



Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

Pinfold Medical Practice pleased by switch to Surgery Line

Pinfold Medical Practice is a thriving surgery situated in the centre of the university town of Loughborough. Currently part of Charnwood and North West Leicestershire PCT, the practice serves patients from a range of backgrounds including residents from the outlying villages, as well as students and a significant Asian community.

John Kavanagh, Business Manager at the practice was frustrated that the phone system was the one area that patients consistently complained about every year in the annual survey. "We tried to address this initially by approaching our existing provider," explains John. "However, the system was so inflexible that very little was achieved." John and the Partners decided to look further afield and met with Mirrin Ridgley of NEG. "Mirrin was very patient; she visited us several times and answered all of our questions," comments John. "We had some reservations, but Mirrin was able to demonstrate to us that Surgery Line could actually do the things she had promised. We also visited another practice where we could see the system in a live environment and talk with people actually using it."



"Pinfold Medical Practice is a thriving surgery situated in Loughborough town centre"

Having seen Surgery Line in action, John was convinced, and the system was installed in February 2006. The initial transition period had a number of issues, but as John explains, these were quickly dealt with. "As with any new IT based system, we had our fair share of teething problems and quite a bit of tweaking was needed, but now it runs smoothly and I have more call information than I had ever dreamed of. The support from NEG has actually exceeded expectations: any problems are dealt with quickly and efficiently by Fay, our contact – she has been excellent."



"70% of patients who expressed a preference reported now finding it easier to contact the surgery"

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

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So, now that the system has been working efficiently for a period of time, how do staff and patients feel about the change? John explains "As you would expect with a major change, reactions from patients have been a little mixed. Some patients love the system but we have had complaints. However, the number is down on our old system; in fact one patient who complained early on has now written to us to say that he has changed his mind and has complimented us on the system. In our annual patient survey, almost 70% of patients who expressed a preference reported now finding it easier to contact the surgery."

The staff response has also been positive. Jane Wayment, Senior Receptionist feels that the system is working well and she particularly likes the way that patients are kept informed when in the queue. Anna Ingle, Operations Manager thinks that the menu system is working particularly well with calls routed directly to administration, bypassing the switchboard operator. She has also noted that when the system was first installed, complaints rose initially but now run at a much lower level than for the previous system.

Pinfold Medical Practice's top 5 reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line

1. The excellent standard of customer service
2. More management information than you can shake a stick at
3. The automatic call recording facility
4. The facility for cancelling appointments when the practice is shut
5. The fact that patients are given information when queuing so they can make a decision whether to hang up or call back later

John reports that Surgery Line has helped with many aspects of running the practice and feels that the system's benefits are manifold. "As disputes about what has been said on the phone are more easily resolved, abuse from patients has reduced. The headsets allow our Receptionists to operate hands free and we have access to management information which enables us to make informed



"Staff find the new system makes it easier to handle incoming calls"

decisions. Pressure on the switchboard has been reduced due to the menu option and facility for cancelling appointments when we are shut. We also run regular reports on how things are working, and have used the data to make changes to rotas: for example, we now have the confidence to keep the switchboard open during the lunch hour which the patients love." In fact, John's only reservation is that, whilst it is cheaper than their previous system, Surgery Line may not be as fully self funding as hoped for, although as he says, "it is still early days."

So, would John actually recommend the system to others? "I am happy to recommend Surgery Line, but I would tell anyone not to just take my word for it – go and see it in action at another practice to ensure that it's right for you. I'm certainly glad we made the switch."

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. 41

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