Hornbill Service Manager streamlines support for state-of-the-art patient records system.

> "Hornbill Service Manager is proving ideal for our needs. Its flexible subscription-based model means it's a cost-effective way of dealing with a fluctuating workload, and its power and reliability make it ideal for supporting a system that indirectly affects the experience of every one of our patients."

Kelvin Southgate
IT Service Desk Coordinator at
West Suffolk Hospital NHS Trust

When the service desk team at West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust faced the challenge of supporting e-Care, a major new patient records system, they chose Hornbill Service Manager, Hornbill's cloud-based solution, to help them. Implemented a month before e-Care went live, the solution is now enabling the team to provide an efficient and rapid response to the Trust's 3,500 internal customers and, indirectly, to patients visiting the West Suffolk Hospital.

One of the significant benefits of Hornbill's subscription-based service is that it offers the flexibility to easily adjust the number of users dependent on the organisation's needs. With such a major initiative, there is a fluctuating user base, and the Trust can readily scale up and down to accommodate the number of users required in a given month (which has ranged between 15 and 150 so far). The data is stored in the UK, complying with data protection requirements.

Little training was needed because the solution's user interface is designed to be similar to our favourite consumer apps, and has a collaborative foundation that utilises "social" principles to increase efficiency. It's highly configurable so the team can customise screens, reports and processes without any outside help. Regular updates

from Hornbill are applied without any downtime, and any customisations just carry on working: they don't need to be reapplied. An active user community provides additional suggestions for getting the best out of Service Manager.

Despite an increased volume of calls just after the launch of e-Care (1,000 per day instead of the usual 150), the Hornbill solution has helped the team to reduce its call backlog from 200-250 to 70, meaning that customers enjoy a faster and more efficient response to calls and hence more robust IT services.

Supporting rollout of a major new system

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust runs West Suffolk Hospital, a 430-bed hospital on the edge of Bury St Edmunds that serves a population of around 275,000 within an area of approximately 600 square miles.

In May 2016 West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust went live with a new electronic patient record system, called e-Care. This was the culmination of a two-year implementation project of an advanced solution that has replaced many legacy systems and manual processes. The resultant solution will be used by all areas of the Trust for everything from prescribing and medications administration to clinical notes.

The Trust's IT function realised that e-Care would make considerable demands on the service desk. The entire Trust depends on e-Care, so reporting and dealing with outages promptly is key to the running of the hospital. Supporting such a far-reaching and business-critical system would require a powerful and scalable service desk platform.

The hospital had been successfully using its existing service desk solution for several years but had limited its use to logging of support calls. The system had not been updated for a while and was only set up to handle 17 users whereas up to 150 people would be needed to support e-Care.

Choosing a new service desk solution

Upgrading to support the new requirements looked like a significant exercise, and so the service desk team, led by IT Service Desk Coordinator Kelvin Southgate, decided to take a completely fresh look at the market for service management tools. Kelvin says, "Our biggest driver was to find something flexible enough for our future needs – and as always in the NHS the budget was limited."

The team considered a wide range of solutions. Initially the focus was on on-premise systems, but it became apparent that many of these would be too expensive, and so the team started to look at Software as a Service (SaaS).

The search led to Hornbill Service Manager. This had immediate appeal because, unlike many cloud services, it was UK-based: the Trust can't store data outside the UK for data protection reasons.

Its affordability was also attractive. Kelvin explains: "Because of Hornbill's flexibility around the number of subscribers, we can vary the usage from month to month and just pay for what we use. For example, one month we only needed 15 users for testing, and then when we went live we needed over 150 – but that might go down to 30 or 40 once e-Care is bedded in." Implementation was free and didn't involve any capital outlay or consultancy fees either, he adds.

Dealing with Hornbill also inspired confidence. "The people at Hornbill were easy to talk to, forthcoming with ideas and happy to give advice, even before we'd decided to trial the product," Kelvin says.

