

British Medical Association (BMA) Call to Action

Many of you will be aware of the dispute between the British Medical Association (BMA) and the Government over the organisation and funding of general practice.

Whereas we do welcome the positive messages coming from the new Government, the situation remains critical, and we are not able to safely cope with the pressures brought about by years of under-funding of primary care and the deficiencies of our contract (that has been imposed upon us). In line with BMA guidance and along with many other GP practices we are taking a limited degree of action at this time.

What does the 'Call to Action' mean for the patients at Plas Ffynnon?

Put simply it means we are going to stop doing work that we are not contracted to do. This should free-up some time to concentrate on things that really matter like providing safe effective care for our patient population.

The things that we will push-back on are mainly administrative – not using computer software that slows down prescribing by suggesting cheaper alternatives; not filling in time-consuming proformas instead of typing a suitable referral letter; not accepting a second-rate 'advice letter' from the hospital when what we really want is for patients to be seen face to face by a specialist; not taking responsibility for complex treatments without proper supervision from the specialist teams; not wasting time 'rubber-stamping' referrals between specialists that they should do themselves.

Safe working guidelines strongly suggest that GPs should not be expected to deal with more than 25 patient contacts a day. This is something which we agree with and aspire to. We will continue to offer a choice of face-to-face and telephone appointments for routine matters within 2 weeks. We also have a duty doctor who deals with urgent matters which cannot reasonably wait but it is important to stress that we cannot offer an open-ended service and deal with everyone that wants to see us the same day. When we are full, it really means we are full. We will never turn away a true emergency when we are best placed to address it, but there will be times when patients will have to be directed to alternative providers (NHS 111, urgent care centres, walk-in centres, pharmacies, A&E).

We would like to reassure you that the impact on individual patients will be kept to a minimum and we will continue to monitor the situation and obviously respond to further advice from the BMA.

If you would like to see how the number of appointments we provide compares with other practices in the county, please follow this link.

<https://www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/sites/healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/files/Shropshire%20GP%20access%20Aug%202023.pdf>