



Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

‘Surgery Line meets all our objectives’ reports Vale of Neath General Practice

The Vale of Neath General Practice serves the town of Glynneath and surrounding villages. Located in the rural Welsh countryside, Glynneath is a small town near to the Brecon Beacons, with a practice population of a little over 9,600. Due to the nature of the industries that people from the area have traditionally worked in, there is a higher than average prevalence of long term disease amongst patients at the practice. Coming under the control of Neath Port Talbot Local Health Board, the surgery currently employs 6 doctors, 1 nurse practitioner, 3 practice nurses and 1 phlebotomist in addition to 16 administrative staff.



Glynneath is a small town near to the picturesque Brecon Beacons

“We have a better, more cost effective system”

Patients at the Vale of Neath General Practice frequently complained of difficulties getting through to the practice prior to the installation of the Surgery Line phone system in September 2006. Roy Miller, the Practice Manager, met with Paul Hounsell of NEG to look at the options that their system could offer. Following on from this meeting, Roy felt confident enough to

recommend the system to the Partners. “Our old system was unable to provide the features and functionality needed to deliver the contracted levels of care and service,” he comments. “We were impressed by Surgery Line’s availability of required additional features and ability to handle the high volume throughput at peak times. We also liked the facility for informing callers where they were in the queue.”

The overhaul of changing to a new number and a new



The old phone system couldn't cope with the volume of calls

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

0800 096 86 26

phone system wasn't a decision taken lightly, and Roy admits to having some reservations prior to installation "There were some concerns about the cost of the system, especially in terms of the implications for patients." However, Roy reports that these reservations have proved to be unfounded. "The phone system has lived up to expectation: we believe that we have a better, more cost effective system that also gives us more information and better control over call volumes."

"NEG staff react quickly and are both knowledgeable and helpful"

As people don't always respond well to change, the patient response to the transition was mixed at first, but soon subsided as people became used to the new system. "Some patients had difficulty remembering the new number initially," explains Roy, "but complaints have become few and far between after the first few days. Our reception staff do report that some patients select the incorrect option when listening to the menu, but they do like the fact that they can see which option the patient has chosen which allows them to monitor how the system is being used."

The Vale of Neath General Practice's top 5 reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line

1. Better access for patients
2. The visibility afforded by the system
3. Affordability
4. The system's simplicity
5. Ease of manageability

Roy has used the system to monitor peak call volumes but hopes to use the reporting function more in the future. His experience of both Surgery Line and NEG has been an overwhelmingly positive one: the only negative comment he makes about the system



Patient response has been overwhelmingly positive at Glynneath Surgery

is a remark about how the handsets don't always sit snugly on their rest which can make accessing them inconvenient. "However, we have had a good response from customer services to any problems," says Roy. "NEG staff react quickly and are both knowledgeable and helpful."

"We are better able to handle the incoming call queue"

Roy also reports that the system has helped with many areas of the day to day running of the practice. "We are better able to handle the incoming call queue and generally handle calls more efficiently. We also find the visibility of peak calls times a useful facility."

Since installing the system, Roy feels that the benefits have made the whole transition totally worthwhile. "Surgery Line has given us the features that we need to handle the volume of calls each morning and afternoon at an affordable cost. I have already recommended NEG and their product to another practice as a potential solution to their needs. All of our objectives have certainly been met."

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."

Surgery Line

Case Study No. 48

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