



A MODERN MULTIFUNCTION DEVICE ESTATE SUPPORTING VITAL NHS CARE SERVICES

Norfolk Community Health & Care NHS Trust reduces costs and supports mobile workforce with innovative HP multifunction devices. Every day, Norfolk Community Health & Care NHS Trust (NCH&C) strives to provide excellent patient care in a time of severely squeezed public sector budgets.



Norfolk Community Health and Care
NHS Trust

Industry
Healthcare

Objective
Replace 86 legacy, refurbished printers with modern multifunction devices (MFDs)

Approach
EU-wide tender in line with NHS procurement rules

IT matters

- Enhanced MFD functionality and capability
- Ease of deployment
- Pro-active maintenance

Business matters

- Ensure best value for money for taxpayers
- More cost-effective MFD estate
- Support the needs of a mobile workforce

THE CHALLENGE

Serving a population of nearly 900,000 people in Norfolk, the Trust's aim is to constantly improve patients' lives by providing them with the best care, close to where they live. In practice, this means its clinical staff are based across 40 sites throughout the county, with a large mobile workforce of approximately 1,750 community nurses and care workers visiting patients in their homes.

It's a high-pressure job, and one that can easily become even more stressful if the supporting technology infrastructure goes wrong. Printer malfunctions can be a huge source of stress for time-pressured clinical staff, so when NCH&C was nearing the end of two printer leasing contracts, it wanted to ensure the new contract was awarded to a Managed Print Service provider that could support its aims.

BALANCING PROCUREMENT RULES WITH CLINICAL NEED TO SUPPORT CLINICIANS

A key consideration was replacing their 86 legacy, refurbished printers with modern multifunction devices (MFDs) that meet the needs and expectations of today's users. The Trust was aware that many of its devices were over 10 years old, which meant it was missing out on new functionality that could better support its staff.

For Steve Worley, NCH&C's Interim Head of Procurement, the challenge was to balance the Trust's need for up-to-date print, copy and scan capabilities with the need to ensure best value for taxpayers' money:

"Public sector contract regulations mean that with every new contract, we have to show we're getting the most value for as little money as possible. But for us, that doesn't mean cutting corners on cost. There's no point buying cheap devices if you're only going to have to replace them two years later. It's a false economy."

What was more important, he says, was that the Trust found a Managed Print Service provider that it could work well with, and which had the best interests of the Trust at heart. While reducing the overall cost of the contract was a key aim, the Trust chose to weight the capabilities of the supplier over the cost of the devices.

A PARTNERSHIP, NOT A CONTRACT

In 2019, the Trust put out an EU-wide tender in line with public procurement rules. It attracted eleven initial bidders, which the project team narrowed down to a shortlist of five. All five were invited to conduct a full site audit and make recommendations for a more cost-effective MFD estate that could better support the NCH&C workforce.

On that shortlist, one company already stood out. "Lots of companies provide printer leasing and maintenance, but DTP's bid was very personable," says Steve. "It felt like we weren't just a number in their system, but an integral part of what they were doing. What they were proposing felt like a partnership rather than a contract."

That feeling was reinforced by DTP's handling of the site audit. "It felt like they were working with us, not for us. The professionalism was very noticeable – they never once badmouthed the previous contract owner, as many suppliers do. They just focused on finding the right solution for our needs today. It came across as very respectful."

A MODERN, COST-EFFECTIVE MFD ESTATE

DTP proposed a cost-effective solution that would replace the Trust's existing 86 devices, supported by 21 servers, with a slimmed-down estate of 74 new, touchscreen HP devices, supported by just seven servers. The Trust had a year left on one of its existing contracts, which led to discussions about whether the old and new devices could exist side by side for a year.

Steve says the Trust looked at the problem from a costing basis and practicality basis. "The steer from our IT team was that it would be problematic for them to run two different printer estates. However, when we looked at DTP's costing proposal, it actually justified ending the previous contract a year early and sending the old devices back."

A 40-SITE ROLLOUT COMPLETED IN JUST THREE WEEKS

With DTP engaged for the new contract, the rollout could begin. The Trust presented quite a challenge in that respect, because of the way its 40 sites are dispersed across Norfolk and Suffolk.

"Logistically, we're a nightmare," Steve says. "We've got people in lots of different sites of different sizes. In some cases we're just renting an office in a GP's surgery. It's not like you can just pull a big truck up to one door and push everything out."

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DTP tackled the problem with ingenuity and enthusiasm, setting up a temporary warehouse in Norwich and co-ordinating the installation from there, over a period of just three weeks. It was a new approach for DTP, but working in partnership with NCH&C meant it all went smoothly.

Steve especially appreciated the way the DTP engineers took the time to stay at each site and show people how to use the devices. “That helped to bridge the gap between the old and new devices, and it meant we had minimal complaints from users.”

SUPPORTING A MODERN AND MOBILE WORKFORCE

Since NCH&C has been up and running with the new HP devices, the improvements have been remarkable. Staff report that the new devices are much more user-friendly, with touchscreen technology they’re familiar with from smartphones and tablets.

There’s been a jump in quality too, with higher-quality printing and scanning, and more intuitive email functionality. What’s more, the new devices support the needs of a mobile workforce.

Steve explains:

“Anyone can print a document and go and pick it up from the device nearest to where they are. If you’re a community nurse and you need to print something, you can pick it up from somewhere you’re driving past. “Our clinicians in the field have a difficult enough job as it is – so anything we can do to help them in their job is valuable.”

MINIMAL DOWNTIME, THANKS TO LEADING-EDGE PROACTIVE MAINTENANCE

A key aspect of the DTP service for NCH&C is proactive maintenance through HP Smart Device Service. The HP devices monitor device health, predict failures and provide service recommendations to help ensure the devices don’t stop working.

This means breakdowns can be anticipated before they happen, and DTP can take appropriate action.

“When you’re in an admin-heavy environment and a device stops working, that can create a lot of stress,” Steve says. “Proactively stopping that device from breaking down means our people don’t get derailed in their day-to-day work.”

Steve says the Trust has already seen the benefits of HP Smart Device Service, which surfaced in a quarterly review meeting with DTP. “We were looking through the performance data, and our account manager told us an issue had arisen with one device, but they’d been able to fix it before anyone noticed. Now we know that printer breakdowns are something we don’t have to worry about.”

A PARTNERSHIP FOR FUTURE INNOVATION

With DTP on board as its Managed Print Service partner, the Trust has gained much more than a cost-effective contract. Steve says that NCH&C and DTP will now work together to ensure the Trust can use emerging functionality to help its workforce provide the best care to patients.

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“Replacing the entire printer estate is a big change, affecting a high percentage of our workforce. It could have been a nightmare. But because DTP discussed everything with us, we got to a stable position very quickly. Now it’s all about what we can do to capitalise even further on the new technology.”

“We have a specific focus on innovation, and DTP will help us understand what we can do next to innovate, to push the functionality of the devices more. We already feel ahead of the curve in that sense, and we’re confident DTP will advise us about new possibilities as they come along – not six months after they’ve happened.”

Steve concludes: “Replacing the entire printer estate is a big change, affecting a high percentage of our workforce. It could have been a nightmare. But because DTP discussed everything with us – even taking us to visit HP’s Customer Welcome Centre and one of DTP’s long-standing customers, King’s College London -to see the new devices we’d be getting – there were never any unpleasant surprises. We got to a stable position very quickly, and now it’s all about what we can do to capitalise even further on the new technology.”



For more information about the capabilities of HP print solutions, or for a chat about your current environment, please call us on 0113 276 0210 or email newbusinesssales@dtpgroup.co.uk