



Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

Cottingham Medical Centre impressed by Surgery Line technology

Cottingham Medical Centre is situated in the pleasant village of Cottingham, reputed to be England's largest village, a few miles north west of the bustling city of Kingston upon Hull.

The practice serves a semi rural community: as the village is a popular place to retire, the surgery has 20% higher than the national average of its patient base over the age of 65. Coming under control of East Yorkshire PCT, Cottingham Medical Centre is comprised of 5 partners, 1 salaried GP and 16 additional staff, including nursing professionals and administration personnel.



Cottingham Medical Centre is in 'Britain's largest village' just a few miles from Kingston-upon-Hull

“The Surgery Line system is so much more reliable than our previous system”

The practice felt that its previous telephone system was outdated and simply unable to cope with the volume of calls which came into the surgery; consequently, patients were phoning in only to hear the engaged tone.

It also proved difficult to obtain replacement parts for the system: due to

its age, the only spares available were reconditioned and prone to unreliability.

The Partners and Cottingham's Practice Manager Brian Harrison felt that this situation couldn't continue and decided to investigate the alternatives offered by various telecoms companies.

Following on from the short listing process, a meeting was arranged with NEG and the decision was taken to proceed with the Surgery Line system. "We felt that their digital system had the potential to be extended to keep abreast with technological



Reception staff such as Barbara Rogers, finds that Surgery Lines makes them more effective.

advances- our research suggested that it was the best system," comments Brian "We also liked its capabilities such as the

call recording facility - plus the fact that we were receiving a modern system for a relatively small financial outlay."

The system was installed in July 2004 and the practice has been more than happy with its performance ever since, finding it easy to operate and effective in handling the call traffic coming into the surgery. "The Surgery Line system is so much more reliable than our previous system and has significantly reduced the number of 'dropped' calls," explains Brian. "It just sits there and does the job - we don't need to intervene - it even knows when the bank holidays are and plays the appropriate message without any involvement from us."

"The support team is also excellent: every member of personnel appears to be knowledgeable"

The Reception staff- often those in the front line when it comes to dealing with patients who are frustrated by communication problems, are similarly impressed with the system. "It is much more dependable," comments Carol Buckton, the Senior Receptionist, and her colleague Barbara Rogers, adds that she feels "that calls are now handled much more efficiently."

"It just sits there and does the job - we don't need to intervene"

Despite the fact that a number change is a considerable undertaking for any organisation, the patients at Cottingham also appear to have quickly come to appreciate the benefits of using the system. "We conducted a survey recently to gauge the patients' reaction to our system and were pleased to see that over 60% of those who responded rated the system as good to excellent," comments

Brian. "They also feel that the Surgery Line system is more reliable and that it is now easier to make appointments and speak with the relevant member of staff."



NEG support staff are praised for their 'excellent' work

Cottingham Medical Centre's top five reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line

1. The digital technology
2. The fact that the system is expandable
3. The ability to keep pace with technological advances
4. The good back up service from friendly and knowledgeable staff
5. The facility to have a cost neutral telephone system

Brian is quick to single out the NEG staff for praise. "To any surgery considering using Surgery Line I would point out how little intervention the system requires to do its job efficiently. The support team is also excellent: every member of personnel appears to be knowledgeable and fixes any problems almost immediately. The customer service team are also very reliable and supportive. The input from the company, and the system itself, 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, this case study focuses on one of the hundreds of surgeries that 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

Case Study No. 30

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

0800 096 86 26

