

Complaints:

We operate a practice complaints procedure also called "local resolution" which meets national criteria as part of a National Health Service system for dealing with complaints.



HOW TO COMPLAIN:

We hope that most problems can be sorted out easily and quickly, often at the time they arise and with the person concerned. If not, and you wish to make a complaint, we would like you to let us know as soon as possible.

Complaints should be addressed to the Practice Manager, or any of the Doctors. Alternatively you may ask for an appointment with the Practice Manager in order to discuss your concerns.

It would be a great help if you are as specific as possible about your complaint.

WHAT WE SHALL DO:

We shall acknowledge your complaint within three working days and aim to have responded as swiftly as possible to your complaint within an agreed timescale from the date you raised it with us. We shall then be in a position to offer you an explanation, an apology if appropriate or a meeting with the people involved. Please be assured that future care will not be impacted by making a complaint.

When we investigate your complaint, our aim will be to make it possible for you to discuss the problem with those concerned if you would like this, and take appropriate action wherever possible.

COMPLAINING ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE:

Please note that we keep strictly to the rules of medical confidentiality. If you are complaining on behalf of someone else, we must have their written permission to do so. A letter of consent signed by the person concerned will be needed, unless they are not able (because of illness) to provide this.

We have a dedicated complaints leaflet which will be provided to patients on request. This contains more detailed information including where you can go if you feel that your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction. Alternatively, you can download a copy from our website.

Great Bentley Surgery



Surgery Information Booklet

GREAT BENTLEY SURGERY - OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The practice endeavours to promote good health and provide high quality, evidence-based care in a non-discriminatory fashion to all members of the practice population.

www.greatbentleysurgery.nhs.uk

Introduction:

If you are a new patient here at Great Bentley Surgery, then welcome! If not, then I hope you find that we are providing a good service for you and your family.



The NHS is struggling to cope with an ever increasing demand these days. Unfortunately we are not immune from these effects, so there will often be times when we cannot provide the service you want exactly when it's convenient to you. We do try our best, but with limited resources and growing demand, we do sometimes struggle and patients have to be flexible and work with us.

We are a medium sized rural practice with over 8,600 patients to look after across a wide area of the Essex countryside. We are very fortunate to have a full complement of doctors and nurses, unlike some practices and a great admin team who all work extremely hard to provide the best service we can. If you ever have any problems, then please do speak to us. We'll always do our best to resolve any issues as quickly as possible.

Practice Contact Information:

Main telephone number..... 01206 250691

Prescription helpline 01206 257557

Main email..... postmaster.gp-F81021@nhs.net

Prescription email..... holliesprescriptions@nhs.net

**Postal Address..... The Hollies, The Green
Great Bentley, Colchester, CO7 8PJ**

Opening Hours..... 8.00am to 6.30pm - Mon to Fri

Website..... www.greatbentleysurgery.nhs.uk

Facebook..... www.facebook.com/greatbentleysurgery

Twitter..... @GtBentleyDocs

Things you may not know about your surgery:



Did you know that Great Bentley Surgery is a small business? The GP partners own the building and are paid a set amount of money by the Government to provide an unlimited service to all of our 8,600 patients regardless of their needs. This has to pay for doctors, nurses and staff wages, heating and lighting, building maintenance and everything else needed for us to operate. The money we receive has fallen heavily in real terms, but the demands of patients and our costs are increasing all the time. We have to be very careful to provide only what is necessary so that everyone gets the care they need. Unfortunately this is the situation we are in these days. Please therefore help us to help you, by using our services wisely.

GPs are specialists! Most people think that the consultants who work in hospitals are more qualified than GPs. This is most definitely not the case! GPs have chosen to specialise in family medicine and their training and experience is at the same high level as hospital consultants. GPs have all worked in hospitals in many disciplines before choosing to specialise in general practice. In many ways GPs have much more knowledge and experience than hospital consultants who specialise in just one area of medicine.

