



# Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

## Heath Lane Medical Centre finds NEG “an excellent company to do business with”

Heath Lane Medical Centre is located in the residential area of Great Broughton, on the outskirts of Chester. The practice, which has 7,000 patients on its register, comes under the control of Western Cheshire PCT and employs approximately 25 staff, including 5 GPs, a nurse practitioner and nursing team, plus additional support staff.

The centre installed its Surgery Line phone system in June 2006 after continual problems with their previous system which was outdated and kept crashing due to call volume. Patients also complained of constantly getting the engaged tone when they called up to make an appointment.

***“It had all the functions and spec that we wanted from a new system”***

Accordingly, two of the Partners and the Practice Manager, Linda Bennett decided that the practice needed a new telephone service and met with Josh Turley of NEG to discuss what Surgery Line could do for them. “We liked the system,” explains Linda. “It had all the functions and spec that we wanted from a new system, plus it



Since installing Surgery Line, patient satisfaction with the phone system has increased by 10 points

had the potential to be self funding and didn't require a large initial capital outlay. Josh was also really helpful: he answered our questions without being pushy.”

Linda and the partners did have some reservations that the system would be self financing, and whilst many surgeries do find this to be the case, this hasn't quite proved to be so at Heath Lane. However, Linda, the doctors and staff are all pleased with the way that the system is working



Reception staff at Heath Lane like the headsets and increased security that the system offers

For more information on how the Surgery Line system can help you visit [www.networkeuropegroup.com](http://www.networkeuropegroup.com) or call

**0800 096 86 26**

for the practice. "We are glad that we went with the Surgery Line system," comments Linda. "It's reassuring to know that we have good technical back up available and all the staff we have dealt with at NEG have been very helpful."

***"The direct dial numbers provide better access for patients"***

When the system was first installed, there was some negative feedback from a small minority of patients in response to the change. "NEG were very supportive in helping us to deal with this and clear up any questions about the cost of calls: our patients are now happy with the system. In fact, in the category 'telephoning the surgery' our patient satisfaction survey showed a 10 point increase this year. This category attracted the lowest score last year, but with the introduction of Surgery Line, is now the area in which we have shown greatest improvement."

Linda also reports that the new phone service has helped with many aspects of surgery life. She particularly likes the panic buttons which improve security, as well as identifying that the headsets for staff increase efficiency and address DSE issues



Heath Lane Medical Centre is on the outskirts of Chester in a residential area

by using the telephone and keyboard at the same time. "The direct dial numbers are used by some PCT staff to provide better access for patients," explains Linda. "They are also given out to colleagues to save them being routed through the switchboard. The built in directory is useful, whilst the automatic programming is very efficient and we appreciate the use of messaging and communicating via voicemail."

### **Heath Lane Medical Centre's top five reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line**

1. It is a high tech system.
2. The technical support team are good.
3. NEG are an excellent company to do business with.
4. Ability to install system without a large capital investment.
5. The project management of the installation.

***"We are glad that we went with the Surgery Line system"***

"Like any new system, it did take time to learn how to use it and unsurprisingly there were a few minor technical glitches at the outset. However, these were quickly resolved by the helpline, and we have found the level of support from NEG as a whole to be very good.

We have run reports to show how call handling is being managed, and these have proved useful in the day to day running of the practice. Our staff are happy with Surgery Line, and our patient satisfaction with our phone service has improved. If any surgery with an outdated phone service was considering making the switch, I would advise them to talk to Josh to find out if Surgery Line could be the solution for them."

### **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 George Neal. "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 Neal, "but after it's been installed, they realise that NEG delivers everything we promise, and more."

# Surgery Line

Case Study No.53

For more information on how the Surgery Line system can help you visit [www.networkeuropgroup.com](http://www.networkeuropgroup.com) or call

**0800 096 86 26**

