

Reception Staff get support to help navigate patients to the right care

Receptionists at GP practices across North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are to get extra training to ensure they help patients receive the most appropriate support.

A total of 55 of the area's 77 practices are currently signed up to the initiative which begins in September and will be rolled out over the next few months.

It means reception staff will soon start to adopt a common approach in helping navigate patients to the best care, and may ask questions about why appointments are required.

Dr John Gilby, a local GP and Clinical Director for Primary Care for the CCGs said: "Virtually everyone who calls their practice to make an appointment asks to speak to a GP, but very often patients could get the same help more quickly from another health professional.

"This new specialist training will help our reception staff to get patients the most appropriate help using the range of information they have access to.

"We want to make sure people who need to see a GP can see them as soon as possible. GPs spend considerable time most days speaking to patients who could get exactly the same help from other highly skilled medical professionals such as nurses or pharmacists, or from another easily accessible service, including the voluntary sector, who can support people with a wide range of social, emotional or practical needs."

Currently some receptionists do ask patients about why they would like to see a GP while others don't.

Dr Gilby said: "Across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire there's a lot happening right now to make sure that when people need to see a GP, they have access to one quickly and in a way that suits them, be that in person or over the phone."

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