Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust

Following an organizational merger which greatly increased both staffing and the geographical extent of its services, Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust needed to support a dispersed, remote-working workforce, while ensuring the new staff were integrated into its systems and processes. To achieve this, the Trust replaced its legacy support management solution with Novell® Service Desk, enabling the Trust’s IT department to prioritize support requests more effectively—improving user experiences, and reducing response and fix times.

Overview
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust (the Trust) offers both acute services, centered on North Devon District Hospital (NDDH) in Barnstaple, and community services across a network of 17 community hospitals and nine clusters. At any one time, the Trust supports 6,000 patients in their own homes and 600 people in hospital beds. It employs more than 4,300 staff and serves a population of nearly 500,000 with a budget of £209 million.

Challenge
In April 2011, the Trust acquired the community services serving Exeter, East and Mid Devon, as well as the pan-Devon specialist community services such as bladder and bowel, podiatry and sexual health.

With 4,500 business users and 3,000-plus workstations under management, the Trust’s IT department faced the challenge of continuing to deliver excellent support services to a far larger number of users.

Cameron Stephens, IT Desktop Support Supervisor at the Trust, said: “In recent years, investment in IT in the Trust has increased and, combined with the effect of the merger, this has intensified demand for support services. We often had 50 people with requests of varying degrees of urgency calling the helpdesk simultaneously—putting huge strain on our telephone operators.”

The Trust realized that its legacy support management solution was no longer able to cope with the high service levels for this enlarged user base. In addition, the system lacked the flexibility to service support requirements for those staff using mobile devices.

Geoff Smith, IT Strategy & Development Manager—IT Services, said: “The Trust’s services are spread over hundreds of square miles in rural Devon, so a support solution based on conventional on-site helpdesk support was not practical.”

The Trust needed to replace its legacy support management solution. The new solution had to deliver a better user experience, reduce response and fix times, and provide more flexibility to support remote workers.

Success Story
Endpoint Management

“Our staff now log requests for resolution of minor issues via a self-service portal. They receive a timely response and can check the progress of this request. This frees up our telephone operators to deal with the most critical support requests—enabling us to deliver a better user experience.”

CAMERON STEPHENS
IT DESKTOP SUPPORT SUPERVISOR
NORTHERN DEVON HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST

Results

+ Helps the IT department to prioritize support requests and incidents—improving user experiences, and delivering improved response and fix rates.
+ Links CMDB dataset (NSD) linked to Novell ZENworks inventory information.
+ Facilitates remote access to 3,000 PCs distributed across 1,300 square miles—reducing the need for on-site visits from engineers.
+ Delivers advanced reporting functionalities—helping the IT department to highlight efficiency increases to senior managers.
“Using Novell Service Desk and Novell ZENworks Configuration Management means our engineers can work on a PC 30 miles away as if they were sitting in front of it. By taking remote control of the affected system, we can perform the vast majority all of the actions required to complete support requests.”

GEOFF SMITH
IT Strategy and Development Manager
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust

on engineers physically travelling long distances between sites was not a cost-effective proposition. We needed to re-think our approach to help us deliver a more efficient service for users throughout the Trust.”

Solution
After reviewing support management solutions from different vendors, the Trust chose Novell Service Desk.

“We selected Novell Service Desk because we were impressed with its built-in self-service portals,” said Cameron Stephens. "Furthermore, as long-term users of Novell ZENworks® Configuration Management, we realized that we could leverage our extensive catalog of Novell ZENworks assets to augment the capabilities of the solution."

The Trust worked with a team from Novell to implement and configure Novell Service Desk.

“Novell Service Desk is running in parallel with our legacy solution, and we are in the final stages of migrating to the new platform,” said Cameron Stephens. "The direct support we receive from Novell has been faultless—their engineers are always on hand when we need advice or assistance."

Results
Thanks to its Novell Service Desk solution, the Trust has gained the ability to transform its IT support processes in line with Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) best practice—including support for tablet devices.

“Using our legacy support management solution, our helpdesk was inundated with telephone calls—making it difficult to identify and prioritize the most urgent enquiries,” said Cameron Stephens.

"Today, users can raise tickets for minor issues via a self-service portal, and receive a timely response via email. This frees our telephone operators to deal with the most critical support requests—enabling us to deliver a better user experience, and much faster fix times."

The combination of Novell Service Desk and an extensive catalog of Novell ZENworks assets has also helped to boost efficiency.

“Using Novell Service Desk and Novell ZENworks Configuration Management, our engineers can work on a PC 30 miles away as if they were sitting in front of it,” said Geoff Smith. "By taking remote control of the affected system, we can perform the vast majority all of the actions required to complete support requests—such as modifying settings, applying patches and installing software. This improves the resilience of our business-critical healthcare systems and IT service."

By working with Novell, Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust has achieved its objective of improving the efficiency of its support desk.

“Today, we can offer a larger population of users an even better level of service than before,” said Cameron Stephens. "What’s more, the advanced reporting tools in Novell Service Desk enable us to highlight these improvements to our directors in the Trust.”