



Call: 0330 333 6400

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Future-proofed call handling system for growing medical practice



The Customer

Forest House Medical Centre is a thriving general practice in Leicester, comprising two surgeries. Together, they serve around 15,000 patients from their catchment area. Its 41-strong team is committed to recognising the needs of the community and ensuring that their patients are at the heart of everything they do.

The practice is growing due to new housing developments now included in their boundaries and, indeed, the Warren Lane surgery is being extended to help the practice serve the additional patients that will come under its remit.

In addition to general patients, the practice's 7 partners are also responsible for 10 care homes.

The Situation

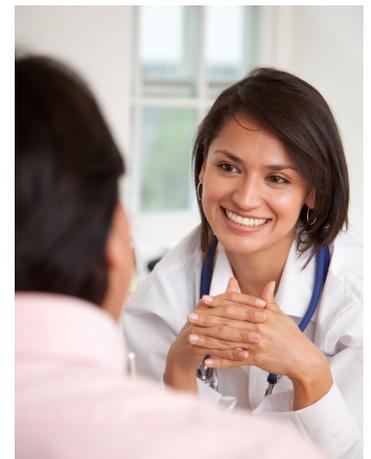
The surgeries open at 8 am, with staff arriving earlier.

Patients can walk into either surgery to book appointments but are also able to phone the surgeries.

With such a busy practice, the phone calls coming in were unmanageable. In fact, patients calling in for emergency appointments were often met with an engaged tone and, on finally getting through, were often advised that all the appointments for the day had been booked.

This made managing the reception teams difficult for the reception manager. It also made serving the community in the way the practice wanted very difficult.

The previous phone system was inflexible with poor support. With no real-time call stats available, and no call queuing or on-hold announcements, the staff couldn't see how many people were holding in the queue and, in fact, quite often patients didn't realise they were.



They understood that business continuity was, and is, important for us and did everything they could to ensure there were no disruptions.



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“ They had an hour, when we closed at lunchtime to make the switch. It all happened seamlessly without any disruption to our staff or patients. ”

“We knew that the situation had to improve if we were to continue to anticipate our community’s needs,” commented Taruna Masani, practice manager.

The Solution

The practice was moved from an existing VoIP system over its two sites to an on-site SIP system with Voice Assured Fibre Connections at both sites to ensure good speech quality over VoIP. The new system resulted in free calls for the practice and lower SIP charges, which meant that MPS was able to provide a cost neutral installation with no capital outlay.

A back-up system was installed at the Warren Lane site as a contingency to the main site, ensuring a continued service to patients in the event of an outage at either site.

An essential part of the solution was to provide cloud queuing with position in queue announcements, on-hold messages, which can be amended as required every day by the team, and call recording, together with an appointment booking option which directs callers to the appointments line from the cloud queue.

“We knew, from our meetings with MPS, that the features of the proposed system were exactly what we needed to meet our patients’ needs,” Taruna added.

The Impact

Moving to a new solution has had a marked impact on the surgery, the biggest being call handling. With a team of people managing the phones, the reception manager can allocate resources more effectively. A near-by screen indicates the number of people on hold and staff can be allocated to help alleviate long queues.

An added bonus is being able to share call data with patients so they know the practice’s busy times and can actively avoid calling during those periods. This is especially helpful when patients call in for test results, who previously had to wait for prolonged periods.

Patients calling in now only have three options to choose from, which has vastly simplified the experience. This is borne out in the feedback the practice has received from its patient participation group, which meets every six weeks.

Another positive impact of the new system is the ability of the team to record different messages that play to patients on hold. They can share various pieces of information, often recorded by the doctors themselves. Patients appreciate this information, and hearing a GP’s voice.

The feedback from patients is that it’s all together a much simpler system to understand.

“I suppose the feature that will have a longer-term impact for us is the ability to record and review calls. This will become part of our learning once our operations manager starts. We’ll monitor calls to help our staff improve their call handling,” said Taruna.

In Summary

In summing up working with MPS, Taruna says, “The really reassuring part of the whole process was that MPS kept us informed at every step. The consultant who initially came in to see us explained how the installation would happen and the engineers on the day couldn’t have been more helpful. They had an hour, when we closed at lunchtime to make the switch. It all happened seamlessly without any disruption to our staff or patients.”

“Working with MPS has been a great experience,” added Taruna. “Their team put our minds at rest, and everyone was very accommodating. They understood that business continuity was, and is, important for us and did everything they could to ensure there were no disruptions. I’ve already recommended MPS to another practice and I’d be happy to make future recommendations.”