

Surgery News

With Dr Letton and Dr Hilton leaving and no new Registrar in place just yet, we have brought in some locum GPs to help us out over the summer. Hopefully, this will mean that we keep up with demand for appointments and that nobody has to wait too long to be seen. We have four who will be doing fairly regular sessions for us between now and the middle of September.

We have Dr Jonathan Gatland, who retired not long ago from a surgery in Colchester and is helping us out a couple of days a week. Dr Katy Daniel, who has done work here before, is more often found at the Walk-in Centre on Turner Road, Colchester. Dr Oliver Frey and Dr Sabina Klapper have both been holding the fort at Great Oakley whilst the usual GP there has been absent due to injury for some weeks. They are all very experienced doctors who prefer at the moment not to be tied down to one surgery which is very lucky for us. I know that they will look after you brilliantly.

It's time I gave you all early warning that our clinical computer system is booked in for a major upgrade on 6th November. We are staying with the same supplier – a Leeds based company called EGTON, which has looked after your medical records for us ever since 1991. The new version of their system, EMIS Web, is supposed to be **the** system for the 21st century. We just hope that it is as reliable and as user friendly as the old system.

Fortunately, we are not going to be the first local surgery to move to EMIS Web, and we intend making full use of other people's experiences, taking all the advice on offer about preparation before the day, as well as tips on how to avoid the inevitable pitfalls when we first migrate. (See! I'm even picking up the technical terms.) I am sure that Richard Miller, my assistant, and Steve Osborne whom I mentioned a couple of months back, will do a great job of co-ordinating our efforts and managing us through the change. All I can ask of you is that when it happens you are patient with us, as there is bound to be a spell when we are slow and clumsy while we get used to doing things in a new way.

One unwanted side-effect of the development of EMIS Web has been that EGTON has not put a lot of effort into improving and maintaining its non-core systems such as EMIS Access, which I know a lot of you use. I'm afraid there have been problems with this over the last few weeks, culminating with the booking appointments bit being completely out of action for several days in July. That problem has now been sorted. Unfortunately though, we have had to remove the facility which allowed you to send us messages as it just wouldn't work properly. If ever EMIS Access is misbehaving don't forget that you can always e-mail us on postmaster.gp-f81021@nhs.net for admin, or holliesprescriptions@nhs.net for prescriptions.

As so often happens, I am now going to ask for your assistance with a couple of issues in making sure that things run as smoothly as possible. Thank you in advance for your help.

Firstly, if even you drop anything in to us, particularly a sample of some sort, a home blood pressure reading or a hospital letter, please can you make sure that the patient's name is on it. We have had a couple of instances recently – one a set of blood pressure readings and the other a sample which one of the doctors had obviously asked for – where we never were able to identify to whom they belonged. In neither case does it seem to have resulted in major problems, but it might have done.

The second request requires me to back-pedal a bit on Repeat Dispensing. This scheme, which has proved very popular, allows people who are on a stable medication regime to order several

months' prescriptions at a time. The Medicines Management Team at our PCT tells us that in rather too many cases where patients pick up more than one month's worth of medicines at a time, treatments are subsequently changed, meaning that medication is wasted. Unfortunately, it can't be reused once it has left the pharmacy.

The ideal would be if people carried on using the Repeat Dispensing system, which saves us – and you – a lot of work, but only collected one month's medication at a time. That way, if something is changed or if you stop taking a particular drug, you only get what you will actually use and nothing goes to waste. It will still be easier for you as all you'll have to do is let your pharmacy know a day or two before you need a new batch. This can be done in person or by telephone, and in the Green Pharmacy's case by e-mail.

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