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Hello Everyone

I'm typing this on a lovely Spring morning, looking at the sun catching the top of the Welsh hills and feeling a sense that summer will be here. However, there is a lot of negativity and uncertainty about at the moment, no one actually knows what effect Brexit will have on the Country and certainly we cannot predict what if any effect it will have on the Health Service or Pharmaceutical companies. We have no idea if any effect will be immediate or will reveal itself over the passage of time, whatever happens we will strive to deliver a good service and try to overcome any problems with resources available to us. We all have to be patient, understanding and tolerant until this period of uncertainty is clearer

We have been looking at the workload of the Doctors at the Surgery. A doctor's day is not confined to morning and afternoon Surgeries and a couple of House calls. Doctors have to make phone calls to hospitals, district Nurses, social services, Commissioning teams, pharmacies to mention a few. They have a huge amount of paperwork to deal with, approximately 150 letters a day come in from the hospitals, these all have to be read and actioned, Doctors also have Insurance, occupational health and medical reports to write. On an average week we have over 1000 test results to look at and report on, but one of the biggest demands on the Doctors time is Prescription signing and prescription related queries.

We have been doing some work around prescriptions and it takes the Doctors on average 2 and a ½ hours a day to process prescriptions, this does not include the time Receptionists spend printing prescriptions and looking for them. There is the facility to send Prescriptions electronically to the Pharmacy (EPS), this saves the need to print prescriptions which means this is better for the environment as no paper usage, it saves receptionists time looking for "lost" prescriptions as they will be either with the Doctor - waiting for an electronic signature, or at the Pharmacy. Prescriptions can be sent to a Pharmacy of your choice and also if the Pharmacy does not have your prescription items available, they can be sent electronically to one that does. You need only go to the Pharmacy, no need to come and wait in the queue to see if your prescription is ready. Currently 54% of our patients use this service and we would like to encourage you to all to consider this. Of course as with all new

systems there are anomalies, prescription items such as some Controlled Drugs cannot be sent for safety reasons and there are a few other medications that cannot be sent but the majority can.

We also ask that you order your prescription in plenty of time, most people do but we have about 20 "Urgent" requests a day. It may not seem a very big task to issue a prescription but it does mean we potentially have to disturb the Doctor when they are possibly already running late, the Doctor then has to check in the patient records before signing, if the prescription raises a query this further delays the Doctor. Some prescription items can be bought over the counter, if this is the case the prescription will no longer be treated as Urgent. There are always genuine reasons for an Urgent prescription and if this is the case it will be dealt with but it is your responsibility to order before you run out.

Very sadly we are saying Goodbye to Dr Mark Washington. He has been at the Surgery for 25+ years and many of you will have had wonderful years of care from him. His compassion for his patients, medical knowledge and hard work come second to none. His support for his colleagues both clinical and non-clinical and his awful jokes will be sadly missed and he will be a huge loss to the Surgery. We are all very sorry that he has to leave. He has been unwell recently but his retirement will give him the opportunity to indulge his passion for birdwatching and taking wonderful photographs. We wish him well and feel privileged to have worked with him.

Also we have said goodbye to Dr Janet Carter, she has left regular Surgery sessions for a while but I'm sure we will be seeing her here as a locum from time to time. She has made so many friends in her years at the Surgery and we will certainly miss her.

We welcome Dr Kiera Vaughan a GP who lives locally. She will be working all day Monday, Thursday and Friday, she has a particular interest in lifestyle medicine which will complement the interests of the Doctors already here. We really have a lovely surgery team and we hope that she will be happy at Neston Surgery.

Our Registrars Dr Helena Garfit and Dr Daria Mudrak both left the Surgery late last year and both have had beautiful baby girls. We wish them both happy times with the new addition to their family lives.

We have a new Well Being Coordinator. The service helps you improve your health and wellbeing by making positive life changes, she can support you with housing, benefits and financial advice, healthy lifestyle, counselling, education, learning, employment and volunteering. You can be referred by the Doctor or ask at reception for an appointment.

Another local service is the Admiral Nurses. They can help people who care for people with dementia. They are based in Puddington and can be contacted on 0151 336 2323 if you need support or advice.

A reminder that you can visit the local pharmacies for Minor health concerns. Pharmacists are qualified healthcare professionals that can assess and recommend the correct treatment for minor illnesses such as Sore Throats, coughs, colds & Flu, tummy troubles, aches and

pains, red eyes, athlete's foot, mouth ulcers, constipation and diarrhoea. Please use this valuable resource for these types of illness.

We have completed our Flu vaccination clinics but still have a few vaccines left, so if you missed it or forgot please give the Surgery a call before the end of March.

Once again, I hope you all keep well and do not need to come and see us, but if you do visit the Surgery I do hope you have a good experience and please feel free to ask to talk to me if you have any comments, positive or critical to share.

Take Care and best wishes for your good health.

Heather