



New technology is transforming patients' experience at one of the largest GP practices in the UK.

The Malthouse Surgery in Abingdon has eliminated complaints about its phone system, cut telecoms expenditure by a third and reduced patient call costs following the installation of a new phone system.

The surgery is the largest of 82 GP practices in Oxfordshire with close to 20,000 patients and can receive more than a thousand calls a day.

The surgery had used a 0844 number but more than 20 people at a time could be in a calls queue.

Practice manager David Ridgway replaced the service earlier this year with a bespoke telecommunications system from telecoms provider DuoCall Communications.

"Patients waited a long time for the call to be answered and because of the 0844 number they paid for the inconvenience at the same time," explained David Ridgway.

"The old system was also great at telling us how many people were calling at various times of the day, but only after the event, there was no easy way to read the real time activity.

"We went to tender and DuoCall was certainly the best value for money when comparing the level of support. They provided technical support/training on the new system, floor walking for the first couple of days and following up on any adjustments required of the new system immediately."

David revealed the new system had reduced costs by a third with the added bonus that patients no longer pay for calls to an 0844 number.

"The call management system is really useful and we can now see in real time who is calling the surgery and how many people are queuing, increasing or removing resource as needed to maximise our workforce," added David.

"Previously we averaged two or three complaints a week from patients about queuing for a long period when calling the surgery or having to call an 0844 number. Since January we have not received one complaint about the telephone system, making for a happier patients and a happier workforce who previously had to deal with the disgruntled patients."

Andrew Ringsell, Director at DuoCall Communications said: "We work hard to understand our customers' needs and ensure we deliver solutions which, not only work, but deliver real benefits.

"The change of systems took place over a weekend and the new system with a new local number was up and running successfully on a Monday morning, the surgery's busiest period of the week. It is excellent to know the system is reducing complaints and saving money for both patients and the surgery."

DuoCall offers high quality landline, mobile, data products and services across a range of industries including the NHS, hotels, schools and the motor trade.