



Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

‘Surgery Line offers value for money,’ says Dr Pinder and Partners

Dr Pinder and Partners is a large group practice spread over 4 locations in the Castleford area, a few miles south east of Leeds and is part of Wakefield PCT. The main surgery at Beauforth House in Ferrybridge, was purpose built and opened in May 2005 as part of a major extension to the practice.

This expansion enabled the practice to offer patients 900 additional appointments annually. Dr Pinder and Partners also operates an online appointment booking and prescription ordering service. The practice employs 50 staff over the four sites and serves a patient base of local residents living in a combination of rural and urban areas.

“The system has enabled us to considerably improve our ability to handle calls”

To coincide with the opening of these new, modern premises, it was decided that the phone system needed to be replaced as it simply wasn't functioning efficiently enough to deal with the 9,500 patients registered at the practice. “Before we installed Surgery Line, we



Beauforth House is situated close to the area from which Ferrybridge takes its name

had a number of problems with our phone system which included regularly engaged lines with no call waiting system which meant that many calls were abandoned,” explains Alan Grimes, General Manager at Dr Pinder and Partners. “As we didn't have any call data, we were unable to analyse the system to make improvements.”

Accordingly, Alan met with Kath Simons from NEG to look at ways in which Surgery Line could help. “We really needed to update our previous



Dr Pinder and Partners covers 4 sites including the main surgery at Beauforth House

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

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system,” comments Alan, “but to upgrade it sufficiently for our needs would have proved very expensive. We were impressed by the completeness of the whole Surgery Line package. We did have some concerns about the financial arrangements and how the system would operate, but decided to proceed. The system was installed at the same time as our new premises opened at Beauforth House in 2005.”

“We were impressed by the completeness of the whole Surgery Line package”

Alan admits that there was some fine tuning necessary in the early days of installation, but that as the system has been refined to meet the practice's needs, Surgery Line is operating well and has brought many benefits. “The system has enabled us to considerably improve our ability to handle calls. In addition, patients can now leave messages 24 hours a day to cancel appointments or order a prescription. We also have live data to monitor system changes which helps us with staff training and service levels. The system has proved to be flexible, it is good value for money and works well for us at our surgery.”

Dr Pinder and Partners top five reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line

1. It is a good system
2. Value for money
3. Plenty of good add on features
4. The system has flexibility
5. The availability of useful data

Alan reports that, unsurprisingly, the reaction from some patients was negative initially, but that these complaints have now ceased. “Our patients have become used to the system and we have also worked to refine the call handling so that it works efficiently for our practice. The system has lived up to our expectations and has brought us many features that our previous system didn't offer. The reaction from staff using Surgery Line has also been very positive.”



Nearby Ferrybridge power station is one of the biggest producers of electricity in Yorkshire and Humber

So, would Alan recommend the system to other surgeries looking to improve patient communication? “I would say go for it, but be aware that the practice has to put in the time and effort to make the system work at its optimum for them. In our experience, we found that limiting the number of options worked best for us and I would advise colleagues to be careful if they have more incoming lines than operators. The system has many things to recommend it and with the necessary fine tuning, should be a valuable addition to any practice.”

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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