

## Case Study

### From answering 33% (300 incoming calls) this has now increased to 95% (750 calls) each day

Solihull Healthcare Partnership participated in Productive General Practice to improve how it managed high volumes of patient calls and its care navigation process. The programme helped reduce the average waiting time for calls to be answered from 33 minutes to 11 minutes, and reduced the need for 40 GP appointments per week, enabling the practice to introduce a 'roving' GP to support the Care Navigation team.



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## Case study

### Solihull Healthcare Partnership, Midlands

From answering 33% (300 incoming calls) this has now increased to 95% (750 calls) each day

- Average waiting time to answer a patient call has reduced from 33 minutes to 11 minutes, and continues to be a priority for further improvement.
- Patients receiving a more consistent and equitable service through better signposting, not automatically allocating everyone a GP appointment but triaging and streaming to the right professional and service.
- New data dashboard helping to understand demand and supply better, leading to improved capacity planning.
- Staff turnover has reduced because of improved training and development of Care Navigators; staff report feeling happier and more confident in their roles. Practice working to grow the team further.
- Reduced need for 40 GP appointments per week has enabled the practice to introduce a 'roving' GP to support the Care Navigation team.



### What were the issues?

"Patients are complaining it's taking too long to answer their calls."

"Our Care Navigation team answers all inbound calls, but it's struggling to manage the high volumes and deal with patient negativity."

"GP appointments are being issued on a first come first serve basis instead of what the patient needs."

"It's hard to keep track of what we do because we're a big practice. If we understood our demand and supply, we could plan our capacity better."

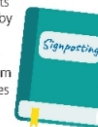
"Turnover in the navigation team is high; most staff were receptionists and don't see signposting as part of their role."

"Our patients need a more consistent service."

### Using data to understand our demand and capacity



- Developed a data dashboard to monitor key areas of demand. Focused on telephone access first as demand was highest.
- Data showed average waiting time for a call to be answered was approx. 30 minutes. Mondays busiest with 1,000 incoming calls and Tuesday to Friday 700 calls.
- Compiled top 10 list of conditions most patients contacted the practice about over last 12 months for a GP appointment. Out of 9,000 contacts identified most could have been seen by an AHP or Physician Associate.
- Identified potential for improving care navigation to more appropriately stream and signpost calls, reduce waiting times and use GP appointments more effectively.



### Designing our own solutions

- Conducted a one-week trial which saw phone line opening times extended and additional staff scheduled to answer calls. Results demonstrated waiting times went down and made the case to grow the practice's Care Navigation team.
- Identified the most common six conditions and created criteria for when a GP appointment was necessary e.g. age, specific symptoms and also alternative interventions for when a GP appointment was not required.
- Updated signposting resources to provide a current directory of services.
- Re-trained Care Navigators to help develop their confidence and knowledge. One hour every week is now dedicated to team training, led by a clinician.
- A roving GP is now present in the room to support Care Navigators with complex queries and provide feedback on managing calls.
- A number of GP appointments are embargoed daily and only released for urgent on-the-day appointments, ensuring these are available beyond the 08:30 rush.



NHS England and NHS Improvement

### Solihull Healthcare Partnership

**34** whole time equivalent GPs  
**6** sites, serving over  
**55,000** patient population

The practice used the Time for Care team's rapid modular support, known as Productive General Practice, as part of NHS England's Access Improvement Programme. For resources, case studies and to connect with thousands of colleagues improving local primary care, visit [FutureNHS](https://future.nhs.uk).



"Time for Care gave us the dedicated and focused time we needed to look at how we could improve patient care. Everyone in the practice can see the benefits, and there's lots of momentum and enthusiasm for the changes we're making."  
 Stephen New, Chief Executive, Solihull Healthcare Partnership



"We're proud of the changes we've made, it's like starting the practice again and standardising what we do. The work has made us look at the bigger picture and how we can move the practice forward. We have an amazing team behind us that is doing a fantastic job."  
 Dr Kapil Laid, Partner GP, Solihull Healthcare Partnership



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<https://future.nhs.uk>