



# Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

## Reports Prove Dramatic Fall in Average Call Durations for South Wales Surgery

Maesteg in South Wales, located 6 miles to the East of Port Talbot and 12 miles from Swansea, has a population of over 19,000. Llynfi Surgery, which comes under the control of Bridgend Local Health Board, has a total of 25 staff including 5 doctors, and serves around 40% of the town's population.

Before the Surgery Line system was installed, the surgery didn't have any particularly serious issues with patients calling in to book appointments. "To be honest, we were able to handle most of our incoming calls efficiently - most of the time," says Paul Canham, Practice Manager, "but like many surgeries, we did have problems during the morning peak.

***"I have no hesitation in recommending the system - it's a cost effective way of getting your hands on a first rate phone system."***

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



Llynfi Surgery serves around 40% of the towns population

in fact staff were already speaking to other patients."

After meeting Julie Jerum from NEG in late autumn 2004, the practice soon saw the advantages that the Surgery Line system could offer. By December 2004, it was already installed. "It was the flexibility and manageability of the NEG system that swung it for me. But the fact that such an impressive range of features could effectively be 'self funding' certainly helped to speed up my decision. This was an innovative way of funding a brand new telephone system." says Mr Canham. "I certainly



Linda Evans, Reception Manager

did my homework on NEG, and went into the change-over with my eyes open because I had a good knowledge of our communication problems."

When the system went live in the run up to Christmas, there were a few initial problems. "Nothing out of the ordinary, just simple issues that required bedding down. All the problems - and they were all minor ones - were dealt with very quickly. NEG worked hard with us to ensure that the system was able to do what we wanted it to do. In particular I was very keen to analyse if - as NEG claimed - call lengths were actually reduced." Paul's independently produced reports show that call durations have indeed decreased from an average of 3 minutes 41 seconds pre installation call in December 2004, to February's average of just 87 seconds per call. Using the 0844 number this actually reduces the cost of the phone call from an average of 12.9p to an average to under 6p.

When anything new is introduced, there is often adverse reaction from elements of the community, and the Llynfi practice was no exception. Whilst there is 'anecdotal' evidence of problems when some patients called the surgery, after extensive research, Paul and his team found no widespread evidence of this problem occurring. They have even taken to calling patients as part of an extensive quality control exercise. Patients are asked about their recent experience of calling the surgery.

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Without exception they have replied that their call has been answered quickly and they have had no problems in getting through to speak with someone. In fact, the surgery use data from the system to analyse call statistics independently and don't rely on pre-written reports.

So, three months down the line, how does Paul feel about the introduction of Surgery Line? "I have been a little disappointed by the reaction of some patients because I know we have improved the service we are able to offer them. I am not, however, disappointed with either the Surgery Line product, or NEG themselves. They have backed up the surgery excellently." The response from personnel working at Llynfi has also been very affirmative. Reception Manager, Linda Evans comments "The staff are very positive, and have seen the real and on-going benefits for themselves."



The Surgery's Secretary, Wendy

### Llynfi Surgery's top 5 reasons for choosing Surgery Line:

1. The equipment is 'top drawer'.
2. The support is excellent
3. Its use as a management tool.
4. Its connectivity potential to other systems
5. The pricing structure

Let's leave the final comment to Paul: "I don't have any hesitation in recommending the system, but a good project management plan as to how you want it (the Surgery Line system) to work for you is paramount. It's a cost effective way of getting your hands on a first rate phone system."

### 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. 18

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

**0800 096 86 26**

