

Medical centre manages calls with Akixi

Gleadless Medical Centre in Sheffield serves patients in the Gleadless Valley area of the city. With just under 9,000 registered patients and 30 Partners and staff, efficient communications is essential for the effective running of the Centre. To manage the large volume of incoming phone calls the Centre's telecoms provider Integra ICT installed a Siemens OptiPoint 500 phone system supporting 32 extensions within the Centre.

While the phone system provided excellent call management, there were issues with understanding calling patterns as Stella Crookes, Business Manager for the Centre explains. "The NHS conducts regular surveys to ensure that we are meeting our patients' needs in all regards. A recurring issue in the surveys was getting through to the Centre by phone and the time taken to answer. The trouble was that the phone system could not provide me with the data needed to understand calling patterns, so I asked Integra ICT if they could suggest a solution."

Integra ICT recommended the Akixi hosted call management and contact centre reporting service. Because Akixi is provided as a remote hosted service, it does away with all the costly set-up costs normally associated with call management reporting. There's no capital expenditure on hardware, no implementation and upgrades to worry about and no commitment to ongoing support fees.

"We wanted to achieve a situation where no caller to our main 0845 patient line was waiting more than three minutes for an answer. By analysing the calling patterns using Akixi we have been able to achieve that without increasing the number of reception staff. It's allowed us to use existing resources more effectively." Stella confirms.

Akixi offers 'cradle to grave' call tracking, with comprehensive reporting allowing users such as Stella to scrutinise and analyse usage in real time, using the Akixi 1000 Business Dashboard. "I can display the system on my PC system and see the calls in real-time. If it takes more than three minutes for a call to be answered an alarm sounds in my office so that I know a queue has overrun. The reporting analysis also allows me to check the exact time taken to answer, if a patient comments that we have taken an excessive time to answer."



By providing the Centre with full reporting on calling patterns Stella has been able to develop strategies to better manage calls. "We can let patients know when the quieter periods are to call. If a patient has a lengthy enquiry we can ask them to accept a call-back and log the nature of the query, so we can respond with the right information. Basically we try to move calls off the reception as efficiently as possible, so that the main 0845 patient line does not become engaged."

As the Akixi system is hosted remotely it's always up to date. It can also be accessed from anywhere, with a variety of operating systems and devices supported, including mobiles. "As part of the NHS we have a duty to manage our costs closely and with Akixi we only pay for the functions we use, so there's no wasted expense", says Stella.

In conclusion Stella believes that the Akixi system has improved the Centre's telecoms provision. "We get good and proactive support from Integra ICT, our telecoms provider, and Akixi hosted call management has met our needs balanced with reasonable ongoing costs. Employing more staff to answer phone calls was simply not an option, so Akixi has allowed us to use existing resources more effectively to meet patient needs."

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