



COLLECTIVE ACTION JULY 2026

Dear Colleagues,

The BMA GP Committee for England (GPCE) has set out collective action for July 26 in response to sustained workload pressures and underfunding in General Practice.

In July 2024, Sheffield LMC formally wrote to the then Chair of IMOC to express significant concerns regarding the decision-making process affecting General Practice. While the views of Sheffield General Practice were being heard, they were not being meaningfully reflected in decisions. As a result, decisions about what General Practice can and cannot, or should and should not, deliver were being made without the support of the profession.

Following a sustained period of raising these concerns, Sheffield LMC took the decision to withdraw attendance from IMOC. This decision was not taken lightly. We have, however, continued to engage constructively by providing written feedback on relevant papers.

A key element of our position has been that no new shared care protocols should be accepted without appropriate resourcing and funding being in place. This reflects the reality that General Practice continues to absorb increasing volumes of unfunded and unresourced work.

Shared Care and Contractual Position in Sheffield

Practices in Sheffield should be mindful that delivery of existing shared care protocols and prescribing guidelines forms part of the Over and Above Local Commissioned Service (LCS) for those practices signed up to it.

As such:

- Practices are contractually required to deliver agreed shared care arrangements under this LCS where capacity, clinical expertise allows and appropriate governance is in place
- Requests for shared care prescribing must therefore be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis
- **A blanket refusal to accept all new shared care arrangements is not advised**
- Implementing a policy of automatic rejection could potentially represent a breach of contract
- No shared care protocols can be imposed by secondary care, there must be explicit **written** acceptance provided by the practice before a transfer of prescribing responsibilities can take place

Approach to New Shared Care Requests

While the above contractual position applies, practices retain professional and clinical autonomy in determining whether to accept shared care in individual cases.

Practices are therefore entitled to decline shared care requests where appropriate, including (but not limited to):

- Capacity or workload pressures
- Lack of appropriate clinical expertise or competence
- Concerns regarding patient safety
- Absence of clear protocols or insufficient specialist support
- Lack of formal, commissioned arrangements between primary and secondary care

BMA GPCE advises, practices should:

- Refuse to enter into “informal” shared care arrangements, defined as those where no formal contract or governance framework exists between general practice and specialist providers
- Ensure any shared care arrangement is safe, appropriately resourced, and clearly defined

Funding Pressures

We would also highlight the significant financial context within which this work is being asked of General Practice.

For 2026/27, Sheffield LCS contracts have seen an uplift of just 0.04%, representing a markedly sub-inflationary increase. This continues a pattern of several consecutive years of below-inflation uplifts, effectively resulting in a real-terms reduction in funding.

This further strengthens the LMC’s position that new work, including shared care responsibilities, cannot be sustainably delivered without appropriate investment and resourcing.

In summary, Sheffield LMC advises practices to:

- Continue to meet contractual obligations under the Over and Above LCS
- Avoid blanket refusals of all shared care prescribing
- Assess all shared care requests individually
- Decline appropriately where there are valid clinical, safety, or capacity concerns
- Refuse any informal shared care arrangements lacking formal agreements
- Escalate concerns regarding resourcing, safety, or system pressures to Dr David Crichton Chief Medical Officer South Yorkshire ICB david.crichton2@nhs.net and Anthony Fitzgerald Executive Place Director South Yorkshire ICB anthony.fitzgerald3@nhs.net