



Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

Practice Managers have their say over Surgery Line

Since it was launched in 2002, Surgery Line's aim has been to make the lives of surgery staff and patients easier. Richard Chapman, CEO of NEG plc explains that "Surgery Line was developed to make it simpler for the staff to handle incoming calls and to make it quicker for patients to get hold of their GP."

To celebrate the installation of the 500th Practice using Surgery Line, NEG has asked for the views of Practice Managers from across the country on how they have found using the system, what their patients feel about calling an 0844 number and what they would say to a surgery considering making the switch to Surgery Line. The following are edited highlights from the feedback we received.



Richard Chapman, CEO of NEG, "easier for staff to handle incoming calls"

**Alison Soos, Practice Manager,
The Village Surgery, Llanbradach**

"It's easier for patients phoning into the surgery. We were initially concerned about the queuing facility, but have actually found that it helps the patients to know where they are in the system. Patients are getting used to the new way of contacting the surgery and seem happy with the innovative system. The staff at NEG are always pleasant to deal with and very helpful. We have been impressed by the company's obvious commitment to customer service. They are very helpful and approachable – keep up the good work."

**Lynn Smith, Assistant Manager at
The Lodge Surgery, Chippenham**

"The reception staff are very happy with the system and the new equipment and they find it easy to operate. It has been a pleasure to deal with NEG. They are such a professional company who genuinely seem to care about the whole process. The staff at NEG went out of their way to support us throughout the transition and kept us fully informed of any changes as they happened. They were eager to ensure that we were happy with the process throughout. It is a major upheaval for a surgery to change its number, but NEG ensured that the changeover was handled



NEG is "famous for its customer care"

as smoothly as possible. If any other surgery were considering installing the system with NEG, I would tell them to go for it!"

**Paul Canham, Practice Manager,
Llynfi Surgery, Maesteg**

"We were able to handle most of our incoming calls efficiently - most of the time, but like many surgeries, we did have problems during the morning peak. Although we have 4 incoming lines, before we had NEG's queuing system, calls would come through to us, but they would just ring out. To our patients, it must have sounded like we couldn't be bothered to answer our phones - when in fact staff were already speaking to other patients. I don't have any hesitation in recommending the system. It's a cost effective way of getting your hands on a first rate phone system."



Surgery Line makes engaged tones a thing of the past

**Siri Knott, Executive Manager,
The Cathedral Medical Group, Chichester**

"We are very pleased with the new system. Both patients and staff have given positive feedback on the improvement in our telephone service and I'm happy to recommend it - and regularly do - to other surgeries."

**Roland Cundy, Practice Manager,
Binfield Surgery, near Bracknell**

"The new phone system and telephones have more than lived up to our expectations, as has the support from NEG. We are now able to measure the effectiveness of our system and use this information to give the patients better access to the surgery."

I have already recommended the system to other surgeries and will be showing it to them in the near future. Our patients now have a much better access to the surgery - it feels as if we have gone from the stone age to the space age!"

**Sharon Rees, Practice Manager,
St Luke's, Guilford**

"The partners and staff are happy with the new system - we all feel very positive about it. This system gives the surgery a chance to improve their telephone system with a first class package. We were particularly attracted by the fact that the system could provide us with more lines at no extra cost to the practice."

The installation was well planned and did not disrupt the surgery at all. We now find it much easier to get a line to dial out, and calls are also answered more quickly which has to be good for our patients. We also had good training on site - we have found the service that we have received to be very good throughout."

**Lee MacDonald, Practice Manager,
Church View, Wetherby**

"Previously we had no way of identifying and prioritising patients with an emergency. As part of our installation package, we requested an audible alarm. This means that all staff within hearing distance of reception are aware if there is a caller on the line who requires urgent assistance."

All staff know that these calls must be answered immediately - we think that this is a useful service for our patients. The benefits of Surgery Line are undeniable; the system is excellent- it has been designed for surgeries and it shows."

**Christine Zscherpel, Practice Manager,
Dr Patel's Surgery, North Fuzton & Bletchley**

"Our previous phone system was old and simply didn't have the lines or facilities needed to process calls quickly. We felt that we needed a more up to date system which could improve our ability to handle large numbers of calls more rapidly."

Our telephone lines are utilised much more efficiently now and this frees up reception time. We like the use of headsets and the system has generally made call handling much quicker. The automated system works really well and the staff have found it easy to use. The system has brought us many benefits: it is simple to use, we now have better control over call handing and our automated out of hours system works very well. It has fully lived up to our expectations."

What is Surgery Line?

"Surgery Line is a cost-effective way for forward looking surgeries to improve the service that they offer to patients, reduce stress levels for staff and self-fund a state of the art phone system," explains NEG's CEO, Richard Chapman. "As you can see, we have been swamped by positive feedback from Practice Managers from across the UK who have already switched to Surgery Line. By doing so, they have saved money, improved the service that they offer patients and relieved the pressure on busy staff."

You and your staff benefit

When a surgery switches to an 084 number, NEG will install and maintain the most efficient communications system on the market. You specify exactly what equipment you want to receive (from handsets to switchboards) for no extra charge. With your own 084 number, you keep about 2p from every call to re-invest in your practice, instead of BT making all the profit from calls to your surgery.

How your patients benefit

Patients benefit by having their calls answered more quickly. The engaged tone becomes rare - even at peak times - because you are able to handle incoming calls more efficiently, whilst patient calls are spread out during the day. Calls to 084 or 'lo-call' numbers cost patients 4p per minute, the same as the first minute of BT's standard call rate between 6am and 6pm. This means that many patients will actually pay less in total because their call is answered and processed more quickly. Significantly, the cost of calls from mobiles remains unchanged - these account for around 30% of all calls to surgeries.

The phone system that won't test your patients

"I've met a number of practice managers who think that Surgery Line sounds almost too good to be true," says Chapman, "but after it's been installed, they realise that NEG delivers everything we promise, and more."

Surgery Line

For more information on how the Surgery Line system can help you visit www.networkeuropegroup.com or call

0800 096 86 26