Patient Participation Group (PPG)—We have a very committed and active patient participation group who meet on the third Thursday of every month (except August and December) at 6.30pm at the Great Bentley Village Hall. The group is always looking for new members, although you would not be expected to attend every meeting. There is also a “Virtual PPG” for patients who are too busy to attend meetings, where you can influence the meeting agenda, get feedback and receive copies of the minutes. If you would like more information, please send an email to melvyncox141@yahoo.co.uk. There is also a dedicated page about the PPG on our website.

Training and Research Practice— We are an accredited training practice which means we have trainee GPs (registrars) working here under supervision. We also host medical students and are involved in various research projects to advance help progress medical science and treatments.



Research &
Surveillance
Centre
Practice

Zero Tolerance Policy

Great Bentley Surgery operates a zero tolerance policy to any abuse or bad behaviour towards its staff, doctors or other patients. This could be physical, verbal or online abuse.



GPs and staff have a right to care for others without fear of being attacked, abused or treated badly in any way. To successfully provide our services a mutual respect between staff and patients has to be in place. All our staff aim to be polite, helpful, and sensitive to all patients' individual needs and circumstances. We would respectfully remind patients that very often staff could be confronted with a multitude of varying and sometimes difficult tasks and situations, all at the same time.

However, aggressive behaviour, be it physical, verbal or online, will not be tolerated and may result in you being removed from the practice list and, in extreme cases, the Police being contacted.

In order for the practice to maintain good relations with our patients we would like to ask all our patients to read and take note of the occasional types of behaviour we see that are unacceptable:

- Using bad language, shouting or raising of voices at practice staff.
- Any physical violence towards any member of our team or other patients.
- Verbal abuse towards staff or patients in any form including shouting.
- Racist, xenophobic, sexist, homophobic or other intolerant Language, discrimination or sexual harassment will never be tolerated.
- Persistent or unrealistic demands that cause stress to staff will not be accepted. Requests will be met wherever possible and explanations given when they cannot be met.
- Being perceived to bully or manipulate a staff member to obtain something.
- Causing damage to, stealing or not returning practice equipment from the practice's premises, staff or patients.
- Obtaining drugs and/or medical services fraudulently.



Social Media - is used to cascade information to patients. We cannot fully respond to any negative comments or complaints due to patient confidentiality, therefore any negative comments or complaints can be deleted without notice. We can be contacted directly to investigate any issues.



Self care helps us to help everyone better:

Over the years we've found that patients have become much less self sufficient which is fuelling a huge increase in demand for GP services. Many minor ailments can be treated at home and we would like to urge our patients to consider self care first where appropriate, in order to leave more appointments for patients who need them. **Please find below a list of ailments you can safely manage yourself:**

Back pain	Cold sores	Common cold
Conjunctivitis	Constipation	Diarrhoea
Period pain	Earache	Haemorrhoids
Hayfever	Head lice	Headache
Influenza	Insect bites	Migraine
Nasal congestion	Nappy rash	Sore throat
Sinusitis	Sprains & Strains	Thrush

There are other conditions that can be managed at home if they are not related to any other underlying conditions, for example: cough that doesn't last for more than three weeks, heartburn & indigestion unless symptoms persist.

Still not sure what to do?

There is plenty of useful information on the internet, for example:

www.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.selfcareforum.org

There is an excellent leaflet for parents called "When Should I Worry" giving guidance on coughs, colds, earache and sore throats which can be downloaded at www.whenshouldiworry.com

Don't forget you can also get great advice from your local pharmacy!



Booking Appointments

We only have a fixed number of appointments to offer and have to ensure that our patients get the appointments they need rather than want. Our receptionists have been carefully trained by the doctors



here to ask questions about what you need. Please help them to help you by answering their questions as more often than not, they will be able to find you the soonest appointment. You can politely decline however.

Non Urgent GP Appointments:

Most non-urgent matters can wait until the next available non-urgent appointment which can weeks ahead, **but** if you feel it cannot wait until the first available non-urgent appointment then you can ask to be put onto the triage list to speak to the on call doctor that day. He/she will decide upon the most appropriate appointment for your issue. The on call doctor's decision is final however and is based on medical need, not convenience.

Urgent GP Appointments:

Please be aware that we do not offer a walk in service. Urgent on the day requests must be made by phone. If you walk in, you will be asked to return home and await a call from the on call doctor.

