

Dear Patients,

### **Important information about your GP surgery**

We hope this letter finds you well. We would like to let you know about changes to St Stephens Medical Partnership services. They are part of necessary Collective Action by General Practice in Worcestershire.

We did not make the decision to take part in Collective Action lightly, because we understand the impact this may have on you. This letter explains the reasons we are taking this action, and how it may affect the services offered to you in the coming weeks.

### **Why Collective Action is needed:**

We are concerned about three main areas:

1. **Patient Safety:** The numbers of patient consultations we complete in a day means that we are not practising as safely as we would like
2. **Workforce:** The huge workload is making it difficult to recruit and retain staff, and levels of burnout are high
3. **Funding:** We are not being funded sufficiently to recruit more staff for the demand we are facing

Collective Action draws attention to these problems so we can offer you the best possible care in the long run.

### **What this means for you:**

The practice will be open. But you may see changes to appointments and services:

- We will return work to other healthcare providers where they should have completed that part of care. This includes referrals, fit notes, starting prescriptions, investigations, and responding to patient queries.
- We will not take over prescribing medications that were started by specialists, unless there is funding for this work.
- We will not provide monitoring checks for certain conditions, where this should be done by your hospital/specialist team.
- We will work towards clinicians having a safe workload. This means they will not see more patients than they can cope with. There will probably be longer waits for routine appointments. If you need urgent care, you may be directed to an urgent treatment centre or a pharmacy, depending on what is wrong.

We are sorry for the inconvenience this may cause and ask for your understanding and patience. We are taking every possible step to minimise disruption to your care.

**How you can help:**

Many minor illnesses can be managed by community pharmacy. This short [video](#) will tell you about the Pharmacy First scheme.

Consider phoning NHS 111 to find the best place to get help with your symptoms.

Help yourself stay well by getting a flu and Covid vaccination (if eligible).

Please be kind to our staff. They want to help you get the care you need and will do everything they can to do that.

**Looking ahead:**

We want your practice to remain open and provide the high level of care you deserve. We hope this action will bring meaningful changes, which benefit our patients and the healthcare system.

Thank you for your support, patience, and understanding during this challenging time.