

20<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing in my capacity as Clinical Director of Newcastle East PCN on behalf of the seven practices that make up our PCN- namely Thornfield Medical Group, Heaton Road Surgery, St Anthony's Health Centre, Walker Medical Group, Biddlestone Health Group, Benfield Park Medical Group and Newcastle Medical Centre.

As you are aware we like many other practices have grave concerns regarding the exponential rise in shared care requests coming to General Practice. Added to this is the knock-on effect of our neighbours in Jesmond and Gosforth now declining to take on any new shared care requests which has caused a significant increase in requests and new registrations to our practices.

We are concerned about the inappropriate and unfunded work transfer that this represents and the reciprocal impact on our ability to perform our core contractual duties.

Reviewing the NHSE guidance Responsibility for prescribing between Primary & Secondary/Tertiary Care (January 2018) we would specifically wish to highlight the following:

*5.1 Resources. It should be recognised that resources available in practices are not uniform, and there may be impacts on both primary and secondary care. Commissioners should take account of the operational and resource implications of shared care, and of the fact that this should also extend to the requirements and sustainability of hospitals in situations where shared care is not accepted. If ongoing monitoring and prescribing are part of the shared care agreement, then the resources and capacity to ensure consistent delivery need to be determined before any shared care prescribing is implemented.*

*6.1 Monitoring. All appropriate monitoring requirements must be fulfilled. The person delivering that aspect of the shared care agreement should ensure that the resources to do this are in place in the clinical setting in which they are delivered.*

We are concerned that by continuing to carry out this un-resourced and non-contractual work our teams may struggle to meet their core contracted duties, which you will appreciate has to be our primary priority. We have therefore made the difficult decision to **suspend the taking on of any new shared care agreements from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2023**. Please understand that we have not come to this decision lightly.

We appreciate that the ICB are making efforts to review the funding issues around shared care and other LES/LIS issues, but we feel we cannot wait for this action to be realised. Should a new offer of funding for this work be presented by the ICB then we will of course review our position on the matter.

We will also soon be reviewing our position on historical shared care agreements that are already in place, and it is likely that we will unfortunately also have to serve notice on these agreements due to the excess burden of work this entails and the lack of appropriate resource to carry out the work.

Yours sincerely on behalf of the practices,



Dr Natalie Crowe

Clinical Director East Newcastle PCN