

**ST STEPHEN'S HOUSE SURGERY**

# NEWSLETTER

**IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG)**

## Join Our Committee!

We're looking for enthusiastic people—especially those with social media skills—to help us spread the word, share our mission, and grow our community. If you love creating content, staying on top of trends, or just enjoy connecting with others online, we'd love to have you on the team!

Be a part of something meaningful. Your voice can make a difference!

## The New Bike Racks Are Here !

The Surgery has recently installed a bicycle rack in the front garden for patient use. We hope this provides a convenient and secure option for those traveling to appointments by bike.

## Patient Survey 2026

Keep a look out for the 2026 Patient survey, as usual it will be launched at the end of January 2026 and will be open for a month. This is YOUR Surgery so YOUR comments and suggestions are really important to us!



## Practice News

Over the last few months, we have seen a few adjustments at the surgery especially with how patients book an appointment. We have introduced to patients a new way of requesting an appointment by completing a medical form via our website. This was a directive by NHSE as part of the NHS Contract between NHS and Primary Care. We have had some very enthusiastic feedback, patients realising that it is so much simpler and quicker to get an appointment with availability being on the day if urgent or within 10 days if routine. Patients that are unable to access the website can ask our receptionist team to complete the forms on their behalf.

Patients are asked to keep their mobile phones close when they have requested an urgent appointment to ensure that they don't miss their appointment times, which start from 0830.

Government funding for Winter Access has meant that we have more appointments to offer at The Hubs during the day, evening and weekends. Reception staff book patients in to either Bourne Hall Clinics or Derby Medical Centre.

We held two Saturday flu clinics this year, one being



- It is estimated that 1.2 million repeat prescription items are unused and thrown away in Surrey Heartlands each year.
- This contributes to medicine shortages. It can also have an environmental impact if not disposed of correctly.
- The main purpose of this campaign is to help reduce the number of unnecessary repeat prescriptions.
- The primary target audience are Surrey Heartlands residents aged 50+ as they have the highest number of repeat prescriptions
- Only order what you need campaign - Resources for GP practices to use including short videos for waiting room screens are available using the link - [Waste medicines](#)

smaller and both being inside due to concerns with storms that were threatening. Although these have gone well along with the clinics during the week, we have found a reduction in the number of patients attending the surgery, preferring to go to the chemist for ease whilst having COVID vaccinations.

All housebound patients have now been visited, arranged by GPHP, for both flu and COVID, we thank them for their support.

From an IT side, we are currently training on a new AI system 'Anima' that assists with the importing of letters and reading ready to code into patients' clinical records. Whilst it will be slow to start while our staff learn another new process, in the long run it will save administration and doctor time.

Most of you should have received an SMS message from the practice advising that we will soon have a new 'Digital Front Door' on our website. This will assist patients with obtaining help with their health concerns by signposting/referring to the relevant health care professional, be it Pharmacy First, First Contact Physiotherapy or seeing a nurse. Not all health problems need to be dealt with by a GP. The upshot is shorter wait times to see your GP. To access the new DFD you will be required to input your NHS number and DOB.

Thank you to all our patients for your support, we hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year.

Jane White, The Practice Manager

***January 2026 prescriptions will be a 5 working day turn around rather than 3 working day turn around.***

## Prescribing Q&A

### **Dr Eleana Kamalanathan (GP Registrar)**

#### **Do you know what happens when you request your prescription from the GP surgery?**

The most common ways that patients request their repeat prescriptions from the GP, is via the 'NHS app' or 'Patient Access'. The requests then go straight to our GP practice's online system's (EMIS) inbox.

From the EMIS inbox, members of our admin staff on reception will:

- Check if the medication is on your repeat list

## Help Our Surgery Garden Bloom!



We're looking for kind volunteers to support the upkeep of our surgery's garden. Currently Richard Coveney from the PPG has very kindly taken on the responsibility to maintain the gardens. So, whether you have green-fingered skills or simply enjoy being outdoors, your help will make a big difference to our patients and community.

