HOW TO...

UPDATE A PRIMARY CARE NETWORK TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The why and how, from a network of 13 x GP practices (from an independently led learning evaluation)

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Enhanced communication between practices

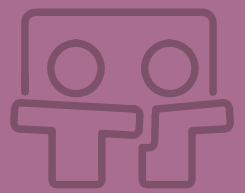Potential for joined up work forces to support staff shortages or down time (telephone operators)

Cost saving potential when collectively reviewing and selecting new providers

Improved customer service support

Updated equipment with new features

HOW TO SELECT A PROVIDER

Review all available providers based on:

- Functionality – ease of use, range of different functions.
- Customer service provision – in particular, rapid response, and ease of connecting with technical support staff.
- Experience of the company in supporting Primary Care services.
- Consideration of additional equipment that might be required, and what is or what is not supplied.
- What is included in the long-term contract, including hidden costs.
- The experiences of other practices who have contracted with this provider.

AVOID PITFALLS

Implementation is more complex than teams may expect, the key to smooth implementation is good communication:

- Identify an implementation lead at each site.
- Build strong comms processes between the implementation lead, practice manager, PCN lead, project manager (if CCG led), the new provider and engineers before any work is scheduled to start.
- Ensure that all parties are clear on who to communicate with (implementation leads).

5 TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. Consider the costs of ending old contracts early (incl returning old equipment), before signing a new provider (these can be very high).
2. Create an issues board (white board etc) at each site for all practice staff to list issues or queries. Regularly pass these to the provider and PCN lead.
3. Schedule the update of the technology between 1 and 2pm, midweek.
4. Pre-train key staff on the use of the new technology before updating.
5. Provide 'plain English' crib sheets to support staff where the technology has new functions or steps.