

Dear colleague,

The interface between primary and secondary care in the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been very challenging for the whole NHS. Whilst we hope that the vaccination programme will bring an end to the rising cases, hospitalisations and deaths, it is also apparent that the repercussions of the last 16 months or so will be felt for some time to come with NHS services being affected now and going forwards.

We wish to acknowledge that there are pressures being felt in terms of increased demand across the whole system. We are all busy. This is true for GPs, dentists, pharmacists, and optometrists as much as A&E departments, acute wards, elective services, and outpatients. Mental health services have seen significant increases in cases and community services likewise are dealing with greater demand than we are used to.

These issues are facing us all and it is only by working together as a system that we will begin to overcome them.

In Cheshire and Merseyside we will endeavour to work at pace to develop sustainable solutions to help. A small group is being formed to look at these opportunities which might include exploring how we can restore diagnostic services (where that has stopped), or ensuring that all clinicians can access phlebotomy and blood results for their patients (including from remote outpatient appointments). We will work to ensure no part of the system is creating unnecessary work for another and hope to identify where there are gaps in capacity.

We would like to hear from you with regards to any thoughts or ideas that you feel would help. Please send us your ideas [Here](#).

We wish to thank those working in healthcare at the moment for all they are doing to serve their patients. We have been dealing with extreme demand and unsustainable workload for some time now and we know that this is continuing. However, it is important that we stand united together as healthcare professionals as we look to restore our services to better help our patients who need them, as well as look after those that do so.

Yours



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On behalf of and with full support from:

Cheshire and Merseyside NHS Trust Medical Directors

Cheshire and Merseyside Primary Care Providers Leadership Forum

To note - The Cheshire and Merseyside Primary Care Providers Leadership Forum is a new forum, the members of which are listed below for information:

Paul Bowen (GP Cheshire East)
Jonathan Gregson (GP Cheshire West)
Gary O'Hare (GP Halton)
Mike Merriman (GP Knowsley)
Ian Pawson (GP Liverpool)
Craig Gillespie (GP Sefton)
David Lawson (GP St Helens)
Raakhi Raj (GP Warrington)
Abhi Mantgani (GP Wirral)
Adam Irvine (Community Pharmacy)
Louise Gatley (Community Pharmacy)
Steve Wright (Dentistry)
Mark Woodger (Dentistry)
Fionnuala Stott (Optometry)
Bob Wilkes (Optometry)
Joe Chattin (LMC)
Ivan Camphor (LMC)
Mark Fraser (GP Federations)
Raj Kumar (Chair of Primary Care Forum)