Come join us and help create a calm, healing space.

- Ensure that the request is identical to the medication on your repeat list (i.e. in terms of name, dose, strength etc.)
- Confirm that the medication is due i.e. you are not requesting the medication earlier than you should/ not underusing your medication
- Check that you are up to date with your medication reviews with a prescribing clinician (please see below for an explanation on what a medication review entails)
- Check that you are up to date with your chronic condition reviews (e.g. asthma, COPD, diabetes, amongst others), with a prescribing clinician (please see below for an explanation on what a chronic condition review entails)
- Check to ensure that any monitoring tests are done, that are required (please see below on common conditions that require blood tests and why)

If there are any issues with the above, for example, a medication review with a prescribing clinician is overdue, blood tests are required, a chronic condition review is overdue, members of staff from our GP surgery, will likely contact you to inform you about this. Requests are passed to a prescribing clinician for approval.

Once the requests are received by a prescribing clinician, they may:

- Approve it
- Reject it
- Approve it with a reduced quantity (often because monitoring is overdue, please see the point below)
- Ask you to book a medication review, a blood test for monitoring or a chronic condition review, before further medication is issued

Once your prescription is approved, an EPS (electronic prescription service) is sent digitally, straight to your nominated pharmacy, where it is processed.

### Why is it important that I do not over order medication?

#### 1. Safety

- Medication can expire, especially if you over order lots of the same medication and save it at home. This can mean that medication does not work effectively and can be unsafe.

## Being A Carer



There are many people who are caring for someone but do not identify themselves as a carer.

You might not think of yourself as a carer but you probably are if you are looking after someone regularly. This could be your spouse, child or a family member if they have an illness or disability.

Being an unpaid carer doesn't have the status of other jobs. It won't boost your self-esteem or social life. You find yourself in another role that you weren't expecting.

As your role takes over more of your life you might feel it affects your own identity and your previous way of life. Becoming a carer can be easier to accept if you don't feel that everyone expects or assumes you will do it.

Carers have their own needs and can experience tiredness, stress, strain and feel isolated from friends and other family members. This is not easy to resolve. Finding someone you can talk to freely about your feelings can be a great relief. Even the most mild mannered and cheery person can be worn down by the responsibilities of being a carer. It takes your time and energy and becomes a juggling act between perhaps holding down a job, running a

- It can lead to an increase in mix-ups, especially if doses of medications change

### 2. Monitoring

- Ordering medication in the correct fashion, can ensure that your prescribing clinician can monitor how well your medication is working for your condition.
- Over ordering can make it appear that you are taking more medication than you are, which can make medication reviews/decisions about your care complicated.

### 3. Waste and cost

- Unused medication cannot be reused, once it has been dispensed, even if it is unopened.
- This contributes to medication waste, which is costly to the NHS and impacts the services provided by the NHS, as well as, the availability of resources for everyone using the NHS.

### What is a medication review?

A prescribing clinician will carry out a medication review for your safety and to ensure that you are receiving the best care. This is to ensure that the medications you are taking are safe, effective and appropriate for your current medical conditions. It is a key and essential part of NHS care for any patient with repeat medication/long-term medication.

During this review, the prescribing clinician will go through all of your current medications. They will ensure that all medication on your list are still needed and assess that the current medications are treating your medical condition effectively and being taken as they have been prescribed. If it is not, they may suggest a different dose, or an alternative medication. The medication reviews also help the prescribing clinician stop any medications, which are no longer effective or needed. During this review, you can also discuss any side effects which you may be experiencing, which will be helpful in deciding whether to change the dose of medication, stop medication, or start a new medication. The review also allows the prescribing clinician to ensure that there are no interactions between your medications. It also gives the prescribing clinician the opportunity to look at monitoring tests, e.g. your kidney function, blood pressure etc.



home and attending medical appointments.

There is help available but sadly not enough to assist the huge band of unpaid carers working hard to support someone.

