



# Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

## 1 year on and this Fulham Surgery still can't find a catch to their Surgery Line system

The Surgery at Lillie Road in Fulham is located on a busy main road within a bustling urban area of south west London. Located close to Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, The Surgery serves a wide ranging socio-economic group, including a substantial proportion of middle class patients, mixed with some pockets of deprivation. The Surgery, which includes 9 doctors and 11 additional staff, comes under the control of Hammersmith and Fulham PCT.

Having experienced continual problems for some time with engaged lines when patients attempted to phone in to the practice, the partners and Practice Manger decided that a solution had to be found. A meeting was set up with Kerry Rich from NEG to discuss how the system could help, and two months later, in May 2004, the Surgery Line system was installed.

***"It saves us time and the staff are happier - we haven't looked back since."***

"We felt that the Surgery Line system was user friendly for staff and would help us to provide a better service for



Lillie Road Surgery is almost in the shadow of the Earls Court exhibition centre

our patients," explains Pauline Patterson, Practice Manager at The Surgery. "We could never really use our old system efficiently before as it was just too complicated and overly technical, but we found it easy to make changes using the Surgery Line system." The practice have found many of the system's features useful, including the queuing facility which informs patients of their position in the queue, as well as the option of routing calls directly to members of staff or



More than 8 thousand patients are registered with Lillie Road Surgery

departments. This enables callers to bypass Reception, thereby freeing up time for the staff to deal with other patient issues. Whilst Pauline initially had some doubts about using a non geographic number, since the switch to 0844, there have been no problems.

Pauline also reports that the majority of patients are more than happy with the new system. "I had reservations about the number change, but we actually received very few complaints. We used to have the occasional patient who was concerned about the call charges, but we produced an information sheet explaining the costs and reasons for implementing the system. Since we have been using the system, our patients no longer complain about being unable to get through, or being cut off – it just isn't an issue any more."

The Reception staff are also very pleased with the Surgery Line system and particularly appreciate how easy it is to use. "All our staff really like the system," comments Pauline, "we have had a lot of temps recently and they have all picked up the system within an hour of using the phones. It saves us time and the staff are happier - we haven't looked back since."

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Pauline is obviously very satisfied with the system, but have there been any problems since its introduction over a year ago? "NEG have been great, they sort out any problems quickly. My only concern was that I wasn't aware that changes to the system after 6 months were charged for.

But even if I had been aware of this, I would still have opted to install the system because of all the advantages that it has given the practice."



**"NEG support staff have been great, they sort out any problems quickly"**

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

1. Its ease of use
2. The option of informing patients of their place in the queue
3. The automated system
4. The help from the support desk
5. The fact that the system is hands free

"I would advise any practice considering installing Surgery Line to go for it," explains Pauline, "after a year of using the system, we are as happy with it now as when it was first installed. Initially, when I was shown the system, I wanted to know what the catch was.

I was told that there wasn't one and to be honest I was sceptical – but so far I still haven't found it. We definitely feel that we made the right decision when we switched to Surgery Line."

### **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. 28

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**

