

CASE STUDY

HEALTH SECTOR

EAST LANCASHIRE MEDICAL SERVICES



East Lancashire Medical Services (ELMS) is a social enterprise organisation delivering urgent primary care services out of hours across the whole of East Lancashire. It has been established for over twenty years and operates out of seven treatment centres, with over 50,000 patient interactions recorded in 2012–13. It has always viewed IT not just as a technical enabler but also as a positive agent of change, driving improved patient care within the community.

CHALLENGES

Until 2013, ELMS's IT infrastructure had sat under the aegis of the local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (and the Primary Care Trust prior to that). While utilising the CCG's network provided ELMS with essential N3 connectivity, there were also frustrations inherent in not having complete ownership of their own systems.

ELMS's Craig Winters explains: "We felt we lacked the degree of control we needed to deliver IT that both supported our staff and could drive better patient care. There were restrictions on what we could do, changes were slow to happen, there simply wasn't the agility or will or resource to help us fully capitalise on today's technology."

The tipping point came when the CCG refused to allow the deployment of a new IP telephony solution on the network. "This certainly accelerated the break as we absolutely had to have a new phone

system rolled out but the parting was pretty inevitable. As an organisation we have a clear strategic direction for growth and a defining vision for patient-centric services and we felt that our existing IT provision was compromising both those things."

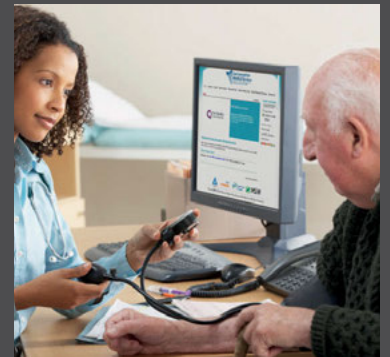
As a result, ELMS took the decision to look at outsourcing their back-end infrastructure in order to secure:

- A resilient, flexible, secure network with full N3 connectivity
- The ability to bring the new IP telephony solution into the network
- On-demand hosted server resources that could be deployed and stood down at will
- 24/7/365 UK-based support that aligned with their own round-the-clock working
- Streamlined, lean IT delivery with cost certainty to drive down waste and drive up cost-efficiency

REALISING THE BENEFITS

In one respect, the changeover was very low key. Redcentric don't fuss, they just get on with things, delivering very reliable, consistent managed IT to us day in, day out. They don't intrude themselves onto the organisation, and that's just the way we want it.

Craig Winters
East Lancashire Medical Services



HOW REDCENTRIC HELPED

Redcentric was awarded the contract not just because of their technical capability and track record in N3 provision but because ELMS felt truly valued and understood as a customer.

Craig Winters: "This was as much about relationship and chemistry as it was about the IT in all fairness; but we're all the more confident now in what we can achieve through IT because of who we've partnered with. And we're all pulling in the same direction."

The original project in summer 2013 saw the deployment of N3 connectivity, managed firewalls, hosted virtual servers and SIP trunks. The latter critically allowed the new IP telephony solution, that had already been commissioned on site, to be brought into the network.

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They don't intrude themselves onto the organisation, and that's just the way we want it. We keep overall control but if we do have any issues we know that they're either going to be fixed before we're even aware of them or that there'll be a very quick response from the Redcentric team without any runaround for us.

TECHNICAL INFO

- Network Services
 - Managed Firewalls
 - Network Connectivity
 - N3 Connectivity
- Infrastructure as a Service
 - Virtual Server Hosting
- Voice Services
 - SIP Trunks

But in another respect, the switch was remarkably empowering. The new telephone system now sits on the network and we're aggressively mining the call statistics and patterns to help refine our services and ensure patients are getting the quality, speed and accuracy of care that they need.

It's allowing us to better match resourcing to demand and with the seven treatment centres soon to be linked together, we'll be able to leverage the opportunities and efficiencies within an enlarged but fully connected unit."

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Craig Winters has no doubt that ELMS feels empowered by the change of IT provision and that the switch to Redcentric has brought with it significant advantage.

Increased agility and functionality

There are no restrictions on what ELMS can do now and changes and requests, together with future ideas, are met with an enthusiastic, 'can-do' response.

Guaranteed resilience and security

ELMS needs a high availability service 24/7/365 and absolute security when it comes to dealing with patient data. Redcentric's full N3 accreditation and highly redundant, UK data estate is a perfect match for ELMS's operating requirements.

Greater cost certainty and cost-efficiency

Not for profit organisations exist to maximise performance and delivery to the ultimate beneficiary, in this case those patients requiring out of hours care. Every penny saved on IT can be reinvested in patient care and visibility over pricing can allow for more informed business planning.

Improved support function

While ELMS's IT team maintains full control of all system, it is relieved of the 'keeping the lights on' headache. It can swap low value housekeeping activities for added value projects in support of both staff and patients.

Strategic and operational confidence

ELMS is now much more comfortable in its IT abilities and knows that there are additional offerings and expertise within Redcentric that can always be called upon. With ELMS entering new service areas, such as running GP practices and dental clinics, and continuing its commitment to its core out of hours business, it feels confident that it can respond with agile, appropriate solutions when needed.

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