The first step is to identify yourself as a carer to your GP who can be a useful source of information. Next is to ask for and accept help when offered.

**Barbara Wells**



## Hello!

**I'm Eleana, a final year GP trainee doctor.** We are also known as GP Registrars or GPST3 doctors (GP Specialty Trainee Year 3 doctors).

I have been a doctor for 5.5 years (even as I write this, I can't quite believe it - time flies!) I went to medical school in St George's, University of London and studied there for 6 years. I then completed my Foundation Training Years (Years 1 and 2 of being a doctor after medical school) in Medway Maritime Hospital in Kent and Kingston Hospital, respectively. I rotated through 4 monthly rotations in Intensive Care, General Surgery, Psychiatry, Care of The Elderly, General Practice and A&E. Foundation Years allow us, as doctors, to gain a real insight into the different specialties within medicine and really help shape the doctors that we become in the future! We do on-calls, long days, weekends and night shifts, which really enhance our learning and experience. It can be tiring with the change in shift pattern, but the friends you make during these years, often become your friends for life!

I then completed an unofficial, yet increasingly popular "Foundation Year 3/FY3" year in Kingston Hospital, where I worked in A&E, Care of The Elderly and other general medical specialties. In 4 months, I feel like I have worked there for much longer (in a good way!). One of my colleagues has even recently remarked, "well, you're part of the furniture now!".

Everyone has made me feel integrated into the team and I genuinely look forward to coming into work and speaking to/seeing everyone that I have the pleasure of working with. The patients that I have consulted with are also very kind and understanding people, which make my days enjoyable and satisfying.

I then commenced GP training in August 2023. In the UK, GP training is 3 years in duration. I am a GP trainee doctor, attached to the Epsom Hospital GP training scheme.

In my GPST1 year, I worked at a local GP practice on Mondays and Tuesdays, seeing patients in my own clinics. On Wednesdays, we had GP trainee teaching, portfolio development, opportunities to shadow specialties to further our knowledge within general practice, to name just a few things. Then, on Thursdays and Fridays, we would rotate through different specialties, every 4 months. I rotated through Paediatrics in the hospital, Psychiatry in the community and Palliative Care at Princess Alice Hospice. It was an incredible first year of GP training with lots of great training and a real breadth of experience.

Finally, in August 2025, I commenced my final year of GP training. I am already 4 months into the last 12 months of my training, before I become a fully qualified GP. I have been lucky enough to be placed at St Stephen's House Surgery for my last year of training. It is a wonderful practice, with the kindest staff and a lovely community, family feel, which is very important to me. I felt welcome as soon as I started. It is always daunting starting somewhere new, even when we should be used to constantly having to change locations/jobs as doctors!

Even though I have only been at SSHS for 4 months, I feel like I have worked there for much longer (in a good way!).

One of my colleagues has even recently remarked, "well, you're part of the furniture now!". Everyone has made me feel integrated into the team and I genuinely look forward to coming into work and speaking to/seeing everyone that I have the pleasure of working with. The patients that I have consulted with are also very kind and understanding people, which make my days enjoyable and satisfying.

General Practice has been one of my top choices for my career, before even beginning medical school! It allows me to manage a wide range of conditions, across different life stages of my patients. I get to build long-term relationships with my patients, which is something that is difficult to do in hospital medicine. It also allows me to enjoy practising holistic medicine, looking at the full picture of a patient's story. Finally, it also provides me with the flexibility and opportunity to explore special interests within general practice.

Outside of work, I love cooking and enjoy making dishes from different cultures and I also love to bake! I have also recently gotten into gardening with my family, and love travelling!

**St Stephen's House Surgery and the PPG would like to wish all our patients a very Happy and Peaceful New Year. Thank you for being part of our community, and we look forward to caring for you in 2026!**

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS !**

**Some Useful links :**

Carers UK: <https://carersuk.org/>

Action for Young Carers: <https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk//who-we-help/young-carers-under-18>