



Surgery Line

NETWORK EUROPE GROUP

Oakmeadow Surgery finds Surgery Line to be 'a cost effective solution'

Oakmeadow Surgery (www.oakmeadow-surgery.co.uk) is located near the M1 in Glenfield, a mainly suburban area a few miles west of Leicester city centre. Like most cities, Leicester has a widely mixed multicultural population, whilst the surgery itself has a varied ethnic mix of patients from Europe and beyond. With 9,000 patients on its register, Oakmeadow is a fairly large and busy practice. It has four GPs with a total of fourteen additional staff in a variety of roles. The surgery, which opened in 1991, is privately owned and comes under the control of Leicester city PCT.



Oakmeadow has 9,000 patients, 4 GPs and a total of 14 additional staff

"We are able to monitor call workload and costs far more efficiently now"

Oakmeadow Surgery installed their Surgery Line system in June 2006 after continual difficulties with their previous system which lacked the flexibility necessary to deal with the large volume of calls that the practice received on a daily basis. Looking for a solution to this problem, Frank Hunter, the Practice Manager and the Partners met with Mirrin Ridgley of NEG to discuss how Surgery Line could meet their needs.

Impressed by the flexibility of the system, Frank and the Partners decided to go with NEG. "We felt that Surgery Line would be a cost effective solution for our practice," comments Frank. "We also liked the fact that the system could be menu driven and felt that it would enable us to monitor the volume and handling of calls more successfully - so we decided to go for it."



Frank Hunter, the Practice Manager was looking for a telephone system that was flexible

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Frank recognised that changing the phone number is quite a big deal for some patients, and prior to the change, he had some reservations about what the patient response would be. Happily, apart from some initial grumbles, this proved not to be an issue. "We did have some concerns about how our patients would react, but these proved to be generally unfounded as the reaction has been good for the most part," he explains.

"We also liked the fact that the system could be menu driven"

Frank and his staff are happy with the phones and switchboard and feel that the system has lived up to expectations. Using Surgery Line also gives Frank valuable data on call volume during the day which enables him to plan call handling more effectively. "We are able to monitor call workload and costs far more efficiently now – it shows the high volume of use which our previous provider was unable to do."



The surgery is located a few miles from Leicester city centre in a suburban area

Frank also feels that the service has improved communication with the patients, making access to the surgery easier. "Our patients can now get in

touch with us more quickly as we are able to handle more calls, more efficiently. The queue facility can be used if necessary and the menu option enables patients to be routed directly to the person that they need to speak with."

Oakmeadow Surgery's top five reasons for going ahead with Surgery Line

1. Easier access for patients.
2. Ability to monitor calls and identify when high volume usage occurs.
3. The option of using a menu if required.
4. Call handling is improved.
5. It is a cost effective system.

One attribute that attracts many practices to Surgery Line is the number of different features that the service offers. One such facility is the ability to record calls which has implications for staff safety as any abusive calls can be recorded and monitored.

This option, along with the queuing facility, has proved popular with those who work at the practice. "The staff like the Surgery Line system," comments Frank, "they feel it is a great improvement on our previous system."

"Our patients can now get in touch with us more easily"

Frank also has sufficient confidence in the system to recommend it to others. "If another surgery with similar issues to us was considering changing their phone system, I would advise them to go for it. The support from NEG has been excellent, it has improved access for patients and it is a cost efficient system."

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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