



Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

Castle Donington practice reports that Surgery Line has 'tangible benefits' for patients and staff

The Surgery in Castle Donington is a fairly large practice situated in a rural part of Derbyshire, just 9 miles from the county town of Derby and 12 miles from Nottingham. The village itself has good transport links being close to both the M1 and East Midlands Airport. The Surgery comes under control of the Leicestershire and North County Rutland PCT. Approximately 9,000 patients are registered at the practice which employs a total of 23 staff, including 10 doctors.



Surgery Line has proved to be a worthwhile exercise that has helped improve access for patients in Castle Donington

"Surgery Line is simple and easy to use"

The Surgery installed their Surgery Line phone system in January 2006 having experienced continual problems with their previous phone service. "Our lines were often clogged at peak call times and our patients were understandably frustrated by repeatedly getting the engaged tone when trying to contact us," comments Kathy Wright, Practice Manager at The Surgery. In response to patients' complaints and

their own dissatisfaction with the service, Kathy and the Partners looked for an alternative solution.

Having met with Mirrin Ridgley from NEG who explained what the system could do, they opted for Surgery Line for their practice. "We liked the fact that we could increase our incoming lines (for no extra line rental cost) and upgrade the system to improve communication," explains



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Kathy. "We were also attracted by the recording technology available with the system. Mirrin went through everything very thoroughly at our meetings and made sure that we clearly understood what the system could do for us."

"I advise anyone considering the system to go and see it at work"

Apart from a few minor hiccups when it was first installed as the system was adjusted to suit The Surgery's individual needs, Kathy is very happy with how it is working within the practice and was pleased by how quickly staff became confident in its use. "Surgery Line is simple and easy to use," she comments. "The staff and patients soon got used to the system and we haven't looked back since. Many of the features, particularly the voice recording facility, have already proved immensely useful."

"The benefits are very tangible and obvious to staff and patients alike"

However, people do not always respond well to change and often the most difficult part of any transition is the patient reaction.



Approximately 9,000 patients are registered at the practice

Inevitably there was some apprehension at first, but Kathy reports that the patients are now all using the system quite happily. "The reaction has been mainly positive: there were some grumbles about the queuing system initially but these have subsided the longer the system has been in place. A few patients objected to paying the price of a local call as some had free local calls but they have now become familiar with the system. At the end of the day, the benefits of Surgery Line are very tangible and obvious to staff and patients alike."

The Surgery's top five reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line

1. The recording technology
2. Increased number of lines into the surgery
3. New phones for everyone
4. Private lines for doctors and some practice staff
5. The options menu which allows people to get through to the right department without delay

Surgery Line has helped with the day to day running of the practice as well as improving communication for everyone involved with The Surgery. "Patients can now get through to us unlike before and the voice recording has proved invaluable for both doctors and patients," explains Kathy. Whilst each practice is different and what suits one surgery may not be right for another, Kathy has enough confidence in the system to recommend it to others. "It is really worth looking into as the benefits are tangible: I advise anyone considering the system to go and see it at work. For us, it has certainly been a worthwhile exercise that has helped us to improve access to our surgery."

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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Case Study No. 47

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