



# GP surgery utilises cloud to improve patient access

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A GP surgery in Cambridgeshire is utilising a cloud-based telephone solution to improve the way patients access its services.

The Hicks Group, a practice which works across two surgery sites in Huntingdon Cambridgeshire has installed a cloud-based system that can cope with multiple calls to meet demand.

The practice's old system was causing trouble for patients making it difficult for them to get in touch with the GP via the phone.

"Patients were saying it was easier to turn up at the surgery in the morning to book an appointment, than to try get through on the phone," said Lisa Harrison, practice manager at the Hicks Group. "We were using an old BT system and it was not coping with demand."

More so, staff were also not able to transfer calls between practices making it difficult for them to do their jobs efficiently.

With the Hicks Group set to merge with two other local practices, it realised that it needed to upgrade its services so it could meet the demands of its patients and of its staff.

Whilst the phone is the most common way for patients to get in touch with GPs, it is also a source of frustration for some. According to the [GP Patient Survey 2017](#) patient survey, seven in ten patients think it is easy to get through to their GP surgery. At the Hicks Group, only 52% of patients thought it was easy to contact by phone in 2017.

Now the practice's new system allows calls to be queued so that the first call should be the first to be answered. Calls are able to be righted to the right person, rather than have to go through a single access point.

We can have unlimited lines and we can divert incoming calls to either of the numbers of our practices to the first available receptionist" Harrison said. "This was especially useful recently when there was a power cut at one of our practices. One short call to the supplier and we had all our calls diverted to the operational practice, ensuring patients could get through despite the loss of power."

The system has been in place since April 2017 but the practice is just now seeing the results.

Harrison said: "Patients say they are much happier now, as they actually get a response, even if it is just to tell them they are held in a call queue. There is nothing more frustrating than calling a number and not being able to get through, which previously was the case. And staff find the system intuitive and easy to use."

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