

Case study

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Easy and inexpensive web-based multidisciplinary team meetings make for better care and less cost at NHS mental health trust

At the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, hospital and field-based clinicians work closely together to ensure mental health patients get the best treatment on the wards and at home. But travelling to multidisciplinary team meetings robs community carers of time they could spend with patients.

Kamru Mohammed knew conferencing technology could solve the problem, but with a widely dispersed team, traditional video conferencing would prove too costly. BT came to the rescue with a product providing web-based conferencing meetings at a fraction of the cost.

Clinicians can now attend meetings from anywhere. They save time on travel and get to see more patients. That's a wise solution for everyone involved in mental healthcare in Berkshire.

“The benefits are convenience, and time and costs saved in travel. Other advantages include the ability to consult with staff without having to drag them to a meeting that, for them, might last less than 30 minutes.”

Kamru Mohammed
Technology Lead
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust





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WebEx web conferencing lets medical experts debate the best way forward on patient cases without travelling to meetings

Challenge

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust provides a wide range of services that help people with mental health and learning disability issues. Clinicians treating people in hospital need to stay in close contact with counterparts caring for patients that have returned to the community.

A cornerstone of this process is the multidisciplinary team (MDT) meeting, a weekly review where ward-based experts confer on cases with their community colleagues. Each week the Trust runs a large number of MDTs, each lasting up to a couple of hours.

The information that community teams get out of these sessions is vital to their patients' wellbeing. But there's a problem: in some cases it can take up to 45 minutes to travel to the hospital where the MDT is taking place.

Kamru Mohammed, Technology Lead for the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, says: “That travel time tended to add additional pressures to the busy workload of clinicians; time that would be better spent on patient care.”

Solution

In November 2010 the Trust started looking for ways to overcome the problem. Video conferencing was an obvious answer, and one that has been used successfully in many other healthcare organisations across the UK. But it was not viewed as viable for Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust because of the expense of providing the necessary conference facilities to serve its geographically diverse team.

Then BT proposed Cisco WebEx, a web conferencing product that offers enterprise-level features such as integrated security and high quality video, all at a fraction of the cost of a traditional video conferencing system.

Kamru Mohammed adds: “WebEx gave us a cost effective way to see whether the potential benefits we had identified are achievable without investing huge amounts of money.”

Value

Around one in five MDTs now take place over WebEx. And the Trust is hoping to boost that level to 50 per cent. Each WebEx session only costs about £10 compared to the huge time and cost of travelling to meetings. Although it's early days, Kamru is convinced that co-ordination is much better and cash savings are substantial.

The system is simple to use, and BT has provided online training tools and troubleshooting advice to help smooth its introduction. Moreover, WebEx might be able to provide spinoff benefits elsewhere in the Trust.

“We have put the facility in most of the wards and community locations,” Kamru Mohammed concludes. “WebEx could also be used for other purposes, such as conducting ad hoc and planned meetings to co-ordinate care between community and in-patient staff.”

Core services

- BT One Collaborate web – featuring Cisco WebEx
- BT training and troubleshooting



Offices worldwide

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