

## **A Day in the Life of a Patient Co-ordinator at Chawton Park Surgery, Alton**

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*Sarah Brown is Patient Co-ordinator Manager at Chawton Park Surgery (CPS) where she has worked for the past 17 years. Sarah oversees the Patient Co-ordinator team and appointments system.*

### **Q: Sarah, has your role changed in the 17 years that you have worked for the Practice?**

Very much so! Obviously during Covid, things were vastly different. CPS was tasked with visiting all patients from the A31 group who couldn't get to their surgery. The A31 group comprises CPS, the Wilson Practice, Boundaries in Four Marks and (until it closed in 2022) Bentley Village Surgery.

The 'receptionist role' and the responsibilities that go with it have changed so much that we are now known as Patient Co-ordinators. We have had extensive training and are now able to signpost patient enquiries. This is why we have been requested by the doctors to ask patients what their call is about enabling us to prioritise appointments and also direct them to the correct practitioner. For example, a patient needing a dressing would be signposted to a nurse or one with backache to the physio team.

### **Q: How does your typical day start?**

I like to arrive early around 7.35am. I unlock the building, turn on the reception computers and lights ready for the surgery to open at 8am. I then log into my computer to check the out of hours reports and lab results. Anything that needs to be actioned is forwarded on to the duty doctor.

The phones come on at 8am except on a Tuesday and Friday when we are open from 7am for pre-booked appointments. The patient Co-ordinator team then begin answering the phones, dealing with patients in the surgery and with prescription queries. We can also pre-book patients in to the new Saturday surgery run by Mid Hants Healthcare which recently started at CPS and is available to all A31 patients.

### **Q: What other roles do the Patient Co-ordinator team perform throughout the day?**

We are tasked with adding eConsult enquiries to patient records and signposting any that can go to the prescription or admin team as well as to the doctor's list so that they can be actioned. (The online eConsult system is active throughout the working day for non-urgent medical queries). We also print off notes that the doctors or matron may need for any home visits or visits to the two care homes that we cover.

As well as patients, the team see people who may have come in to collect samples, pharmacies with prescription requests and the community nursing team who also drop in for various reasons.

We also scan any letters that come in to add to patient records and help with any new patients who want to register at the practice. Our favourite is registering a new born baby especially if we get a cuddle while mum or dad is filling in the form for registration!

We may also need to assist the doctors at any time, to call in patients that need to be seen from the acute list or to arrange an ambulance for one of the patients.

***Q: Do you have any specific roles as Manager of the Patient Co-ordinator Team?***

I and several of the team are chaperone trained so at any time throughout the day we may be called on to accompany a patient who is seeing a doctor, nurse, matron or other member of the medical staff.

As Patient Co-ordinator Manager, I also deal with any unexpected changes to the day. If we have any sickness within the team, I will need to adjust the rotas or surgeries depending on who is off. I also check emails that come in with holiday, time off requests etc. I update the doctors' diary appointments once a week, which is generally 4 weeks in advance, adding on any training or meetings that they may have. We are a training practice and currently have six trainees. I also attempt to help with any IT issues although this is not one of my strengths!

***Q: Are there tasks the team have to complete before going home at the end of the day?***

The afternoon is much the same as the morning but before we leave, we make sure to print off the following day's appointment lists in case the computers go down or we have a power cut - both of which have happened! We also get any paperwork out that is needed for the next day and check that any computers not in use have been shut down. We complete a shutdown/lock up check list at 6.30pm.

***Q: Do you enjoy your work?***

I do enjoy my job as no day is ever the same. I work with a wonderful team who are a great support and look forward to continuing to be part of that team for whatever the future holds in healthcare.