

5th August 2024

Dear Patient,

You may have heard articles in the news this week about GP collective action. We want to reassure you and inform you what this action is about.

General Practice is collapsing across the country, nationally practices are closing, and GPs and Nurses are leaving the profession. We value our patients, and we know that most of you value us too, appreciating we can deal with most of your health problems, keep you out of hospital, and have your best interests at heart.

The aim of this industrial action is to provide ***Sustainability, Safety and Hope***.

Many people do not realise that General Practices are individual business, contracted and funded by the NHS to deliver you certain services. However, we are constantly being asked to increase our workload, and make up for shortfalls elsewhere in the NHS, whilst our funding and resources are reduced year on year. Staff across our practice are exhausted and stressed. Primary Care is rightly called the “Bedrock of the NHS”, dealing with 90% of patient contacts for less than 10% of the national budget.

In April we were offered a 1.9% uplift in our practice income in the context of increased costs of more than 11%., which lead to difficult conversations around what staff we could afford to employ. This contract was rejected by 99.2% of GPs in March 2024, but enforced anyway therefore the BMA (British Medical Association) moved to ask GPs about collective action to put pressure on the government to renegotiate the contract for the benefit of patients and the sustainability of practices for the future. The most recent vote has been overwhelmingly in support of action to reform the contract.

What does this mean for you?

This does not mean strike action or the practice closing. What we will be doing is working within the contract and stopping unfunded additional work. If we are working above our capacity, that might include asking you to call 111, or send you back to the hospital for prescriptions or sick notes this should have been actioned by them.

If you want to support us, please contact your local MP.

We thank you for your continued support as we try to deliver the best services we can for our patients.

The Partners of The Castle Practice