

Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust Invests in Supportworks to Provide a Single Point of Support



Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust was established on 1st April 2002 and is the largest PCT in the County Durham and Tees Valley Health Authority area. The PCT serves a population of 196,000 people living in the Middlesbrough, Eston, Normanby, South Bank and Grangetown area.

The Trust works in partnership with two local authorities, local NHS Trusts, other PCTs and the voluntary sector. Serving an area where there is a higher than average level of morbidity and mortality, the Trust is continuously working on a programme of health improvement with its partners. IT investment is a significant part of the programme to support staff with patient care and treatment, and the Trust is working hard to support connections to Health Applications as part of the NHS National Programme for Information Technology.

The programme includes linking to a single electronic patient record system accessible from anywhere within the NHS, electronic booking for patient referral, a Child Health System and Chip and Pin Smartcards. With so many critical IT projects underway, supporting users both in the early stages and on an ongoing basis is vital to the smooth running of the Trust's healthcare service.

One-stop Service Desk

Recognising this, Middlesbrough PCT has installed Hornbill's Supportworks to enable its IT helpdesk to support over 1800 staff located across over 50 sites. The users include district nurses, clinical staff, doctors and specialists such as physiotherapists employed by the Trust connected via the PCT VPN network. Also included are employees in 30 general practices linked by the NHS network. Future plans include supporting dentists, opticians and pharmacies with 'e-prescribing' - the electronic transfer of prescriptions to chemists.

"The adoption of Supportworks marks the transition of our helpdesk to become a one-stop service desk for all IT users across the Trust," said Mark White, ICT Technical Services Manager at Middlesbrough PCT. "From being a purely technical support desk we have become the single point of support for our users for all of the new NHS systems which come under the 'Connecting for Health' banner, as well as for the existing legacy GP systems, information systems and server infrastructure."

Ease of Use

The PCT selected Hornbill's Supportworks for its ease of use and its web-based functionality. Another key factor involved was also the level of automation provided within the system, saving support staff time searching for information and also ensuring consistent logging and updating of call information.

The Supportworks call diaries enable staff to routinely document all calls, so that known issues can be highlighted and used in problem management.

Similarly, site information can be stored in the database, enabling staff to quickly identify what systems a customer may be using and also contact details on suppliers if appropriate.

Business Benefits:

- 'One Stop Shop' for IT support across the Trust
- Automated call screens and database of users and site systems enable queries to be handled faster and more efficiently
- Web self-service has reduced the volume of calls for simple issues
- Database of recorded issues enables proactive problem management and priorities to be set
- Secure audit trail of asset information held in the database

"Hornbill pulled out all the stops and did what it takes to help get us up and running. They provide a quick and friendly service - they always respond and get back to us."

Mark White
ICT Technical Services Manager,
Middlesbrough PCT.

Maintaining Quality Standards

On answering a call, drop down menus enable support staff to select information including call history, contacts and asset information. Call scripts prompt support staff to ask consistent questions and enable speedier resolution of calls. Having such information readily accessible improves the quality of the service that the team is able to provide, which in turn helps them to adhere to service level agreements (SLAs).

The IT service desk team comprises nine support staff, divided into front line and second line. If the service desk team is unable to solve the issue then it is passed onto the IT service team dedicated to that specific area. Currently there are specialist service teams for IT Training, Applications Development, Business Analysis, Information Governance, covering data protection and patient confidentiality issues on extracting medical information from the system and Electronic Referrals. This has been possible due to the easy scalability of the system.

Under the new NHS IT Programme, calls that cannot be solved locally will then be passed onto the National Service desk run by the external IT consultants Accenture and service providers BT and Atos Origin for the e-booking facility.

Using Supportworks the IT service desk has an overview of the type of calls being handled by which members of staff, and this information is used to manage each individual's workload. This not only ensures individual development, it also ensures that support staff do not get overloaded, which prevents an adverse affect on the quality of the call handling.

Increased Support Calls

"During the last twelve months we took over 3,500 calls using our old system. We are expecting this to increase by 45% as we move forward, particularly as we will be the first point of contact for the legacy systems as well as for the new systems as they are introduced," said White. "We are confident that with Supportworks we will not only be able to accommodate this increase, but that with the drop down menus and automated systems, call logging will be much faster."

The IT Service team will also be responsible for supporting the administrators that issue the smart cards. This will involve changing access rights, issuing new PINs and recording changes in allocations of cards as staff leave and join. Having the relevant information readily accessible will enable the IT service team to quickly deal with specific users and resolve their queries.

"Using Supportworks we will record all the information on each smart card so that we have an audit trail of each one. Replication of any cards will be recorded in one place so that security is maintained, and we will be able to respond to any enquiry about a specific card easily and quickly," explained White.

Responsive Service

The implementation of Supportworks was smooth. According to White, Hornbill worked with the IT Team to customise the system as they required, which was also a key selling point during the initial stages of evaluation.

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For the PCT, the implementation of Supportworks has enabled them to fully embrace the NHS programme for IT. The initial business objectives were to improve service and response time and manage IT problems proactively. This was particularly important as the team was taking on responsibility for additional systems that were supported externally.

"Before we had Supportworks we were reacting to calls coming in. Now we can prioritise and plan better which helps us to manage our time. The web self-service has also greatly reduced the volume of calls for simple issues," concluded White.



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