

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

21 JANUARY 2022

QUESTION No. 1 in accordance with Standing Order No 36

Francis Brown to ask the Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board:

#### GP Appointments

Anecdotal evidence indicates that some patients are still finding great difficulty in obtaining GP appointments.

Patients on certain continuing medications are periodically asked to attend a medication review appointment. However, some are finding that they either cannot get through by phone to their surgery at all or have to wait several weeks for such an appointment, during which time their medication is exhausted.

The system of medication reviews is intended to reduce risk to patients - however if it entails long delays or complete abandonment of the medication, the risk to the patient may well be increased.

How can this paradoxical situation be sensibly resolved?

**REPLY** by Andy Ciecierski (Vice-Chair) on behalf of the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board (Councillor Hoskin):

No medication should stop just because a medication review has been missed at the expected date. The annual review is guidance of good practice, not a stop/go for medication being issued.

Frequently pharmacies will advise patients their medication review is due and cause patients a lot of stress that it has to be done otherwise the medication cannot be issued. That is poor information. The patients then get stressed they cannot get an appointment in time. Medication is not stopped because the medication review date has passed.

Some long-term medications need an annual review for blood tests to ensure safe ongoing prescribing. Some blood testing may have slipped past a year during the Covid pandemic due to reduced capacity of blood taking appointments. Recently, in August and September 2021, they were delayed due to blood bottle shortages. GP's have still prioritised bloods in those patients that need them, especially Diabetic patients. All General Practice is working to catch up with these blood tests.

Many medication reviews can be done online via a request on the Practice website, via a text message consultation, or over the phone. They can be done by a Clinical Pharmacist, not just a GP.