

# Primary Care Mental Health Issues

Sheffield  
LMC



## FAQS FOR SHEFFIELD GPs

October 2024

**Q: Mental health services locally are asking GP practices to refer the patient elsewhere without assessing the patient. What should I do?**

**A:** This seems to be getting more frequent in recent times. There is no reason why the mental health services cannot do it themselves. The rejection back to the practice and a suggested diversion elsewhere is a choice rather than a contractual process. The practice can inform the mental health services accordingly. If they decline to do so, other options include highlighting this to [NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board](#) (ICB) and to your [Member of Parliament](#).

**Q: The waiting times for assessments across the mental health service are very long. What options do I have?**

**A:** The LMC has raised concerns repeatedly with commissioners and the mental health providers locally. Whilst some of the pressures on the mental health service are national issues, we remain concerned that the services continue to be unresponsive to patient needs. Despite the transformation programme, there does not seem to be an improvement in the service provision locally. The LMC would advise that these concerns are initially flagged with the service concerned. If there is an unsatisfactory response it can be escalated to the [ICB](#) and to your [Member of Parliament](#).

**Q: The GP practice is being asked to prescribe and/or monitor medications which we do not have the expertise to do. What should we do?**

**A:** This is unsafe for the GP and outside General Medical Council (GMC) guidance on Good Medical Practice. Please return the request to the mental health provider stating that you will not be able to discharge the request as it is outside your scope/expertise, and advise them to action it themselves.

**Q: The Practice/Primary Care Network (PCN) is very unhappy with the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) Primary Care Mental Health (PCMH) worker provision, can we withdraw?**

**A:** Yes, you can. The LMC would support practices who chose to withdraw from the service if you have concerns about the quality of service. In line with duty of candour, practices/PCNs should formally express these concerns in writing to commissioners and the provider and serve notice to withdraw.

**Q: How do I express my concerns about the deficiencies in mental health provision in Sheffield?**

**A:** The LMC meets with the local MPs on a regular basis, and we flag these concerns with them directly. We would encourage practices to contact the [ICB](#) and your [Member of Parliament](#) to express your concerns. Mental health provision has been raised as a concern in the city for years, and the feedback received by the LMC indicates that the recent transformation programme has only resulted in more fragmented care, patients being passed from pillar to post, and more inappropriate work is being directed to General Practice.