Going live with Hornbill Service Manager

The team went ahead with a 30-day free trial. Staff worked closely with Hornbill during this period: a Hornbill consultant gave a full overview of the product and the options for using it, and answered any questions that arose.

"This trial period provided us with a production-ready system that was able to go live within 30 days. It also meant that we were fully trained before subscribing to the service," recalls Kelvin. "In fact there's no real need for user training because it has a social media style user interface that just makes sense as soon as you look at it."

"The automatic updates from Hornbill are fantastic, delivering new functionality that's immediately available to configure and use."

Kelvin Southgate

The team decided that Hornbill Service Manager would meet its needs and went live at the beginning of April 2016 – a month before e-Care's live date. Hornbill's Switch-On service, provided free as part of the 30-day trial, included regular contact with product specialists, webinars to introduce various aspects of the products, and training showing how best to realise the Trust's own business processes using Service Manager.

Now the system is being used to support all the Trust's 3,500 IT systems users – including everyone from clinicians to housekeeping and HR – and covering not just e-Care but all IT systems.

〉 Immediate benefits: flexibility plus efficiency

The solution has met the team's expectations about flexibility. "Hornbill's subscription-based approach is ideal, because we can decide what we need month by month.," says Kelvin. "The flexibility enables us to scale up without any commercial barriers or performance issues."

The system has also flexed to deal with fluctuating call levels: workload peaked at 1,000 calls a day in contrast with the normal 150 a day. In spite of the barrage of calls, the team has managed to reduce the number of open calls from 200-250 to 70 now.

This enhanced productivity reflects the fact that it's easier to manage calls, and that there are back-end processes to speed up their resolution. "The reporting in Hornbill Service Manager makes it easier to manage the workload, and also to motivate ourselves," Kelvin says. "I've got a good, keen team and they like to see how they're doing and compete against each other to see who can close the most calls. The system makes it easy to set targets and monitor how we're doing against them."

The team immediately noticed improvements in the efficiency of their processes. Kelvin illustrates: "Before, we used to input calls on a blank form, but now we have progressive capture and business process models, both of which help us improve call quality and collaboration with other teams to resolve calls faster."

〉 Ongoing improvements

Further efficiency improvements become evident day by day as business processes get refined by the team, taking advantage of Service Manager's configurability. Kelvin explains, "We can easily make changes to processes and screens ourselves, without needing to get Hornbill involved. The week we went live I made several improvements to the way we captured data, for example adding fields that are useful for us such as patient numbers." The team is also self-sufficient in terms of being able to generate new reports for management or to help it deal with its own workload.

The team has continued to get help from Hornbill as needed, and has also been making use of the user forums. "I've never seen such a helpful user community," says Kelvin. "Users are really active, helping to resolve one another's issues and suggesting improvements to the product. It's also great to see how quickly Hornbill acts on those suggestions. New functionality and updates are delivered regularly, I'm impressed with how quickly Hornbill can act upon the suggestions for product improvement." He has already implemented useful ideas from the community, he adds.

There are also ongoing improvements added to the system from Hornbill. "Updates happen all the time, and they're done live so I don't have to manage any downtime. The automatic updates are fantastic, delivering new functionality which is immediately available to configure and use. This isn't something that was possible previously where improvements came via new software releases that were delivered annually."

Future plans

The system was initially used for call logging and asset management. There are plans to add change management and problem management within six months of go-live, and also to create a self-service portal. These additions can all be made simply by turning on and configuring existing features of Service Manager.

In addition, all the documents relating to the Information Management and Technology (IM&T) department's ISO 9001 quality accreditation are being moved into Hornbill Document Manager. Kelvin says, "Storing all the documents in Hornbill Document Manager will make our accreditation easier to manage because we can easily manage the change history and version control of documents, and so on."

In the future, the team plans to make more use of the "social" features of Hornbill Service Manager to increase collaboration between team members and across different IT teams.

For more information about Hornbill visit: www.hornbill.com