



Daisy Surgery Line ends 0844 numbers for NHS GPs

Andrew Goldwater, Commercial Director System Services for Daisy Group plc, has announced to [Wales on Sunday](#) - ***"We have taken the decision to no longer proactively market the 0844 product to NHS-related organisations."***

This is refreshing news, although it must be noted that NHS GPs in England and Wales have been subject to contractual conditions which prohibit their use of 0844 numbers since 1 April 2010.

Daisy Surgery Line is also quoted as saying ***"we will not stand in the way of public opinion"***.

Public opinion is clearly in favour of GPs complying with the terms of contracts which simply reflect the principles of the NHS. **Daisy** must therefore take a further step, for current customers.

[The Surgery Line website](#) confirms that the full features of the system may be delivered by using **03** or **"01 / 02 Enhanced"** numbers. Calls to these numbers include no **Service Charge** to the benefit of the person called. GPs are therefore advised that when they use such numbers **Surgery Line** becomes ***"a chargeable service"***. (Practices do receive NHS funding to meet their costs!)

There is no question of there being any contractual or other difficulty in existing users of 0844 numbers simply moving over to the equivalent 0344 number, if they request such a variation to their arrangements. It is standard industry practice to offer this facility, on demand, at any time.

Daisy claims ***"we offer a range of number types to suit your surgery's individual requirements"***. The option of migrating to a fresh 030 or "enhanced 01 / 02" number, could also be offered.

The NHS GP contract revisions which came into effect (in England and Wales) from 1 April 2010 required GPs to take steps to ensure that their callers no longer paid more than the cost of an equivalent call to a geographic number. A deadline of 1 April 2011 was applied, but not enforced.

As **Daisy** now recognises that public opinion is in favour of GPs complying with their NHS contracts, it must now also recognise the necessity for all practices still using its system to migrate to an acceptable type of number for the remainder of their term. It has no grounds whatsoever for impeding requests to move to the equivalent 0344 number. It may wish to be proactive by offering other migration options, however that is not a matter of any great concern for patients.

~~~~~

We have already seen signs of **NHS England** moving to ensure compliance with the contract terms by those intending to adopt new 0844 numbers. We hope that **Daisy** will recognise that existing customers need to make a variation to their arrangements - no more than changing the second digit of their number. We expect that public opinion will have no tolerance for any practice that wishes to hang on to a 0844 number, in breach of its contract, for up to another 5 years.

**The principles of the NHS will be re-established. The terms of the GP contracts will be enforced.**

**If Matthew Riley and his company wish to continue to serve the NHS and the public who use it, they must be seen to be proactive in supporting it. We look forward to a further announcement about the assistance being offered to meet the requirements of current NHS GP customers who need to migrate to a different type of number.**