

MPS goes above and beyond to satisfy South West Commissioning Support Unit

The Customer

Based in Bristol, NHS South West Commissioning Support provides commissioning support services to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's), NHS England and other NHS organisations.

They are committed to supporting healthcare commissioners meet the challenges of improving outcomes for patients and managing resources effectively in the years ahead. They are responsible for, amongst other things, the IT and communications for the NHS in Bristol, North Somerset, Somerset and South Gloucester. This includes telephone systems in 19 NHS owned primary healthcare centres which house GPs and other community-based clinical services.

Primary and community medical services are provided to almost 200,000 patients within these health centres.

The Situation

3 years ago the 19 health centres used a range of different telephone systems and fixed line services from a number of providers.

Most of the telephone systems had been in place for up to 10 years and their functionality was less than adequate.



South West Commissioning Support Group Offices

NHS Bristol's patient satisfaction surveys reported a significant level of dissatisfaction with the phone systems in many of these sites.

Patients had no option to select which service or department they required, often being placed in queues, with no indication of the waiting time they could expect.

The Tender

The decision was taken to go out to tender for the consolidated support of the 19 legacy systems, followed by a migration to new telephone systems, across the centres.

It was the responsibility of Voice and Networks Manager Tom Humphreys, to manage this process.



Tom Humphreys

Benefits

- Reduced costs
- Improved support
- Consolidated suppliers
- Consistent experience across multiple sites
- Future proofing

“MPS regularly goes above and beyond what we could reasonably expect... I would be happy to recommend them.”

Tom Humphreys
Voice & Networks Manager

Choosing MPS

MPS were included in the tender process and recommended installing a Mitel system in every site. This offered the potential for increased functionality, such as mobile working, hot desking and networking, with inherent business continuity benefits. In summary, future proofing the NHS communications.

Asked why they had chosen to partner with MPS Tom Humphreys said, “MPS were supporting two of our sites and had demonstrated their capability to support the existing systems. In addition to local knowledge MPS also offered a coherent strategy for future proofing our communications.”

The Roll Out

Initially MPS took over the support of the existing disparate systems and began a phased roll out of the new Mitel systems.

Talking about his experience of the MPS engineering services, Tom said, “Supporting the legacy systems from multiple vendors had its challenges. Some systems had remote access and some did not. Support was made easier as the new systems were installed and MPS worked with the GP Practices and clinical service providers to review business processes at some of the sites as new functionality became available.”

Tom went on to explain, “Many of these Health Centres host multiple GP Practices and often these practices have different ways of working, different opening hours and so on. The previous systems

could not be customised to meet the various needs of the services working within the centres. MPS were able to program the Mitel systems to meet the operational and business requirements of the individual services at each site.”

The Impact

Talking about the impact of the new phone systems Tom said, “Having the same phone system at all sites means that medical staff travelling to and working across multiple locations have a consistent communications experience across the sites. Patients benefit from new functionality such as intelligent queuing where callers are presented with options to connect to different departments or clinical services.” Tom also said “One of the requirements was the provision of call statistics, an increasingly important healthcare performance measure. Having this management information from MPS means that practices have a greater level of detail on the number of staff and lines they require to meet patient demands.”

Tom continued, “Since the new telephone systems have been installed I have had no complaints. MPS manage service calls from each health centre directly, shortening the response times with fewer people in the reporting chain. MPS also recommended that we reconfigured our ISDN circuits, which now means that they can manage the availability of telephone lines allocated to incoming calls, so that no matter how busy our incoming lines are, staff can still make essential outgoing calls.”

Partnering with MPS

Commenting on partnering with MPS Tom said, “MPS are flexible responsive and provide good customer service to meet the ever increasing demands of patients and staff. They are very methodical and process driven in dealing with any faults that occur, prioritising urgent faults accordingly. MPS have established good working relationships with colleagues based within the centres.

MPS were sensitive to the environment they were working in during the installations and worked out-of-hours where necessary, to avoid disruption to patient services. They provided additional cabling where required in order to deploy the new Mitel IP phones and managed the whole installation without issue.

We have quarterly review meetings with the MPS account manager, MPS operations manager and the health centre managers, where they review support cases raised by each centre and discuss future plans.”

Overall Experience

Summing up his experience of partnering with MPS, Tom said, “MPS regularly goes above and beyond what we could reasonably expect. They quite often send out engineers, even when it is not clear where a fault lies. I would be happy to recommend MPS to other CCGs and Commissioning Support organisations.”