



Primary Care Networks (PCNs) were created about around five years ago by the government. Every general practice in the UK was encouraged to become part of one of these networks, as they're a way to provide general practice services at scale and help commissioning problems. Hastings PCN serves a population of about 100,000 patients, offering services such as occupational therapy, social prescribing, podiatry, home visiting services, and more.

CHALLENGE

GP practices operate in many different ways, but there are always problems with recruiting staff, high staff turnover, and limited candidate pools in the area. Additionally, A PCN provides learning events, which require clinical and administrative cover. Historically what might have been done is provide clinical cover for all the surgeries while they were closed for the afternoon. In the past, Hastings PCN has asked surgeries to employ a couple of their receptionists and keep them on for the afternoon, in addition to trying to get a locum GP to sit in so that their GPs were released to go to any training event that was on. It became clear that as Hastings PCN's events grew larger, it was useful for all of their administrators and GPs to attend the events.

SOLUTION

Hastings PCN was referred to CallCare Health by one of their practices, The Hill Surgery. The Hill's lead partner, Dr. Milan Radia, contacted Jon Merrick, Manager at Hastings PCN, and said "We're using this company and we plan to move our reception to a remote system. It solves a lot of problems for us in several ways." Additionally, Dr. Radia mentioned the fact that he had come to visit CallCare Health's headquarters in Manchester and that CallCare Health went through the EMIS clinical system and other protocols that would be used. So Jon knew that a lot of things were already in place.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation and transition to using CallCare Health as part of Hastings' reception team was seamless. CallCare Health provided cover during events so that all staff members could be in attendance, including the reception team. This is partly due to the protocols already being in place from CallCare's previous relationship with Dr Radia.

“

It's just the ease of knowing that the CallCare team have got it in hand. I can look at the reports and we're not seeing patients being sent to the on-call GP for inappropriate things. If patients are going through to the GP it's because it's a valid emergency. So I think CallCare works well with the administration side of things and handling the patient flow. If there's any problems, CallCare are easy to communicate with.

Chloe Tate, Practice Manager at Hastings PCN

RESULTS AND IMPACT

The implementation of the outsourced reception service during events yielded significant improvements for Hastings PCN:

- **Smooth Operations:** The absence of complaints indicates that CallCare ensures smooth communication between patients and GPs, preventing issues that previously arose.
- **Effective Patient Triage:** CallCare's handling of patient flow ensures that only valid emergencies reach the on-call GP, improving the efficiency of emergency responses.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** Access to call data allows for better capacity planning and process review, helping to refine criteria for what constitutes an emergency.
- **Ease of Communication:** CallCare's team is easy to communicate with, ensuring any problems addressed and resolved, contributing to overall service reliability.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hastings PCN plans to continue its partnership with CallCare Health and explore additional services to further optimise practice operations. Based on their positive experience, they recommend outsourced reception services to other healthcare providers seeking to enhance patient care and practice efficiency.

CONCLUSION

Through strategic collaboration with CallCare, Hastings PCN successfully addressed challenges they faced during events and achieved notable improvements in patient care and practice efficiency. The partnership serves as a testament to the value of outsourcing reception services in optimising healthcare operations and delivering exceptional patient experiences.