

### Summary:

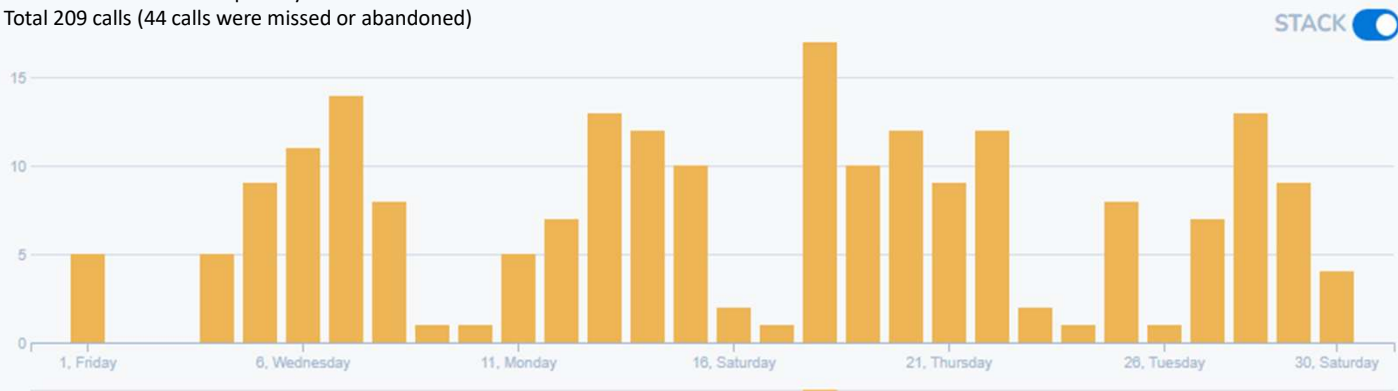
- We describe the benefits observed from the introduction of a cloud based telephony system to replace a traditional fixed line telephone system and mobile phone.
- Benefits – Staff enabled to answer calls from multiple locations improving resilience in service provision, improved hybrid working, improved training and supervision opportunities, call analysis, resulting in multiple benefits for MRC staff, enquirers, and the operation and management of our service.

**1. Method:**  
Observation, comparison and commentary of how our service has been developing since the new telephony system was introduced approximately 12 months ago. This replaced a single fixed line telephone with a separate mobile phone with a different number.

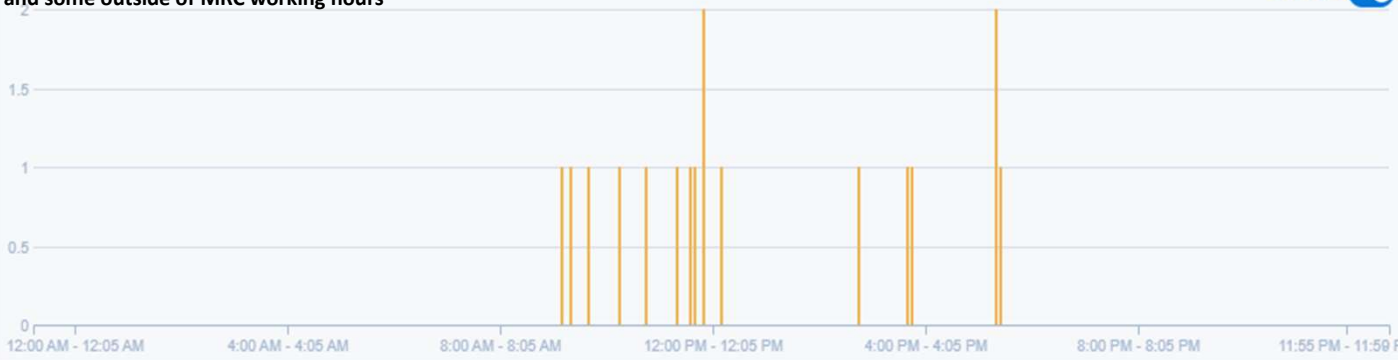
- 2. Historical system disadvantages:**
- Staff had to be on site to answer calls or pick up the mobile phone.
  - The fixed line number could be answered by one staff member only.
  - An answerphone message on the fixed line directed callers to use the mobile number if the call was not answered, or enquirers could choose to leave a limited recorded message.
  - No records of calls could be accessed.
  - Supervision of trainees taking calls was difficult as it required the use of the speaker phone function leading to loss of confidentiality.
  - Calls were easily missed.
  - Not a timely service.

**Examples of call analysis**

Number of inbound calls per day to the MRC 01.09.23 – 30.09.23  
Total 209 calls (44 calls were missed or abandoned)



Call distribution on one day (18<sup>th</sup> September) showing most calls received in the morning and some outside of MRC working hours



- 4. Benefits of the new system:**
- We can now include staff working on other hospital sites
  - Facilitates hybrid working from home to provide call answering services. For example we now have a member of our team working from Leeds.
  - Has enabled more resilience in service provision.
  - Single advertised telephone number.
  - Multiple calls can be answered at the same time rather than an enquirer hearing an engaged tone or the call immediately defaulting to an answerphone.
  - Staff can indicate “not to be disturbed” when unable to take calls, and the system skips over them to the next member of staff.
  - Has enabled a better work life balance for our staff.
  - Enhanced supervision and training opportunities.
  - Call analysis of time calls received, staff answering calls, time on calls, number of unanswered calls, and callee telephone numbers recorded – provides an opportunity to improve the service.
  - Demand identification - ability to identify and record numbers of calls to the service when closed and at weekends.

- 3. Use of the 8x8 system.**
- MRC staff (in a ring group) each have the opportunity to answer the call. Callers hear instructions to remain on the call until it is answered. Only when all the staff active on the ring group have been called does the system default to a voicemail.
  - Advanced functions “Monitor”, “Whisper” and “Barge” enables supervisors to listen in on calls answered by staff in training. If needed the supervisor can prompt the trainee without the caller hearing, or interrupt the call and take over the conversation. Both the supervisor and the trainee have to agree to this monitoring before the system is enabled.
  - The system records the date, time, call duration, and the external caller’s telephone number which is particularly helpful for patient helpline calls.
  - The accurate records of calls and the recordings from the answerphone messages have been found to be useful when responding to service issues.
  - Callers are informed at the start of their call that their call may be monitored or recorded for training purposes.

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Monday to Friday, 9am – 4pm  
E-mail: [bucks.medicinesresourcecentre@nhs.net](mailto:bucks.medicinesresourcecentre@nhs.net)

For questions about your medicines following your hospital visit, please have your medicines to hand when you call this number.

12 month call data to the end of Sept 2023	
Total number of calls to the MRC	2012
Average per month	168 (range 121-217)
Total missed or abandoned calls	353
Average per month	29 (range 22-44)

- 5. Disadvantages of the new system:**
- Staff have to be added and deleted on the ring group by IT staff
  - Opting into 8x8 monitoring systems have to be activated by IT staff
- 6. Future plans:**
- Governance arrangements for the storage and retrieval of calls recorded by the system is currently being finalised.
  - Recording of standardised telephone “role plays” to benefit new or junior staff providing more consistent training.
  - Opportunity to play and replay conversations to analyse good and bad communication skills.
  - Trainees to record some of their calls for later review by their supervisor.
  - Further interrogation of call metrics
  - Redistribution of resources to match caller availability to demand patterns.