

Spalding's largest surgery makes it easier for patients to make an appointment

Spalding's largest GP surgery has announced that it is changing its phone number to improve communication with patients. Munro Medical Centre, which has half the town's population on its register, will go live with the new phone system on Tuesday 11th December. From this date, the number will change to 0844 815 1571

Like many surgeries in the UK, patients can find it difficult at present to get through to the surgery at peak call times. Munro Medical Centre has joined several other surgeries across the county by installing a phone system which allows virtual queuing and additional lines to ensure that the engaged tone is all but eliminated. Patients will also be routed automatically to the department they need, enabling them to get through more easily.

"We have 19,500 patients which can make our switchboard pretty hectic at times", comments Practice Manager, Debbie Herd "We do have online booking so patients have an alternative to phoning us (www.munromedicalcentre.co.uk) but our phone system can't always cope with the demand placed on it. Our new system will make call handling much more efficient for staff and patients".

Known as Surgery Line, the new system is in use at several practices in the area and has been installed in over 1,200 surgeries nationwide. "there has been some misrepresentation in the press about the cost of calling an 0844 number", comments Debbie. "In fact, it is not a premium rate number and costs 4.2p per minute to call. This is comparable to BT's standard local tariff which costs 4.26p per minute plus VAT, plus a 4p connection charge, so patients will be paying the same, or less for a better service".

To facilitate the changeover, those calling the old telephone number will hear a recording with details of the new number that they need to call. This re-direction message will be kept on the old line for as long as it is needed.

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