

The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust



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NHS Trust

UK-based NHS Trust improves clinicians productivity and is projected to save £2.5 to £3 million in IT costs over a 5-year period with Riverbed® Aternity.

The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust (PAHT) serves a local population of around 350,000 people across West Essex and East Hertfordshire. The hospital provides a full range of general acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. The ICT team is responsible for over 4,000 staff,

including doctors, clinicians, community nurses and many other healthcare professionals.

The hospital required a Digital Experience Management (DEM), that would help the ICT team increase visibility into the end-user experience on any application or device to improve the digital experience for clinicians.

By implementing Riverbed Aternity Digital Experience Management (DEM), The Princess Alexandra Hospital has boosted productivity by mitigating downtime for clinical staff whilst maintaining a high level of patient care and saving costs.

In Brief

Challenges

- Requirement to understand and improve clinicians' digital experiences
- Isolating end-user issues and identifying root causes
- Maintaining high levels of patient care
- Optimising budgets

Solution

- Riverbed® Aternity Digital Experience Management (DEM)

Benefits

- Understanding and improving clinician experience and efficient patient pathways
- 99% reduction in SLA breaches on service desk tickets
- Automated problem resolution
- Optimised IT spend, saving approximately £3 million over a 5-year period

The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust provides a comprehensive range of acute and specialist services at The Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow, the Herts and Essex Hospital in Bishop's Stortford, and St. Margaret's Hospital in Epping. Part of its vision is to 'always hold the patient and their wellbeing at the centre of our thoughts and efforts' supported by 'always using up-to-date treatments, technology and facilities.'

Challenge:

A desire to gain visibility and understanding of the digital employee experience

The Princess Alexandra Hospital Trust aims to deliver healthcare 'that our patients deserve and makes us proud.'

"Our clinicians were experiencing blue screens across devices, and we didn't understand how to address the challenge. Healthcare workers were also facing issues with applications and PCs running slow but not necessarily reporting them because they didn't have the time." explains Jeffrey Wood, Deputy Director of ICT at The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust.

Identifying the source of user issues

Many applications used by PAHT staff were legacy-based due to the age of hospital devices, so they were unstable and challenging to maintain. "When I joined the hospital four years ago, 65% of the equipment was seven years or older and we had a challenge procuring equipment that was up-to-date. As major system components operate on data in 32-bit units, we couldn't run the latest software versions and application providers don't tend to update their software for older machines." states Wood.

In order to determine which equipment needed to be replaced, the ICT team needed to measure the impact the outdated devices were having across their IT infrastructure. To achieve this, they needed to have full visibility across the end-user experience.

Solution:

Pinpointing issues with Riverbed Aternity

Riverbed's partner, Kingsfield, one of the UK's leading Public Sector specialists, initially recommended Aternity to PAHT. They have now been using it for over a year and are currently running 3,300 licenses.

The ICT team calculated that a total of 947 hours had been lost each quarter due to unresponsive blue screens, which was having a knock-on effect on patient care. This has now reduced to 275 hours today. "We are making progress on this but there is still room for improvement," states Wood. "We have saved almost 700 hours which is around 28 days per month that we are effectively giving back to clinicians." One of the core principles at The Princess Alexandra Hospital is 'patient at heart', so resolving these issues was a key priority.

"Aternity was able to highlight where our real issues are. We are now able to work on the areas that need improving and have a real understanding of the end-user experience."

Jeffrey Wood,
Deputy Director of ICT, The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust



As well as pinpointing the exact problem, the ICT team can now proactively fix issues before a clinician even notices. “In January 2023, we had 1,308 open tickets with 629 overdue. By May 2023, the ICT team had 628 open tickets with zero overdue. We have greatly reduced service desk tickets which results in improved user experience and increased levels of productivity,” adds Wood.

The hospital still has many old devices that need replacing, which will reduce the blue screen issues even more. “Aternity has enabled us to start the process of stripping these specific devices out. Our system for detecting issues is much more proactive and automated thanks to Aternity. With the solution, we now have access to the tools we need to not only detect but also resolve user issues much more quickly.” says Wood.

