



Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

Binfield's Surgery Line system helps them "move from the stone age into the space age"

Binfield Surgery in the south east of England is located a few miles north east of Bracknell, and comes under the control of Bracknell Forest PCT. The surrounding local area is rural in nature and enjoys a relatively high rate of employment and a low crime rate. At present, the practice employs 29 staff including 4 doctors, with a patient base that is largely affluent and middle class in its social profile.

The surgery decided to go ahead with the installation of Surgery Line as it was continually experiencing severe difficulties with patients getting engaged lines when trying to ring in to make appointments or contact staff. "Our old system was out of date and simply couldn't cope with the demands placed upon it, the problems were horrendous," explains Roland Cundy, Business Manager at Binfield.

"We have had a lot of compliments about the system..."

This predicament of engaged tones at peak times is one that is experienced by surgeries nationwide, but the Binfield practice decided that it was time to do something about it. Having met with Chris



Binfield Surgery near Bracknell

Berry from NEG, the decision to proceed was made within just four weeks, and the Surgery Line system was installed in January 2005. "We decided to opt for the system because of all the features that it could offer us - such as the availability of management statistics, ability to record calls, the automatic switch over at night, the out of house number, the panic button and so on - it was the whole package of options really, plus the cost," explains Roland. "We were a little concerned by the stories in the media about 0870 numbers. However, with the implementation of the new 0844 lo-call number this is no longer an issue for us."



Roland Cundy, Business Manager and Jenny Willatts, Reception Manager

In the months since its installation, the new system has already had a considerable impact upon the flow of calls coming

into the surgery, particularly at peak call times. In addition to this, the staff at Binfield have responded very positively to the system and feel that it has made it much easier for patients to contact them. Jenny Willatts, Reception Manager at the surgery, explains how using the system has improved the service that they are able to offer their patients. "We are now able to deal with our peak calls within the first hour of opening more efficiently and professionally," she says, a feeling supported by the whole reception team. Roland Cundy adds, "It's great to have a very modern system that caters for all our needs - and at the same time gives far better access for our patients."

So what about the patients? Change is often met with suspicion and resentment, so how have they reacted to these changes? Whilst there have inevitably been some complaints, this represents a small minority of the patient base and the majority seem to appreciate the improvements that Surgery Line has brought about. "We have had a lot of compliments about the system, although a few of our elderly patients have found it difficult to adapt to," says Roland, "we are also able to use the statistics that we can pull off the system to show how we are doing."

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The ability to use the Surgery Line system to analyse data and evaluate performance has been an attractive feature for surgeries. PCTs are now insisting on data to measure the reception of incoming calls - the Surgery Line systems are equipped to deal with this. "Although we have no data from the old system to

compare our improvements, we are now able to measure the effectiveness of our system and use this information to give the patients better access to the surgery," explains Roland. "I have already recommended the system to other surgeries and will be showing it to them in the near future."



Chris Berry from NEG was "impressed by the staffs' commitment to patient care"

Binfield Surgery's top five reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line:

1. The ability to get through to the person that you want
2. The facility for grouping phones
3. The cost
4. The automatic switch system
5. The ability to record calls

The practice is delighted with the improved service that it is now able to offer its patients and feels that the switch to Surgery Line has more than paid off. "The new phone system and telephones have more than lived up to our expectations, as has the support from NEG," concludes Roland. "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!"

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."

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

0800 096 86 26

