are facing the long-term sustainability of NHS general practice and increasingly unmanageable workloads in primary care makes the recruitment and retention of GPs challenging. But there is good news. Over half of all GPs are now working in more or less formal groupings providing services to populations greater than 30,000 people, according to a large observational study by Lindsay Forbes and colleagues, while a cross-sectional study of CCGs in England by Stephanie Tierney and colleagues has found that over 90% of the CCGs responding to their enquiries have some form of care navigation running in their area. It is also good to see how the integration of pharmacists into primary care teams can have positive benefits on health system indicators, including, according to Benedict Hayhoe and colleagues, reduced use of GP appointments and reduced emergency department attendance, probably accompanied by savings in overall health system and medication costs. The wider primary care team theme is taken up by other articles, including one by Paul Silverston in the Life & Times section, who comments on the increasing polarisation of views about advanced practitioners among GPs but concludes that: ‘With the promised army of additional GPs still somewhere over the horizon, a cavalry troop of well-trained Advanced Practitioners might just save the day’. They may be joined by a range of other primary care professionals, including extended role nurses, physician associates, physiotherapists and paramedics.

In a helpful editorial, Matthew Booker and Sarah Voss describe the potential roles for paramedics in primary care, which could include dealing with same-day and urgent problems, undertaking chronic disease clinics, completing home visits, and performing telephone triage, although how best to integrate these new professionals with their undoubtedly valuable skills, into current general practice remains uncertain. What is certain is that there is no time to lose in harnessing new skills in primary care since the funding and training implications of getting a new wave of doctors into general practice, as promised by the government, are formidable and will take time.