If you feel that your issue is urgent enough to need to be seen on the same day, you can again ask to go onto the daily triage list and the on call doctor will call you back, usually within an hour. If the doctor agrees it is urgent, you will usually get an appointment a few hours later. If it can wait an appropriate appointment will be found for you on another day, but within a timescale suitable for your medical need.

Home Visit Requests:

If you're unable to get to the surgery because you are housebound, you can call to arrange a home visit. But remember, such visits are for medical, not social or personal reasons. Lack of transport is **not** an acceptable reason for a visit request and children can always be brought to the surgery. Home visit requests **must** be made before 12.00 midday but preferably as early as possible. Requests after midday are unlikely to be possible due to existing doctors' clinics.

IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO BE SEEN IN A FULLY EQUIPED GP SURGERY WITH PROPER LIGHTING, EXAMINATION EQUIPMENT AND ACCESS TO TESTS.

Online Services

The amount of things you can do online is increasing all the time and here at Great Bentley Surgery we are no different. By signing up to our online patient services you can make your life much easier at the same time as helping us to be more efficient. You can use this via a computer or if you have a smartphone or tablet you can use the Patient Access App for iPhones or Android devices. Here are some of the things you can do online:



Booking GP Appointments

Using Patient access you can book non-urgent GP appointments anytime, anywhere. Of course this service will only be able to offer you the appointments that are available and if you cannot find one that is suitable, you can always call our helpful receptionists who will try their best to find a suitable one for you.

Ordering Repeat Medication

All of your repeat medications will already be listed and all you have to do is click on the items you want. It really couldn't be simpler. The best thing is that your request arrives into our computer system immediately and usually dealt with quicker as a result. You can log in the next day or so to check if it has been issued. You can also see a list of all your past medication requests and when they were issued which can be very useful.

Access to Medical Records

If requested, patients can also have limited access to their medical record which at the moment only includes coded information. However in the future the aim is that more of your record will be accessible including test results. Patients do not automatically get access to this and must apply separately. Access is subject to the authority of a GP.

Using the smartphone app, you can access all of these services 24/7 wherever you are in the world. It really will revolutionise the way you use the surgery's services, save time and ensure that errors and delays are eliminated.

Sign up here: <https://patient.emisaccess.co.uk>

Prescriptions

We issue well over 30,000 prescription items each month, so you can imagine what an enormous task this is. As such, we require 3 full working days notice to issue repeat prescriptions, but your chosen pharmacy may need an additional 2 days to prepare your medications. Most patients will know exactly when their medications will run out, so please plan for it and give us the minimum 3 days notice. **PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT TAKE PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS ON THE TELEPHONE AS THIS LEADS TO ERRORS.**



Repeat prescriptions can be ordered in a number of different ways:

- By dropping off your request to the surgery in the form of a letter or note
- By dropping off your white 'tick box' form which is attached to all of your prescriptions. There is a dedicated secure repeat prescription box in the foyer by the public entrance.
- By email to holliesprescriptions@nhs.net but must detail your name and date of birth, along with a list of the medications you require. You should receive an email straight back to confirm it has been received.
- You can send a fax using our dedicated number: 01206 252496.
- You can place your order online using the website Patient Access or the Patient Access smartphone or tablet app explained in the opposite page.

Medication Reviews - We are required to have a review appointment every 6 months with most patients on repeats. Although the date appears on every prescription, you only need to take action when we or your pharmacy ask you to. We will always allow 1-2 months' leeway as booking these appointments can be difficult. We will not leave you without your medication.

Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)

We strongly encourage all of our patients to use this service. Just tell us which pharmacy you would like to use for all your prescriptions (not just repeats) and your record will be noted. All prescriptions will then be sent electronically to your pharmacy within a few minutes of the doctor signing it, for them to download. This is much quicker, safer and reliable. Over 75% of our patients are using this service and it really does make a huge difference to how quickly you get your prescriptions, especially when used in conjunction with the Patient Access website or smartphone app.



Getting the most from your appointment:

Unless otherwise specified every appointment lasts for **10 minutes only** which is enough time to discuss one medical problem only.

If you have more than one problem to discuss, please ensure that you ask for a double appointment in order to have enough time.