Benefits:

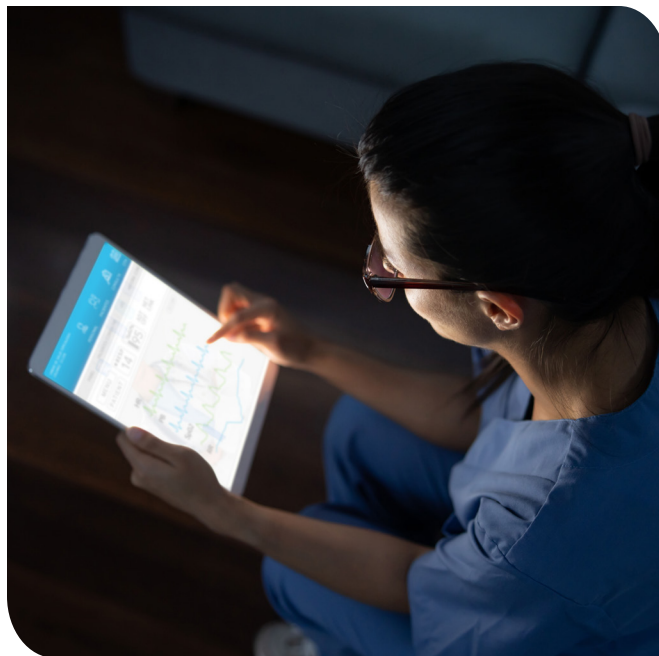
Reduced IT spend through optimising hardware replacement

He continues, “Implementing Aternity has also substantially reduced our IT spend. Rather than buying new equipment, we now have a clear direction on where to spend money on new devices. We have reduced costs by optimising hardware replacement based on performance rather than age.

Over a 5-year period we will save around £2.5 million to £3 million in terms of total IT costs. This is fantastic as the funds can be spent on other vital improvements for patient care.”

“One of the key things I look for in a supplier is a partnership. I want to work alongside a supplier to help improve our service for the benefit of our patients and that is what Riverbed provides us with – a true partnership.”

Jeffrey Wood,
Deputy Director of ICT, The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust



Aternity also enables the ICT team to create automation scripts to automatically resolve the most common device and user issues. “As well as giving clinicians time back, Aternity has given ICT staff time back too. Basic fixes can now be automated, which means my team can spend time on things that really matter,” explains Wood.

Data to back-up decisions

Aternity has also enabled the ICT team at PAHT to gather data which has been useful in leveraging other suppliers. Some applications were experiencing crashes and long hangs. The Trust is now working with these application providers to rectify this, as it can share real-time analytics and actionable insights with them.

Additionally, Aternity is helping provide the hospital with sustainability data which is another key driver for PAHT. The ICT team also plans to integrate Aternity with Apple devices to gather performance data and be alerted when refresh policies are due.

“We’re trialing some bio-mechanical equipment, which is windows-based and quite expensive. As we can’t afford to change every machine, Aternity is helping us see how often our current machines are being used. For example, we might have 10 CAT scanners, but may only be using seven. This provides us with the opportunity to make adjustments to the equipment we have, reducing in some areas and increasing in others,” explains Wood.

Reducing carbon footprint

The ICT team at PAHT now have access to available data to help them focus on and reduce their carbon footprint – an area of importance for all NHS Trusts. “By interrogating data and doing things more intelligently such as shutting down devices which haven’t been rebooted for a long time has massively reduced our carbon emissions, as well as our electricity bill. We now have data and statistics which we can customise to meet our needs and we can see where we can make improvements.”

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Jeffrey Wood, Deputy Director of ICT at The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust



Riverbed – Empower the Experience

Riverbed is the only company with the collective richness of telemetry from network to app to end user that illuminates and then accelerates every interaction so that users get the flawless digital experience they expect across the entire digital ecosystem. Riverbed provides two industry-leading solutions: the Riverbed Unified Observability portfolio, which integrates data, insights, and actions across IT to enable customers to deliver seamless digital experiences; and Riverbed Acceleration, which offers fast, agile, and secure acceleration of any application over any network to users, whether they are mobile, remote, or on-premises. Together with our thousands of partners, and market-leading customers across the world, we empower every click, every digital experience. Learn more at riverbed.com.