



# Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

## Pershore Medical Practice praise NEG for 'exceptional' support

Pershore Medical Practice is located in the rural community of Pershore near to the M5 and M50, a few miles south of the town of Worcester. The practice has over 10,000 patients, with a higher than average proportion of elderly residents, and employs nine doctors with thirty one additional members of staff in a range of roles, including administration and nursing. Part of Worcestershire PCT, the practice moved to new, state of the art premises near to the town's Civic Centre in the latter half of 2006 and is now located in the same premises as the new Pershore Hospital.



Pershore Medical Practice moved to brand new premises in 2006

***"Our patients are pleased to now be able to get through on the first attempt"***

Patients at Pershore were unhappy with the phone system in use at the practice prior to the switch to Surgery Line. This dissatisfaction was officially confirmed by responses to the annual patient survey. As Pam Ford, Business Manager at Pershore explains "When calling the surgery, there was a continuous engaged signal and it was also impossi-

ble to ascertain the usage of incoming and outgoing lines." Accordingly, it was decided to update the old system, and after meeting with Chris Berry from NEG, Pam felt confident in recommending the Surgery Line system to the Partners at the practice who made the final decision to go ahead.

The system was installed in January 2006 and since that time, the practice hasn't looked back. "Initially we were unsure about the costs and there was also some negativity from some staff



The town is located a few miles south of Worcester

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and patients at first – people rarely respond well to change,” comments Pam. However, patient response has improved as people have become more familiar with the system. “Our patients are pleased to now be able to get through on the first attempt, even if they do sometimes have to queue at particularly busy times.”

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***“We are now able to identify the busiest periods and busiest extensions”***

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Pam has also made good use of the data provided by the Surgery Line system and has found it helpful in the day to day organisation of the practice. “We are now able to identify the busiest periods and busiest extensions. We have also run reports to show our receptionists how many calls they are handling each day, and have also been able to show patients why, where and when the phones are busy.”

Pam feels that the system has helped the staff to deal with calls more efficiently and has also found the call recording facility particularly useful. “It is a modern system which, despite all its functions, is easy to use. Some of our staff were unsure about it at first, but have now adapted well. They particularly like the headsets which leave them hands free.”

### **Pershore Medical Practice’s top five reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line**

1. The modern equipment
2. Flexibility and ease of use
3. Good reporting functions
4. The allowance against rental
5. The quality of support from NEG



The practice currently has 10,000 patients on its books

Pam is very happy with the way that the system is working for staff and patients. “The installation process was efficiently handled with thorough training which enabled us to use the system effectively from day one. Now that the system is well established, it would be nice to be trained to do some of the amendments to the system ourselves.”

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***“NEG staff are always helpful and thorough in their dealings with us”***

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Once again, the support from NEG staff comes in for particular praise. “The support from NEG has been exceptional; the staff are always helpful and thorough in their dealings with us,” says Pamela. “If another surgery was considering installing the system, I would urge them to come and see it in action. Then, if they felt it was right for their surgery, they should go ahead. Personally, I like the system very much, and feel that it works extremely well for us and 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, 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. 45

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