Many medical issues can be dealt with by our nursing staff a lot quicker, so please tell our receptionists what you need your appointment for. This also helps to ensure that you see the right person who can also prepare better if the reason for the appointment is known. If your reason is highly personal, tell the receptionist and they will not probe further.

- Clearly formulate in your own mind what you are worried about and highlight any particular concerns.
- Consider preparing short notes to help you remember what you want to say including a description of your symptoms and exactly how long they have been experienced (in days, weeks or months, not "a while"!)
- Consider what is achievable in your one appointment. Be realistic.
- Get to the point. You do not have to justify being there and don't save important issues to the end when you've run out of time.
- **Do not use your mobile phone while in an appointment!**
- Wear easily removed clothing. If you need to be examined, taking off many layers of clothing and redressing uses up too much of your appointment time and can cause clinicians to run late.
- At the end of your appointment, make sure you fully understand any advice you've been given or steps you must take.
- Don't be put off by a doctor or nurse running late. This is often due to them having to give bad news to a previous patient or dealing with an emergency before you arrived. We all might need a bit of extra time unexpectedly one



Missed appointments:

Unfortunately we see dozens of appointments wasted by patients not turning up each month. If we added up all the appointments that are wasted, we would be able to afford to have an extra GP session!

GP APPOINTMENT?
CAN'T MAKE IT?
DON'T NEED IT?

CANCEL IT!

What happens when patients miss appointments?

We realise that everyone can make mistakes and so we won't take any action if a single appointment is missed in error. However, we have a minority of patients who miss appointments regularly and this impacts significantly on other patients. We have a policy in place to take action in these circumstances which has been fully approved by our Patient Participation Group.

If a patient misses an urgent appointment booked the same day, or if a patient misses TWO non-urgent appointments in a 12 month period:

In these instances we send a letter to the patient explaining the problem we have with appointments being missed and the impact that this has on the service we provide to the rest of our 8,600 patients. We list the appointment (s) that were missed and offer the opportunity to discuss if the patient feels this is incorrect. The letter goes on to insist that in the future, they call to let us know if they cannot attend a booked appointment. The letter also tells the patient that they can leave a message on a dedicated answerphone anytime of the day (01206) 255071 or if they've received a reminder text, simply reply with the word "cancel". Missed urgent appointments that are on average booked only two hours before the time of the appointment, are particularly frustrating.

If a patient goes on to miss a further appointment within 6 months of the first letter being sent:

They will receive a letter expressing disappointment and notifying them that their continued registration at the practice will be reviewed by the GP partners in the next meeting. They are invited to write or telephone to explain any mitigating circumstances which will be considered.

In cases where no improvement is seen and there are no mitigating circumstances, the practice will remove the patient.

Out of hours and other services in the area:

There are many other ways to get help in the area.

NHS 111—Open 24/7 Just dial 111

When the practice is closed (before 8.00am or after 6.30pm) you can call NHS 111 **anytime** day or night for help and advice. The call is free from any phone including mobiles and you simply just dial 111. This provides access to medically trained staff who will be able to provide advice on self care, advice on where you should go to get face to face help or can arrange an urgent appointment at a 24 hour GP service or even a home visit.



North Colchester Healthcare Centre—Walk in 7am to 10pm

care UK  **Turner Road, Colchester, CO4 5JR—**
Phone: 01206 314015

Anyone can use this walk-in service: you do not need to be a registered patient here. The walk-in service offers treatment, information and advice for a range of minor illnesses and injuries. It is open 7am-10pm every day, including weekends and bank holidays.

Clacton Minor Injuries Unit - 9am - 9pm 7 days a week



Clacton Hospital, Tower Road,
Clacton on sea, CO15 1LH

The Minor Injuries Unit is staffed by nurses with specialist skills and experience, who are able to order and interpret X-rays and prescribe treatments. The Minor Injuries Unit is a quicker, more local alternative to Accident and Emergency for patients with less serious or minor injuries. Injuries which **can** be treated at the MIU include: wounds, sprains, strains, minor dislocations, suspected fractures, removal of foreign bodies, burns and scalds, bites and stings and minor head injuries.