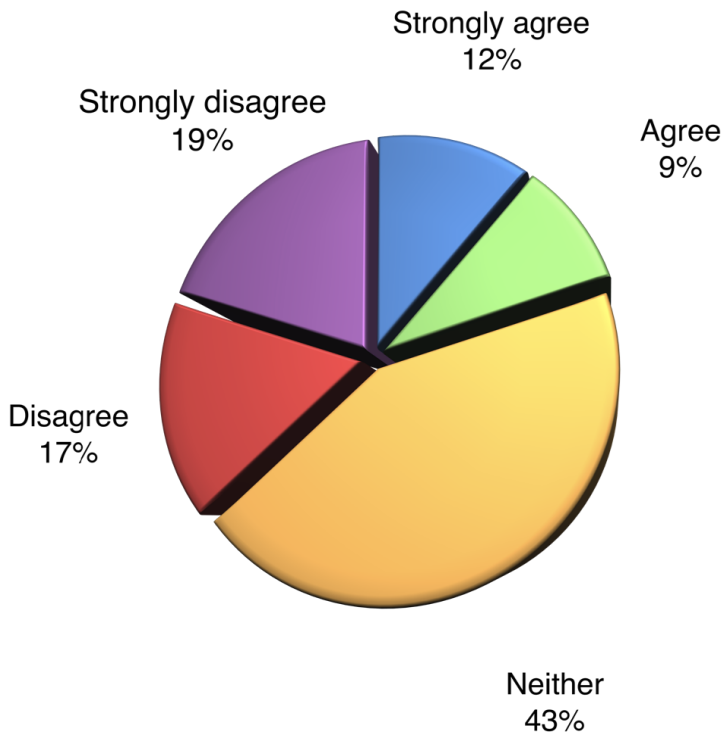
“Being a chambers member means I’ve not burnt out”



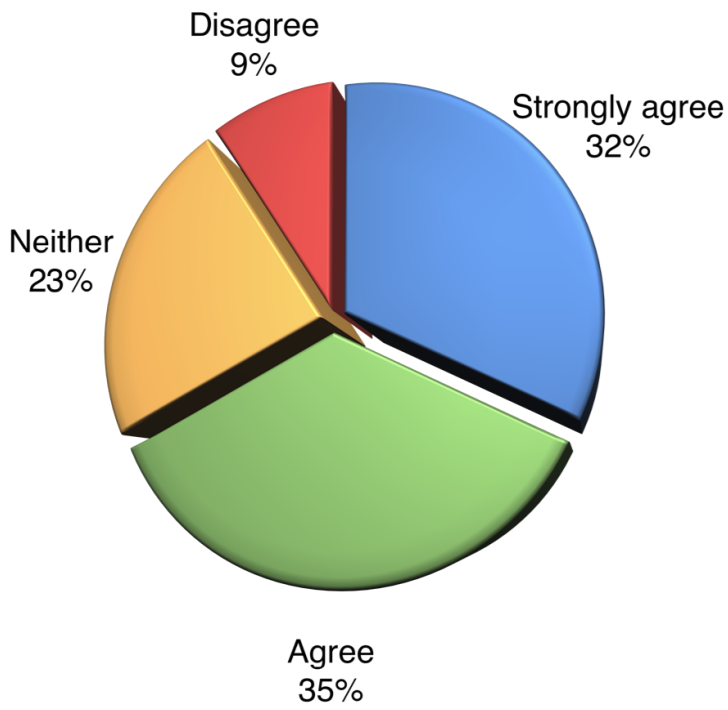
“My local chambers plays a part in where I live”



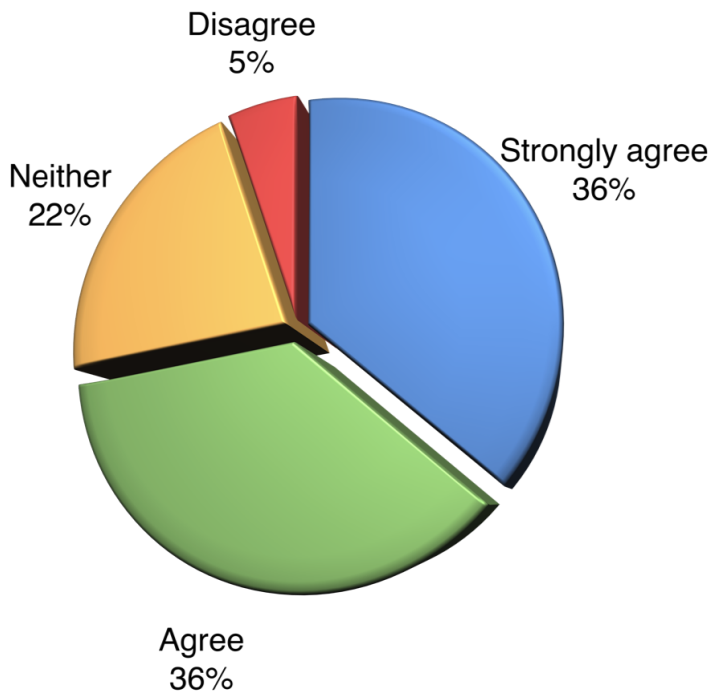
“I’ve delayed retirement”



“I feel more fulfilled as a GP”



“I feel more fulfilled as a person”



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