

Innovation brings fantastic results

Innovative working at St Luke's Primary Care Centre in Duston, Northampton, has enabled the practice to offer an amazing 10,000 more urgent care appointments a year.

In response to a series of GP partner retirements in 2014-15 and difficulties finding direct replacements, the St Luke's team analysed the practice's workflows and looked at how a different approach to recruitment could help meet patients' needs.

As a result, the team refocused its recruitment drive to bring in more nurses and provided more training for its existing nurses in minor illness. This was coupled with the introduction of a new pre-triage process to direct patients to the right practice professional at the right time, while a new primary care consultant role was created to support the team.

In addition to its GP team, St Luke's now has ten other professionals in place to meet demand for same-day appointments – and the pre-triage process has turned out to be hugely beneficial for both patients and staff.

By responding to a recruitment challenge with some smart forward thinking, the practice and local health community are reaping the benefits.

Dr Tom Howseman, GP partner at St Luke's, said: "The development and implementation of our pre-triage process (PTP) has benefited our practice staff and patients. It has helped with team building, staff personal development and the sustainability of our practice - and has hugely increased our ability to offer patients appointments when they need them."



"Encouragingly, PTP has also drawn the interest of many other practices, one of which is now adopting our way of working, in true GP Forward View collaborative spirit. It has also attracted several new GPs to consider working with us permanently. We are now looking forward to the future - a real recovery story, one that can be repeated in any practice. General practice is tough, but it is so much better facing it together!"