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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

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Sarah Atherton MP
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Ein cyf / Our ref: MP/LR/EA21/761 & COM50253

Eich cyf / Your ref: SA6507



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Dyddiad / Date: 27th September 2021

Dear Sarah

Temporary closure of Borrass Park Surgery and management of Hillcrest Medical Centre

Thank you for your letter of 6th August in relation to Borrass Park Surgery and Hillcrest Medical Centre. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you.

As you will appreciate, the redevelopment works to Borrass Park School and the disruption on Borrass surgery was outside of the Health Board's direct control. Read Construction informed us that the works needed to take place during August, which meant a temporary closure of the branch surgery site for the safety of patients and staff. We were however, given assurances that this work would be completed within three weeks, and Borrass Surgery reopened on 23rd August 2021. Whilst the Borrass branch surgery was closed, patients continued to be able to access health services from the main surgery site at Hillcrest.

The Health Board is now working to stabilise Hillcrest, Forge Road and Borrass surgeries, address historic issues and transform the way we deliver primary care. The following provides a small snapshot of improvements that we are currently progressing, or things that we have already been able to put in place:

- We have reviewed the appointment and triaging systems, and are making changes to increase capacity, ensuring these changes are clinically safe. We have now increased access at the practice by 55 telephone contacts and 12 face-to-face appointments per day.
- We have engaged an additional Nurse Prescriber, who will work with an experienced Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) from Pen Y Maes Surgery (also a managed practice), to support with strengthening the triage processes within Hillcrest. We anticipate that this additional resource will increase the initial telephone appointments by up to an additional 80 per day.
- A new telephone system is currently being considered. The solution will allow for better control, access, and the option to offer where appropriate cross cover to manage the calls into other managed practices if necessary. I hope to be in a position to confirm a timescale for this over the coming weeks. In the interim, to address the phone line difficulties being experienced by some

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Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is the operational name of Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board.

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patients, an option has been added to the automated response for Forge Road patients to transfer their calls through to the Forge Road branch surgery.

- To further improve access at Forge Road, we have recently switched to a 'book on the day' system in an effort to reduce the length of time patients have to wait to see a doctor and other healthcare professionals. There is also now a GP, practice nurse and a health care assistant on site each day at Forge Road which means patients do not have to travel to Hillcrest to be seen.
- Hillcrest is also utilising the Urgent Primary Care Centre (UPCC) located at Wrexham Maelor Hospital by referring patients who meet the inclusion criteria. Referred patients then receive same day contact from a clinician, and a face-to-face appointment where appropriate. The UPCC was opened in November 2020. This is a Welsh Government 'pathfinder' scheme, which is part of an all Wales programme to develop the future model for urgent primary care. The UPCC provides the GP practices in Wrexham and Flintshire with increased capacity, supporting patients with 'on the day' urgent presentations. It also redirects appropriate patients away from the ED Department at the hospital.

In terms of clinical cover, there are currently 4 regular GPs (1 Salaried GP and 3 Locum) at Hillcrest providing 12 clinical sessions per week, and 2 regular Locum GPs at Forge Road providing 5 clinical sessions per week. The GPs are supported by 2 Advanced Nurse Practitioners, providing 10 clinical sessions per week. We are also currently advertising for an additional 3 ANPs and 4 Practice Nurses to support the existing teams.

As you will see, the Health Board is committed to ensuring appropriate clinical staffing levels at our managed practices and we continue our work to attract GPs to North Wales, which we hope will result in permanent appointments for the practice in the near future. This recruitment drive is being supported by our Primary and Community Care Academy, and includes initiatives such as the opportunity to work and further train in areas of special interest.

The Health Board fully understands the importance of primary care services in our communities and for our patients, and the anxiety that the recent instability in the service provision at has caused. However, please be assured that one of our key priorities is to continually seek to improve primary care services across north Wales and continue to work closely with national Strategic Programme for primary care.

I hope that my response above addresses your concerns, and I look forward to being able to update you on further improvements being made in the future. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me again if you require any additional information.

Yours sincerely

Mark Polin, OBE, QPM
Cadeirydd / Chairman