

THIS MONTH: DIARY MANAGEMENT

YOU WANT your practice to appear as professional and efficient as possible. As a result, your practice manager or secretary is central to everything you do, *writes Alison Ryan*.

This person is the first point of contact for your patient and they need to be on top of everything, with instant access to any required information. Communication is the key to creating this harmonised partnership.

An essential skill is diary management, and below are some useful tips. They may appear obvious, but precisely because they are simple, they are often overlooked in consultant practices, with serious consequences. It is vital to keep on top of everything.

■ Build a good relationship with your practice manager or the person who performs this function in your practice. You need to work

together as a team and instil a sense of ownership and responsibility;

■ Speak to each other on a regular basis to book in the following:

- Regular slots for clinics and theatres, ideally six months in advance;
- Annual leave, courses, or training dates;
- Other diary commitments, such as NHS work.

■ Advise your manager of all locations you will be working from and the contacts to liaise with at these locations;

■ Ensure your manager always knows which location you are at, for example, on call, in NHS theatre or clinic, on holiday, or training;

■ Check your diary version daily to ensure you are aware of any additional appointments;

■ Look to electronically

synchronise your Outlook diary with your practice-based diary from your home PC and/or palmtop, so you only need have one diary with all appointments showing.

In summary, good communication is crucial. Generally speaking, managing is about gaining and correctly using information. Nowhere is that more important than in diary management.

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