

Padiham Group Practice: experiencing the benefits of GP2GP

A practice in East Lancashire is one of thousands around the country now experiencing the benefits of GP2GP - the service that allows patients' electronic health records to be transferred quickly and securely when they change practices.

When a patient moves practice it can often take weeks, even months, for their paper records to follow them. These paper records then need to be input into the new practice's clinical system, which takes up even more time.

In the past this has often resulted in a patient's first consultation at their new practice being done without access to their record. That situation is now changing fast, as more practices and patients start to benefit from the roll-out of GP2GP.

Padiham Group Practice has already seen the benefits of using GP2GP. Christine Warren, IT manager at the practice, has been impressed: "We're increasingly finding that patients are coming in to the practice to register and that their records are arriving with us electronically half an hour later!"

The quicker access to this information means that queries from new patients, such as those relating to repeat prescriptions, can be dealt with much more quickly.

Dr James Fleming, a GP partner at the practice, is another champion of the new system.



Dr James Fleming: GP2GP is quicker and more secure

"With GP2GP all of the new patient's history is there and it can go back years. It's great – just like dealing with your regular patients."

Dr Fleming has found real benefit in being able to view the medication being used by new patients. He has also found GP2GP saves time, as he does not have to ring their former practices for information before seeing them: "It's quicker and more secure, and there is less chance of losing information."

One of the practice's main concerns prior to receiving GP2GP was the standard of the electronic health records that they would receive from other practices.

However, practice manager Jayne Dewhurst says these fears have been unfounded: "The standard of data has been really good."





Jayne Dewhurst: GP2GP is helping Padiham provide a better service to patients

Christine agrees with Jayne: "I've been pleasantly surprised at the high standard of the records being transferred to the practice. If any data is missing, though, the paper record still arrives at the practice and can be cross checked with the electronic one."

The practice also praised the local help they received from the GP IT Training Team based at the Primary Care Informatics Unit - with dedicated support from a trainer on the day they went live with GP2GP and continuing support with any issues.

"They have been great - really helpful," says Jayne.

Real benefits

All staff at the practice conclude that there are great benefits from using GP2GP. It saves time for administration and IT staff at the practice as paper notes do not need to be summarised onto the practice clinical system.

It also saves time as they do not have to ring a patient's old practice to find out about a patient's medication or history, as that information will have already been transferred onto their clinical system.

Practice nurses also benefit from GP2GP, as Jayne Dewhurst explains: "The nurse has more information available quickly, about patients' immunisations and vaccinations. This helps us provide an even more professional service."

Most importantly, though, GP2GP has massive benefits for patients.

GPs having access to a patient's record in a first consultation ensures that the clinician has all the information necessary to make the best possible decisions and diagnoses for the patient.

Repeat medication can be dealt with much more efficiently and the stress of changing practices is relieved because the relevant information arrives at the new practice much more quickly.

Jayne concludes: "Patients didn't understand why we didn't know about them when they had just registered. Now, we do know and they are much happier. GP2GP is helping the practice provide a much better service for our patients."

For more information about GP2GP, please visit:
www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/gp2gp

NHS Connecting for Health is supporting the NHS to introduce new computer systems and services such as GP2GP. These will help the NHS deliver better, safer care for patients.