

Assura Reading GP partnership case study

Assura Reading is a partnership between local GPs and Assura Medical Limited, a leading healthcare provider. The partnership currently runs a GP-led healthcare centre and provides a dermatology service with Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust.

What we've accomplished together

- **Structure** – a joint venture model founded on shared ownership, led by GPs
- **Scale** – successful in delivering two services with an annual turnover of approximately £3m
- **Scope** – actively engaging with clinicians to develop new services by responding to local priorities
- **Smiles** – positive patient feedback demonstrating the success of our services

How our story began

Assura Reading was formed in July 2008 by 15 local GP practices and Assura Medical, a leading healthcare provider.

The skill set offered by Assura Medical complemented those of the local practices and so the partnership was formed.

Assura Reading's first opportunity came in response to West Berkshire Primary Care Trust's Equitable Access to Primary Care tender for a new GP-led practice and walk-in centre in the middle of Reading Town Centre.

Assura Reading was successful in winning the tender, and starting with new staff and in new PCT provided premises, the service opened its doors in August 2009.

A vertical learning curve

The first year walk-in volumes exceeded 36,000 patients and 2000 new patient registrations and managing the service posed some unexpected challenges.



The first year tested not only the nature of the business model but also the commitment to work together to respond to a range of issues, some which could not have been anticipated.

Attendance rates at the centre reflected the unmet need with approximately 40% of new registrations not having previously been registered with a GP and the case mix of walk-in patients suggesting access to local GP appointments was an issue in certain areas.

Dr Gerard D’Cruz, local GP and chairman of Assura Reading, says: “It was a challenging year as we had to increase staff recruitment and refine our operational processes more quickly than planned. While at times it tested our relationship with Assura Medical, it is difficult for us to imagine how we as local GPs, running our own practices, could ever have managed this without their help and support. Our partnership is all the stronger and continues to break new ground as we look to improve services for our patients.”

Improving community services

The next opportunity came when West Berkshire PCT put out a tender for an area wide, ‘end to end’ Dermatology service integrating both primary and secondary care pathways.

Assura Reading worked with the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust to develop a joint venture agreement to bid for the contract. Once the contract was awarded, the partnership worked together to ensure the service went live within the specified time frame.

Dr Gerard D’Cruz says: “Our partnership now delivers dermatology services jointly with the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust. We provide the GPwSIs and community based staff and premises whilst the hospital provides the consultants and specialist treatment facilities. Both parties are working together to deliver what is required of a modern, quality dermatology service responsive to patient needs.

“Working with Assura Medical has enabled us to start significantly influencing the delivery of services for patients in a way we could not have achieved without their expertise and support. Our early success strongly suggests that when partnerships work well, services for patients can be

improved within the tight financial constraints the NHS now faces. We look forward to further extending the range of services Assura Reading provides either as a stand alone provider or in partnership with like minded healthcare organisations, committed to improving the patient experience.”

For more information

Please email:

information@assuramedical.co.uk

Visit our website:

www.assuramedical.co.uk

Assura Medical Limited

Lynton House
7-12 Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9LT

Tel: 020 7380 1750
Fax: 020 7380 1751

6400 Daresbury Business Park
Warrington
Cheshire WA4 4GE

Tel: 0845 504 0594
Fax: 0845 504 0596

