



## DOCTORnow Prescribes Toyota iQ

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Three Toyota iQ3 compact hatchbacks, boldly emblazoned with the red DOCTORnow logo, are becoming a familiar sight in Beaconsfield and surrounding areas.

"Patients often wave when they see the cars driving past," says Lynne Smith, Practice Manager of the Buckinghamshire private GP service. "The design is eye-catching, but it's surprising how many people have noticed and commented favourably on our change of vehicles. They are an effective marketing tool."

DOCTORnow previously answered calls and made scheduled visits using a pool of Smart Cars, but the severity of recent winters persuaded it that front-wheel drive vehicles able to cope with all road conditions would be more practical.

"Our VIP24 service provides 24-hour cover, so the doctor on duty could be called out at any time of the day or night," says Lynne. "Front-wheel drive makes mobility that much less of a challenge!"

"Besides which, we offer a leading-edge service and wanted to keep our image fresh and up to date."

The cars were supplied in May by Octagon Bracknell on a 30,000-mile/three-year contract hire agreement through Toyota Financial Services. The Berkshire outlet is one of 100 specialist Toyota Business Centres operating across the UK, offering the complete Toyota range from iQ to Land Cruiser V8.

"The iQs are stylish little cars, and more refined than our previous ones," says Lynne Smith. "They're small enough to be nimble and manoeuvrable, but being roomier with back seats as well as a boot makes it easier if the doctors or nurses need to carry anything with them."

The cars also provide ample headroom, she says – even for a tall doctor like Chief Medical Officer Dr Brian McGirr, the GP who started DOCTORnow eight years ago.

Dr Richard Angwin became Dr McGirr's business partner in 2006 and the business continues to grow, with a total of 11 clinical staff and therapists, backed up by an administration team, now operating from a listed barn conversion in Beaconsfield Old Town.

DOCTORnow promises low doctor-patient ratios, extended surgery and phone consultations and extended availability of medical staff – from 8am-8pm on weekdays and 9am-1pm on Saturdays. Besides home visits, it has a number of corporate clients for whom it provides a range of services, including flu vaccination clinics and GP surgeries in the workplace.

And there are sound health considerations in DOCTORnow taking to the road in Toyota iQs. “The seats are very comfortable in terms of lumbar support,” says Lynne Smith, adding that “the fact that the cars are emission-friendly is also important to us.”

The four-seat Toyota 1.33-litre iQ3 hatchbacks with manual transmission, as used by DOCTORnow, have a combined CO2 emissions of 113g/km, while the combined fuel economy is 57.6mpg.

“None of us had owned Toyotas before, though a couple of the doctors had thought that iQs looked stylish and a little bit funky,” says Lynne. “The staff were excited about getting the cars, and now they’re very happy driving them.”

The generous standard specification on the iQ3 includes alloy wheels, heated door mirrors, six speaker sound system, ABS, auxiliary input socket, automatic air conditioning, alarm and immobiliser, remote central locking, wheel-mounted audio controls, electric door mirrors and front windows, traction control, rain-sensor wipers, smart entry and start, front fog lamps and dusk-sensor headlamps.

**ENDS**