

# How Portland is saving GP time despite increased demand

Portland Medical Centre Study



## Summary

Klinik is saving London's Portland Medical Centre 3 to 4 GP sessions per week despite a growing patient list and huge demand for care. The innovative online triage and patient flow management technology is 'the best thing since sliced bread', according to Flemming Jensen, Business Manager of Portland Medical Centre in South Norwood, London.

## Growth in demand and workload called for online triage solution

Like so many other practices across the UK, Portland Medical Centre in South Norwood has seen patient demand grow rapidly.

The surgery used to take 6,000 calls per month; this had risen to 9,000, an increase of 50%. Alongside this, its patient list size grew by 10%, from 12,000 to 13,300.

Based in an area with pockets of high deprivation, the primary care provider looked to online triage to help it meet this demand and make patient access to care more equitable.

"We wanted a solution to be beneficial for patients and for the workforce," says Flemming Jensen, business manager of Portland Medical Centre in South Norwood.

"The traditional way of calling a GP surgery means appointments are provided on a first come first served basis. It's not fair. The person who doesn't get through might be the one that really needs the appointment."



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Flemming Jensen, Business Manager  
Portland Medical Centre

## Klinik's medical triage software provides the solution

To address this, Klinik was introduced in June 2021. Its impact has been significant. "We can get through 100% of patient contacts in three days. Before it could have been up to a 3 weeks wait for a phone appointment, or we may have had to refer people to A&E," says Flemming.

With Klinik, everyone undergoes the same triage process, whether they access the practice via the web, phone or walk through the door. "For the patient, the phone call might be a little bit longer. But it means that everyone is treated fairly," he explains.

Enquiries are reviewed by a clinician based on the information provided. As a result, clinicians can manage 90 to 100 patients in a normal day without feeling pressured, compared to 32 patients per day if they were undertaking 10-minute consultations.

Klinik uses AI to prioritise care according to need. But it is the triaging clinician who decides on the care provided. "Some AI-driven systems are automated and can send people to the wrong place. Klinik is a hybrid model, using AI with human input."

Klinik's AI-infused access and triage model helps direct patients to the right care first time 85% to 90% of the time, compared to the 15% to 20% accuracy delivered by traditional phone-based methods. Many enquiries are resolved using text messages or email. Others are delegated to the right point of care. This could be a pharmacist, paramedic, social prescriber, or another member of the clinical or non-clinical team.

"As a result, Klinik saves the practice 3-4 GP sessions every week, and workload is spread across the multidisciplinary team," notes the business manager. "GPs see those patients who most need their help, and patients get the right type of care for their needs. We can reach more patients this way."

## Klinik provides a fairer and faster patient experience

Most Portland patients contact the practice using the web. "We now deal with 56% of enquiries online, with the vast majority of the rest on the phone. We are aiming to get to 80% online, supported through video tutorials and in-practice advice on how to use the system."

More people using the system online helps free up phone lines for those who prefer to call, for example the frail and elderly. So despite an increase in workload, Portland's 9,000 calls per month are now down to less than 6,000 - again thanks to Klinik.

Klinik means speed and greater continuity of care for Portland patients. "If someone has long term condition, for example, they will get to see a familiar GP, and get a response within three or four hours of submission.

“Even the most cynical have become converts. One patient admitted they disliked the system at the first. He thought it was wrong that people were not getting seen in person. He told us: ‘Now I get it, I love it. If I have a query it gets answered, and normally on the same day. We used to have to wait a long time. Not any more.’”

## Staff seeing the benefits of medical triage and patient flow

Staff can see the purpose and benefits of using Klinik. “It helps reduce the number of phone calls they have to answer, which they can see is due to us putting more things online,” says Flemming. Klinik’s demand data is also supporting a more flexible approach to care delivery for Portland. “We are adopting a hospital model,” says Flemming, “which sees the right member of the team seeing the right patient – a process overseen by the lead GP.”

Identifying the right skills mix to support this model is helped by using Klinik’s data on clinical demand, which informs how it can diversify its workforce to better meet local needs.

One example is how Portland plans to fill the position of a retiring nurse. The data showed that the practice was getting a lot of medication enquiries. “As a result, we will replace the member of staff with one part-time nurse and one part-time pharmacist.”

Flemming continues: “We think this is a pattern that will continue. We expect to see a wider spread of allied health professionals, for example in physiotherapy or medication. Our shift to a hospital model and our use of Klinik means that the experts will be put through more quickly to the patient.” It’s a change in approach that should interest primary care networks, as they look to make best use of national funding for additional roles. It’s an example of using demand data to inform workforce planning that is also being followed by fellow Klinik customers such as Priory Medical Group.



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Flemming Jensen, Business Manager  
Portland Medical Centre



**3-4**

GP sessions saved per week  
despite increased demand



**£30-40k**

saved annually



**85-90%**

of patients are directed to the right  
care first time  
(used to be 15-20% without Klinik)



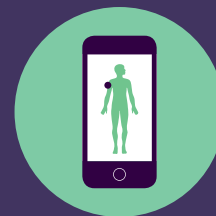
**≈95**

patients managed in a day  
without the GP feeling pressured



**100%**

patient contacts processed in 3  
days - down from a 3 week wait  
for an appointment



**56-70%**

patient enquiries dealt with online

## Aiding recruitment and easing the pressure on a more flexible workforce

Portland is also using the system to support a more flexible, less pressured practice team.

“Anyone can - and does - work from home. Working online removes the need for travel, and means staff can work around other commitments such as childcare. It also reduces the pressure on the estate - we don't have the space for the extra staff we need!”

The use of Klinik also helps with recruitment. “We have people working in Manchester and Birmingham. We can recruit from across the UK,” he says. “We can also easily bring in extra support if someone is off ill.”

“Staff are much happier,” says Flemming. “Clinical staff are seeing the most relevant patients, reception staff are much less pressured, and as a result, Klinik has helped reduce staff absences significantly from 7% to 3%.”

We would not have been able to cope with the levels of demand we are seeing without Klinik,” he says. “It's the best thing since sliced bread.”

## Meeting current needs with a triage platform for future growth

Working with the Klinik team has also been a positive experience for Flemming. “What I like about the Klinik team is they are responsive and they understand which way we can go with this,” he says. “The developments planned by Klinik are designed to give GPs the additional tools they need to provide more accurate and timely care, whilst also ensuring positive rates of patient satisfaction. Klinik is committed to working with practices to help make the patient journey as smooth as possible.”

General practice is a challenging place to work at the best of times. With Klinik, Portland Medical Centre has an online triage system and patient flow management software that makes primary care easier for everyone.



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Flemming Jensen, Business Manager



Any questions? Contact us!



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