



**The Harefield**  
Practice



Harefield Health Centre Rickmansworth Road, Harefield, Middlesex, UB9 6JY

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5<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Dear Harefield Practice Patients,

We are aware that many of you are very worried about the media reports regarding the British Medical Association's GP ballot and news that GPs plan to take Collective Industrial Action:

<https://news.sky.com/story/gps-vote-to-take-collective-action-for-first-time-in-60-years-13188629>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c72vp774rp3o>

98.3% of those who voted have indicated that they are willing to take this action, which would appear to be a decisive and damning condemnation of the present situation in General Practice throughout the UK.

Full details of the BMA's planned action can be found here:

<https://www.bma.org.uk/our-campaigns/gp-campaigns/contracts/gp-contract-202425-changes>

At The Harefield Practice, as many of you will be acutely aware, we have already been on a journey together.

We are working tirelessly as we continue to improve the services that we offer you, and thank you for your patience while we make the changes that are needed.

While we share the intense frustration with our GP colleagues around the country over the deeply inadequate funding and unreasonable pressures placed on our team and our patients over many years, we have at this moment elected NOT to take ANY action which may in ANY WAY impact the care that we offer to our patients.

If we were prepared to "work to rule" and not go the extra mile as a matter of routine, this practice would have closed already.

While we understand and support our GP colleagues who find they need to take a different path, our specific situation in Harefield right now means that we will not be making any negative changes to our services.

As our patients, you already know that when you come to the surgery you may have to wait while we help the patients in front of you, which can be frustrating. Please help us help you. While, as a matter of safety, we do not make you end your appointment after discussing just one medical problem, we kindly ask that you respect your fellow patients and don't make plans to deliberately use the next person's appointment as well as your own. We understand that sometimes, you just need a little more time. If you do have a list of problems to discuss, kindly inform reception and they will find you a longer than usual appointment, to lessen the impact on fellow patients.

Having to wait is frustrating for everyone, which is why we are pleased to announce that over the next few weeks, two new excellent doctors are joining our team.

We also know that when you call us, you wish we were given more resources to help you faster. We have actively been helping patients with more urgent problems faster than those with less serious conditions for some time now, which is why we always ask you what is wrong when you call; and we are aware that for some, the delay in getting an appointment with us and even the delay to get through on the phone has been frustrating.

We are continuously finding ways to improve. Our telephone waiting times are now, on average, less than 3 minutes. If it is busy, and your problem could wait, please consider calling back later to enable patients with urgent problems to get through to us faster.

Our upgraded telephone system is now able to listen to you and recognise your voice, so for many issues (such as requesting medication) you don't have to wait to speak to anyone at all.

We are negotiating with our local NHS Commissioners to protect and maximise our funding so that we can continue to provide you with the very highest level and range of services, while at the same time we have been asked to share our ideas, innovations and experience with the wider NHS so that others can benefit from the lessons we have learned rebuilding The Harefield Practice.

In summary, please do not worry. It is business as usual in Harefield, and as usual, if you think of anything that we could be doing better, just let us know.

With Kind regards,

The Harefield Practice Partners

Dr Rajivi Sanjeevi  
Dr Anthony Gallagher  
Mr Scott Ridley

