Case Study: St Andrew's Healthcare

Aurora365 safeguards St Andrew's Healthcare IT Infrastructure to improve the patient experience

In 2011 St Andrew's first engaged with Comtact Healthcare to deploy its Aurora365 Software as a Service monitoring system to holistically understand its systems performance and availability ahead of a large scale rationalisation programme. This rationalisation culminated in an eventual move of the technology from its own premises to Comtact's primary state-of-the-art UK tier 3 data centre in Northampton.

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THE CHALLENGE

St Andrew's Healthcare is a charity with an outstanding reputation for quality of care built up over 175 years. As a unique national teaching hospital across four sites in the UK, specialist services include mental health, learning disability, autism and brain injury. St Andrew's has doubled in size since the late 1990's, with £200m invested in new facilities. With more than 4000 staff caring for over 1000 patients, the charity provides national secure facilities for adolescents and young adults, women, men and elders, in addition to community services. St Andrew's national and regional services in Northampton, Essex, Birmingham and Nottinghamshire make it by far the UK's leading charity providing specialist NHS care.

As a charity all funds are dedicated to patient care. St Andrew's represents the best of NHS and independent sector values, with a record of excellence in recovery and outcomes for patients. The charity has recently announced a further major development at its main Northampton campus in 2013.

Acknowledged as a world leader in patient care, St Andrew's has an outstanding relationship with the NHS, their single most important healthcare partner. St Andrew's ongoing mission is to ensure they continue to deliver quality, innovation and value back to the NHS and maintain their status as a national centre of excellence. Technology has played and continues to play a vital role in achieving the goals St Andrew's set out to achieve.

"We wanted to set a standard footprint for technology across all our sites, using industry best practice and providing a secure platform for future growth, innovation and patient care."

Paul Kirkpatrick, IT Director at St Andrew's

As a direct consequence of being a healthcare provider that has placed innovative technologies at the heart of its service provision, St Andrew's availability, performance and cost efficiency of its ICT systems are now critical to the services provided.

THE SOLUTION

In this age of austerity, healthcare is in the grip of an efficiency drive, with the NHS working to meet the "Nicholson challenge" laid down by its chief executive Sir David Nicholson to save £20bn by 2015, coupled with the government's mandate to improve frontline service by being fully paperless by 2018.

In this context St Andrew's embarked on an ambitious initiative of change and improvement to expand and develop its care services, allowing them to better care for a rapidly growing number of patients.

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St Andrew's chose to safeguard its infrastructure and future-proof ongoing plans by implementing the full Aurora365 portfolio, including:

- Network Performance Monitor - Network Fault & Availability Management
- Server & Application Monitor - Server Monitoring (Deploy, Monitor & Resolve)
- NetFlow Traffic Analyser - Real Time Network Utilisation & Bandwidth Monitoring
- Network Configuration Manager - Automated Network Configuration & Compliance Management

THE RESULTS

Before starting their change programme it was important for St Andrew's to fully understand where the service bottlenecks existed and any availability issues. In particular they were concerned about throughput in the network which needed to be fully investigated and trend-logged before they could move their IT support to Comtact's data centre.

"The key benefit of Comtact Healthcare's Aurora platform was the combination of an extremely powerful software technology from SolarWinds with Comtact's in-house managed service expertise. In particular, Comtact used the NetFlow Traffic Analyser module to great effect to examine traffic flow in the environment."

"If we had ourselves embarked on a purchase of SolarWinds as a capital project and attempted to attain the same level of skill that Comtact Healthcare has, then the return on investment would have been less impressive. Crucially the endeavour would have been a big distraction to the actual rationalisation programme - which went on to achieve significant savings and provides business continuity assurance for our organisation. In my career experience, very few organisations achieve the level of proficiency with SolarWinds that Comtact Healthcare has, plus they are ready to implement straight away with their always on platform and easy to budget OPEX model."

Paul Kirkpatrick, IT Director at St Andrew's Healthcare

Dominic List, Chairman, Comtact Healthcare comments, "It's been an extraordinary and challenging few years, for St Andrew's, but now the technology infrastructure supports their position as a centre of excellence for mental healthcare. Today, they are well placed to achieve their ambitions to enhance patient care though service innovation and better facilities."

About Comtact Healthcare

Comtact Healthcare is a leading provider in e-health and informatics solutions that seamlessly integrate into existing patient management systems without major upgrades. As a specialist provider of healthcare mobility solutions we support organisations on an international basis, operating a 24/7/365 follow the sun service delivery centre based in the UK. Our groundbreaking work with major healthcare providers coupled with our partnerships with leading technology partners means we are best placed to deliver your IT requirements to meet core regulations and considerations. Let Comtact be the extension of your healthcare innovation and deliver the cost savings and staff efficiency that your organisation seeks.

Aurora365 is accredited on the UK Government's G-Cloud 5 Framework

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