



Total Digital Triage with Online GP Consultation Telephone Assistant saves time on calls for both patients and receptionists

“Having voice recognition technology means our vulnerable elderly and digital illiterate patients are catered for better and get appointments much easier.”

Dr Stephan Claridge, GP Lingwell Croft Surgery and Clinical Director Middleton and Hunslet PCN

About Lingwell Croft

Lingwell Croft Surgery is a large and busy GP practice in Middleton, Leeds, with a patient population of 15,204, in an urban area of both economic deprivation and an ageing population. The practice has a total of 41 staff, including a team of 18 receptionists. We recently spoke with Dr Stephan Claridge, the surgery's GP Partner who was excited to adopt a total digital triage approach using Online GP Consultation. This case study explains why the Lingwell Croft Surgery were keen to adopt the Online GP Consultation Telephone Assistant, particularly for vulnerable patients that struggle to get appointments using the telephone in the mornings.

Their OneAdvanced Experience

Lingwell Croft Surgery were keen to implement a Total Digital Triage (TDT) Model, Dr Stephan Claridge explained why. He said:

“Vulnerable patients struggled to get appointments as like many other GP surgeries our phone lines were very busy in the mornings. Because of this we were keen to adopt a TDT Model, however due to our large elderly population and low digital literacy there were some significant concerns.” The Online GP Consultation Telephone Assistant (TA) solution was introduced to meet the new TDT model of care recommended by NHS England. With an aging population and low digital literacy, introducing online consultations on their own would have added another ‘lane on the motorway’ and increased the workload. This is where Online GP Consultation TA came in.

Lingwell Croft were excited to hear about Online GP Consultation TA because of its ability to process voice telephone calls and transcribe them into a written request like a normal online consultation. After the first step of evaluating with a patient participation group (PPG) they proceeded with a “hard launch” where all patients were channelled to either; Online GP Consultation online or TA. It was made clear to patients on the website, patient newsletter and telephone messages that these were the only options to contact them. Lingwell Croft set up a stall in reception to encourage visitors to try calling Online GP Consultation TA to familiarise themselves with the technology. For those who used Online GP Consultation TA, they would not have to wait in a telephone queue, and workflows were more streamlined and efficient. The result being patients received their care more quickly and with less burden on the GP practice.

Key outcomes:

Comparing a 2-month period, using Total Digital Triage with Online GP Consultation Telephone Assistant:

- Reduction in reception workload - call volumes fell 41% and saved 66 hours of reception time per month after using Telephone Assistant.
- Improved access for patients – patients spent no time in the telephone queue when using the Telephone Assistant and it provided patients that cannot use online services a digital-first option. Previously patients were waiting up to 35 minutes using the normal telephone route.
- Cost-effective – implementing Telephone Assistant can save practices thousands of pounds per year.