



Norfolk and Suffolk Health and Care Awards 2026

Research and Innovation Award

Local Innovation: From One Questionnaire to Whole Practice Transformation

Cardinal Medical Practice

Following the 2023 merger of three GP practices serving a deprived population, the organisation faced significant challenges including poor access, workforce shortages, rising complaints, and difficulty recruiting clinicians. Traditional appointment-based models were no longer sustainable. In response, a clinician-led innovation introduced a simple but transformative approach: enabling patients on antidepressants to complete structured reviews remotely, linked to medication requests. This allowed patients to report symptoms, side effects and wellbeing asynchronously, reducing the need for routine appointments.

The success of this model led to wider adoption across the practice, evolving into a whole-system, multidisciplinary approach involving clinical, prescribing, administrative and data teams. It has since expanded into proactive, preventative care pathways, including cardiovascular risk management, statin initiation, stroke prevention, and medication safety reviews. Unlike standard online triage, this approach supports longitudinal, patient-centred care embedded into routine pathways.

Developed in-house at low cost, the model transformed care delivery by enabling stable patients to be managed safely at home, freeing GP capacity for more complex cases. It also strengthened patient engagement by promoting shared decision-making, with individuals better informed and involved in their care.

The impact has been substantial. Over 2,000 antidepressant reviews and hundreds of preventative care questionnaires have improved early identification of risk, medication safety, and access for patients who struggle with traditional appointments. The approach has supported workforce stability, including recruitment of nine additional GPs, and contributed to the practice improving its CQC rating from "Requires Improvement" to "Good." Overall, it represents a scalable, sustainable model of proactive, equitable primary care.