



# Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

## The Pease Way Medical Centre finds that Surgery Line delivers everything that is promised

The Pease Way Medical Centre in County Durham is one of three practices in the area serving a population of over 30,000 residents in the new town of Newton Aycliffe, 7 miles north of Darlington and 12 miles south of Durham. The practice currently comes under the control of Sedgefield PCT, but this is soon to be changed to Durham as part of a major restructuring. The centre, which is also a training centre, employs a total of 8 GPs, plus 2 Nurse Practitioners and approximately 25 part-time and full time staff in a range of departments.



The new town of Newton Aycliffe is 7 miles north of Darlington and 12 miles south of Durham.

With a patient base of over 10,000, the medical centre is constantly busy, and like many surgeries across the country, patients could find it difficult to get through to a receptionist, particularly at peak call times.

***“We felt that the Surgery Line system was the most viable system available”***

Mike Spence, Pease Way’s Practice Manager and Dr Heath, one of the Partners, first saw Surgery Line at an exhibition at the NAPC (National Association of Primary Care) Conference

in 2005. They decided to investigate further and met with Kath Simons of NEG. “We really needed to provide a better telephone service for the patients,” explains Mike. With the full agreement of the Partners, the system was installed in March 2006.

“At first we were a little unsure about signing up, but after questioning Kath, it became clear that the Surgery Line system was the most suitable system available on the market,” says Mike. “We liked the many facilities that the system offered, such as the ability to record calls and



The Pease Way Medical Centre is close to the town’s shopping centre

the option of generating a range of data to run reports.”

For more information on how the Surgery Line system can help you visit [www.networkeuropegroup.com](http://www.networkeuropegroup.com) or call

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Mike is now happy to recount that his experience of using Surgery Line has been a positive one. "The phone system and support from NEG has met the expectations that we had. The system has enabled us to ensure that phones are answered and to handle calls more efficiently."

***"We got exactly what we were promised"***

In fact, the implementation of the system has had an impact upon other areas of the practice, most significantly, the way in which staffing is organised. "When we installed Surgery Line, it caused us to look at and change for the better our staff rotas to ensure that we were fully addressing our patients' needs," explains Mike.

### **Pease Way Medical Centre's top five reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line**

1. The new telephones with headsets and speaker phones
2. The reporting system
3. The facility for recording calls
4. The panic alarm
5. The cost recovery element via incoming call charges

The initial response from patients has been muted, which is unusual given the fact that any form of change is often initially met with some resistance. "We have had surprisingly little reaction from our patients, although the responses we have had have been adverse," comments Mike. "The main issues have been the long telephone number together with some confusion and concern over the issue of charges.

However, as the system has settled in, the patients have become more comfortable with it, and complaints regarding the new number have ceased. Our Admin staff certainly approve of the system. Lynn Morton – our Office Manager – is typical in that she very much likes the system – apart from the fact that 'the phone keeps ringing!'



About 1 in 3 locals are registered with the Medical Centre

The only issue that Mike has with the system is the lack of global quick dial numbers, but this minor concern aside, he feels that NEG and the Surgery Line system have delivered all that was expected.

***"We have a modern, up-to-date phone system designed specifically for GP's surgeries"***

"I would say that we got exactly what we were promised. We have no regrets about switching to Surgery Line. We now have a modern up-to-date phone system designed specifically for GPs' surgeries which does exactly what we want it to do, at the cost we expected, and with excellent support," concludes Mike.

### **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. 42

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