

Case study – Norfolk and Suffolk NHS.

Unified Communications & Collaboration.



Norfolk and Suffolk NHS.

Rapid deployment of interactive self-help website for NHS Foundation Trust



Deploying an interactive website that integrates with backend systems in a short time frame is always a challenge, and one that faced the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust. Having examined the options available, it chose BT to deliver the project in order to meet its launch deadline.

Formed by the merger of Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust and Suffolk Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is responsible for providing a range of specialist services that are dedicated to the care and recovery of anyone experiencing mental ill health or substance misuse issues - this can be up to 14,000 people at any one time.

The challenge

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust recognised that many of its service users, particularly those in the younger age groups, are very IT literate and prefer to use the internet to gather information and interact with the Trust to using services like drop-in centres. As a result, it secured funding as part of its well-being programme to deliver a specialist website (readytochange.org.uk) that would give users access to advice and live interaction with clinical staff via IM, as well as the opportunity to self-refer. This site had to be delivered in under a month and launched as part of the Wellbeing Service launch.

The solution

Having worked with BT to deliver an internal Microsoft SharePoint-based intranet, the Trust decided that the collaboration tool would be the best platform on which to build its new external-facing wellbeing website.

“ We’re the first Trust in the UK to combine all of these elements together in a single platform, and we couldn’t have achieved that without BT. ”

Alan Vigus
Head of ICT Services, Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

Case Study – Norfolk and Suffolk NHS.

In securing the funding, the Trust had agreed a formal set of objectives and requirements around what the website had to deliver. These included online help capabilities and access to live advice via IM, as well as a self-referral centre that integrated with the SharePoint-based intranet and workflow – all of which had to be ready for the wellbeing programme launch, as Leigh Welch, Technical Project Manager at the Trust, explained: “We had just three and a half weeks to build, test and deploy the new website, in order to meet our obligations under the wellbeing programme. We had a clear set of deliverables that had been agreed in advance, but worked with BT to scope the project and quickly formalise the project plan.”

Using a form of agile design, BT quickly began developing the website, working closely with both the IT team and the Trust’s clinicians in order to ensure the site met the objectives and could be delivered in the tight timeframes. Basing the website on the Microsoft SharePoint platform, it developed each element in sequence, giving it a distinct look and feel, and ensuring it was easy-to-use. As part of the development, BT integrated SharePoint with Microsoft Lync Server – the unified communications platform – for the first time. This allowed the delivery of live IM sessions with counsellors for registered service users, and meant that additional communications tools could be added when required.

Using SharePoint, the website gives users secure access to a self-referral portal that feeds into a workflow and allows them to book appointments, replacing the admin-intensive paper-based appointment system.

As each element of the project was signed off from a technical perspective, it then went through user assessment and governance checks for security, as Alan Vigus, Head of ICT Services at the Trust explained: “As we were using clinical data linked to an external platform, security and keeping data secure was a major consideration for us on this project. As a result, on completion of each phase, we brought in external auditors to run rigorous penetration tests on the site to the highest level of security required by the NHS. Each time, the site passed easily and we received very positive feedback from the testers.”

Why BT?

The Trust had built a long-term relationship with BT and the teams had worked together on a number of projects, developing a good working relationship, as Welch explained: “The BT team worked as an extension of my team, but had the in-depth technical knowledge to come up with workable solutions to the challenges we faced, and was able to deliver them within tight timeframes. For this particular project, they were both essential.”

“The BT team worked as an extension of my team, but had the in-depth technical knowledge to come up with workable solutions to the challenges we faced, and was able to deliver them within tight timeframes. For this particular project, they were both essential”

Leigh Welch
Technical Project Manager, Norfolk & Suffolk NHS
Foundation Trust

The website was successfully launched on schedule at an event for the Trust’s wider wellbeing programme, and provides all of the services outlined in the original proposal.

“BT brought a ‘can-do’ attitude to the project, the team working long hours with my team in order to ensure the project was delivered on time. There was also a huge amount of thought that went into each aspect of the website, which meant that it achieved exactly what we were looking for – both functionally and aesthetically,” explained Welch.

“We’re the first Trust in the UK to combine all of these elements together in a single platform, and couldn’t have achieved that without BT,” added Vigus. “We’ve received incredibly positive feedback from everyone who’s looked at or used the website – particularly the live session and self-referral capabilities.”

Delivering services across multiple channels is part of Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust’s wider strategy and the website will be an integral part of service delivery over the next few years. Being based on Microsoft SharePoint and Lync Server allows the Trust to extend and edit capabilities as required.

“Being Microsoft certified, the BT team understood the products and what they could do intimately, which meant that we could achieve our goals in the simplest and most cost-effective way, whilst being really innovative in our approach – and delivering something unique,” concluded Welch.

Things you need to know:

British Telecommunications plc. Registered Office: 81 Newgate Street, London, EC1A 7AJ. Registered in England No. 1800000

The services and equipment described in this publication are subject to availability and may be modified from time to time. Services and equipment are provided subject to our standard terms and conditions.

Nothing in this publication forms any part of any contract. © British Telecommunications plc 2016.

Find out more: itservices@bt.com | www.bt.com/itservices

