



CASE STUDY

STOCKPORT NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

CONNECTED STAFF CAN CARE FOR PATIENTS MORE EFFICIENTLY

THE CHALLENGE

Stockport NHS Foundation Trust knew that in order to gain the full efficiency benefits of using wireless devices and location services, it needed to review its whole IT infrastructure. The existing network did not provide the robust platform needed to offer reliable wireless services across the whole Trust, nor did it allow for the development of new applications and services. Furthermore, the existing wireless infrastructure didn't span the whole site, meaning services such as asset tracking could not be deployed.

"More extensive and reliable wireless access was required", said IT Director Ken Brennan, "to ensure staff get the maximum benefit from our increased use of mobile devices. These wireless devices are key to streamlining care delivery and particularly important in making the roll-out of our EPMA (Electronic Prescribing & Medicines Administration) system successful."

THE SOLUTION

To scale up the existing wireless estate, an expansion in the core of the network was also needed. This 10 Gigabit increase in network capacity also provided an opportunity to re-consider performance and reliability issues at the same time. The solution had to provide a platform for the Trust to deliver key applications and be future-proofed as well as show a strong return on investment.

"Block was chosen because of the quality of understanding they had of our business and clinical drivers for the project," said Ken Brennan IT Director. "The fact that Block's team was able to build a strong and positive relationship with us early on made the choice easier."



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A full audit of the existing network enabled the development of detailed design plans for the upgrade. The plans, based on the Trust's requirements and Block's extensive experience in healthcare, were reviewed through a series of design workshops. Using real-life examples of completed work at other NHS Trusts, Block's technical team then worked closely with the Trust to refine and finalise design plans.

One of the central features of the new Cisco-based network was a correct Core / Aggregation design using Layer3 and loop avoiding technologies to prevent spanning tree loops and consequent outages. The solution comprised a wide range of Cisco Nexus, Catalyst, Wireless and Management products.

THE BENEFITS

"After due market assessment, we chose Block to help us provide the Trust with the necessary technical platform to support our operational services and 3,000+ users going forward," said IT Director Ken Brennan. "Reduced risk of outages, improved performance and on-going affordability and manageability were key requirements. Plus we wanted this complex task handled with the minimum disruption to our users," he added.

The result is a robust and scalable high performance platform with the capacity for future expansion built-in. The Trust is now looking forward to helping clinical teams improve their efficiency and to a consequent improvement in the overall patient care and experience. The new platform will also help the Trust develop new business and clinical services in the years to come.

Often overlooked, but equally important was the quality of Block's relationship with the Trust staff, which meant they could operate as a single unified network team.

"There was a confusing (to us) maze of potential routes, options and configurations we could have gone down. With Block's help we opted for the Cisco Nexus approach. They led us to this solution in a very professional manner both pre- and post-sales, listening and taking the time to really understand what we needed. They were also price-competitive and worked well with our internal IT team in both the project planning and implementation phases. We were delighted with the service."

Ken Brennan,
IT Director
Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

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THE TEAM



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ABOUT BLOCK

Block is a technology consultancy that specialises in delivering infrastructure and communications solutions. Our solutions deliver outstanding performance for organisations that need robust systems to stay ahead of the competition.

See **www.block-solutions.net** for more information.