

General Practitioners

22 March 2018

Dear Colleagues

### **Improving the out of hours primary care service provision in Wales**

The fragility of the OOH Service across Wales has been a consistent feature over the last few months. We know from the winter evaluation in 2016-17 that GPs felt they could be more involved in winter planning, and would welcome the opportunity to make services more sustainable. We do appreciate how committed in hours primary care is already but also know that you all recognise how fundamental a stable, safe and effective out of hours service is for your patients.

Recent discussions at a policy level and with our GP stakeholders have resulted in a range of proposals that might support stretched OOH services. While some of these might have been tried in the past, we would ask you to consider whether there are any OOH initiatives that you could support, and if so, which you could discuss with your local health board colleagues with a view to trialling/re-visiting in the near future. For example:

1. Remote triage by GPs e.g. from home/ your practice base for both your own patients and/or those identified by OOH services (with access to face to face OOH appointments for those that require this);
2. Ensuring your wider practice team are aware of the opportunities for working OOHs, especially nurse practitioners, and practice based pharmacists;
3. Whether you as a practice want to consider the 'Extended Hours Enhanced Service Contract' to support the delivery of OOH care.

GPC Wales are supporting this work and it would be helpful to hear from those of you that feel able to get involved and explore the variety of opportunities in OOH services that are now being offered. Please get in touch with your local Associate Medical Directors at the LHB or if you prefer via your LMC representative.



Thank you for your continued efforts in what has been a challenging winter, and we hope that together we can find a way to improve the services both for patients and those that work in them. Every little helps!

We understand as practices you are feeling significant pressures and we would like to thank you and your teams for their hard work and commitment.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Atherton', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**DR FRANK ATHERTON**  
Chief Medical Officer for Wales

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlotte Jones', with a large loop at the end of the 's'.

**DR CHARLOTTE JONES**  
Chair, GPC Wales