



Hospitals in East Kent improve medical training and patient care with integrated video conferencing solution

East Kent Hospitals University 
NHS Foundation Trust

Customer agenda

- Cost Reduction
- Continuous Improvement/Innovation
- Environmentally Conscious

Services

- Product Fulfilment Service
- Video Collaboration
- IMAC

Technology

Tandberg high-definition video conferencing units, AMX control panels

Customer challenge

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust serves a wide geographical area. With its main hospital sites some miles apart, the trust's clinicians frequently had to travel to attend meetings and conduct training sessions. The trust recognised travelling was not an efficient use of clinicians' time. In addition to the impact on productivity, the trust was also keen to reduce travel expenditure and its impact on the environment.

Computacenter solution

The trust partnered with Computacenter to design, implement and support a sophisticated video-conferencing solution. The solution installed at the trust's three acute hospitals includes high-definition displays to enable clinicians to share images from the hospital's PACS (Picture Archiving and Communications System) such as x-rays and scans.

Results

By enabling its healthcare professionals to hold virtual meetings and share medical information, East Kent University NHS Foundation Trust has reduced travel costs and its impact on the environment. More importantly, the solution enables faster diagnosis and treatment of patients, and improves mentoring and training for medical staff. These factors all contribute to improving the standard of patient care delivered to the population of East Kent.

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“In order to support meetings and training, we wanted the video-conferencing solution to integrate with the hospital’s Picture Archiving and Communications System.”

Tracey Miles
Head of Supplies & Procurement,
East Kent Hospitals University
NHS Foundation Trust

Customer profile

Providing healthcare services to the people of East Kent

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust is one of the largest hospital trusts in England, formed in 1999 when three hospital trusts merged.

The trust provides comprehensive healthcare provision for the people of East Kent, serving a population of 720,500 and having 1,118 beds (as of July 2008) across the three main hospitals in Ashford, Canterbury and Margate.

The trust is also focused on delivering treatment nearer to patients’ homes via a number of smaller community-based hospitals and walk-in centres.

The trust became a University Hospital Trust on 1st August 2008, and is currently applying for Foundation Trust Status, which will give the organisation and its patients greater influence to improve services.

The trust’s turnover for 2007/08 was £402 million and the organisation delivered a surplus of £7.7 million for the same period. The Trust’s procurement programme is generally in excess of £145 million on non-pay expenditure per annum.

Business challenge

Reducing the need for travel

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust covers a wide geographical area, including the entire south east coast. The trust’s three acute sites – Kent Canterbury Hospital, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital and William Harvey Hospital – are some miles apart.

The trust’s clinicians frequently had to travel between these sites for departmental meetings and training purposes. As Tracey Miles, Head of Supplies & Procurement at East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, explains, “Due to our teaching activities, our medical professionals need to be able to mentor and share knowledge with more junior staff. This often involved travelling between sites.”

The trust recognised that this travel was not an efficient use of clinicians’ time. In addition to the impact on productivity, the hospital was keen to reduce travel expenditure and its impact on the environment. With onsite parking also an issue for the trust, it needed to reduce the need for travel wherever possible.

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IT solution

Integrated video-conferencing

The trust identified that a video-conferencing solution could help address these issues. To find a suitable partner to assist with the project, it carried out a formal benchmarking exercise via the Office of Government Commerce (OGC). Computacenter proved to be the most appropriate match in terms of technical capabilities, experience and best value for money.

Following an extensive scoping exercise, Computacenter worked closely with the trust's project team to fine-tune its requirements and design a solution that met its needs. Tracey comments: "In order to support meetings and training, we wanted the video-conferencing solution to integrate with the hospital's Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS). This would enable medical staff to share x-rays and scans during virtual meetings."

The quality of such images is crucial for accurate diagnosis. It was therefore important to provide a solution that would be able to display such images in high definition.

Results

Improved patient care

"The video-conferencing project has demonstrated how investment in technology can help reduce costs, increase efficiency and improve patient care," comments Tracey. "This was a groundbreaking project for us, which has proved to be a great success thanks to the collaboration and hard work of all involved."

By enabling its healthcare professionals to hold virtual meetings and share medical information, East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust has reduced travel costs and its impact on the environment. More importantly, the solution enables faster diagnosis and treatment of patients, and improves mentoring and training for medical staff.

These factors all contribute to improving the standard of patient care delivered to the population of East Kent.

More resources

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