



# Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

## GP feedback proves that Surgery Line is a hit

Since it was launched in 2002, Surgery Line's aim has been to make the lives of surgery staff and patients easier. Richard Chapman, CEO of NEG plc explains that "Surgery Line was developed to make it simpler for the staff to handle incoming calls and to make it quicker for patients to get hold of their GP."

To celebrate the installation of the 500th Practice using Surgery Line, NEG has asked for the views of Practice Managers from across the country on how they have found using the system, what their patients feel about calling an 0844 number and what they would say to a surgery considering making the switch to Surgery Line. The following are edited highlights from the feedback we received.



Support is always available at the end of the phone



Surgery Line combines award winning service and technology. NEG's Directors celebrate with two recent industry awards.

**Siri Knott, Executive Manager,  
The Cathedral Medical Group, Chichester**

"We recognised the need to do something to cure the bottleneck of calls - we knew that to address the problem we needed to expand our phone system to include additional direct dial numbers for staff.

We wanted a queuing facility for patients and the ability to direct patients through to the right department. We also wanted staff to be able to log out from their station and to receive voicemail. The reception team are happy with the new system. With patients placed in a queue, and a built in pause between calls for recording messages etc, the inflow of calls is more organised, resulting in a less stressful atmosphere for my team."

**Linda Evans, Reception, Manager,  
Llynfi Surgery, Wales**

"The staff are very positive (about Surgery Line) and have seen the real and on-going benefits for themselves."

**Lynn Smith, Assistant Manager,  
The Lodge Surgery, Chippenham**

"We were encouraged by the opportunity of improving our phone system but without any financial outlay from the practice. We are very happy with our new system, it has lived up to the expectations that we had of it. We now have a modern switchboard with eight lines as opposed to four, which means that the patients find it much easier to get through to us. They have commented that the recording sounds very

professional and also like the emergency button option which enables a patient in urgent need to take priority when calling in to the surgery."



Surgery Line makes life easier for reception staff

**Judy Keith, Practice Manager,  
The Esplanade Surgery, Ryde**

"The NEG support team were marvellous. They helped with every little problem and never made us feel guilty about calling them up. One patient called us up last week to say 'welcome to the 21st century!' Surgery Line will provide you with a first class phone system that will enhance the safety of your staff and improve the communications between you and your patients."

**Janet Case, Practice Manager,  
Haydock Medical Centre, St. Helens**

"Prior to the installation of Surgery Line, patients were constantly hearing the engaged tone which was obviously both annoying and time consuming for them. To make matters worse, people would ring in early to get their test results, thereby blocking the line for patients who needed to make appointments or to speak to a doctor urgently.

We liked the range of features that Surgery Line was able to offer us, such as the automated call handling facility coupled with the ability to give queue information.

The system also has an efficient one step out of hours transfer system which we felt would be helpful for our patients. We were pleased with the installation and the support that we have received from NEG. The whole transfer process has been quite painless and the new system has more than lived up to our expectations.

You may need to be prepared for some scepticism from your PCT, but the Surgery Line service is a good system and it is worth arguing for. It has certainly been beneficial to both our staff and our patients. Other surgeries have contacted me to ask about the system and I have been happy to recommend it to them."

**Paul Middleton, Practice Manager,  
Dapdune Surgery, Guilford**

"We did have some concerns about how our patients would respond to the change, but we did, however, feel it would be quickly accepted when, with the addition of three times as many lines, patients suddenly found a two hour engaged tone a thing of the past.

We were getting a modern system for no capital outlay. This meant that we were providing a better service for patients, saving them both time and money by doing away with the need to redial. We also liked the management system which enabled us to measure the performance of the service, our staff and the costs."

**Karen Sallis, Assistant Practice Manager,  
The Cathedral Medical Group,  
Chichester**

"Whenever anything new is introduced, there will always be a group of people who are unhappy. However, with all the benefits the system has brought us and our patients I'm glad that this very small minority didn't stop us from going ahead with a system that has helped so many of our patients."

**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, we have been swamped by positive feedback from Practice Managers from across the UK who 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](http://www.networkeuropegroup.com) or call

**0800 096 86 26**

