



## DAMOVO EQUIPS SURREY AMBULANCE SERVICE WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED TO DELIVER 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY HEALTHCARE

As the demands upon the data network at the headquarters of Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust grew, it became clear that a replacement was needed. Damovo recommended a Nortel solution that not only delivers greater bandwidth to the desktop and scalability for future growth in users and services, but its IP Telephony-ready switches enable the Trust to move to an IP-based system in the future, which will reduce costs and give greater flexibility.

Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust is headquartered in Banstead, in the heart of Surrey. It employs 679 in-house staff and delivers emergency response via 21 ambulance stations to almost one and a quarter million people across Surrey and North East Hampshire. Last year, it received 113204 calls for assistance and responded to 26226 life-threatening calls. Its headquarters house key personnel and, critically, the County's 999 ambulance call centre.

### Delivering critical support

Two key goals for Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust are improving its services and managing its resources efficiently. This requires a careful balancing act between maintaining existing investments, while preparing the Trust to meet future demands and services under the 'Connecting for Health' nationwide NHS programme, such as electronic staff records and 'choose and book', the new electronic booking system. ***"As we get ready for their implementation and the proposed Ambulance Service mergers, we will see a greater transference of voice and data across the South East health community,"*** explains Duncan Chilvers, head of ICT at Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Such services require a resilient, scalable and robust IT architecture to be in place. Yet, as Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust was discovering, its existing data infrastructure – which had been developed in an ad hoc fashion over the last 17 years – was not up to the job.

## SUCH SERVICES REQUIRE A RESILIENT, SCALABLE AND ROBUST ARCHITECTURE

***“Over the last year, a number of network failures had occurred caused mainly by the edge equipment but also by a number of outlets becoming unusable and nearing the end of their life.”*** says Chilvers.

The Trust was also considering whether to expand and establish a new call centre control room in a separate building to deal with growing demand. It is expected that the Ambulance Service will be seeing an increase from 420 calls per day to more than 600 by December 2007.

In addition, the existing 100mb data infrastructure was unable to support voice calls (VoIP), a key element of the Trust’s future plans for voice provision, including those made within the 999 call centre. A new data infrastructure would also enable the Trust to expand its ‘hub for health’, a directory service for all non-999 calls.

### Meeting the Trust’s needs now... and in the future

Damovo was one of the suppliers that pitched for the data network contract, and it won the deal with its recommended Nortel/3Com solution, built on Passport core switches with IP Telephony-ready dual-homed Baystack switches for user connectivity. The solution is delivered as a managed service, which means Damovo not only installed the new data network, but will also support and maintain it going ahead.

Currently there are less than 10 IP telephones in use within the Trust’s headquarters, but the Trust is considering an upgrade to IP Telephony within the next two to three years. ***“There is very limited use of IP Telephony at the moment in our headquarters, but we intend to grow our use if the network can take it,”*** says Chilvers. ***“Our previous network wouldn’t have let us consider such a move.”*** Given the critical nature of the 999 calls that the data network might have to connect in the future, the Nortel solution was recommended by Damovo partly on the basis that it was robust enough not to drop a single telephone call.



In the meantime, the Trust is benefiting from the other features the new data infrastructure delivers, such as greater bandwidth to the desktop, no network downtime, greater resilience, and scalability for additional users.

As a result of the network deployment, voice and data transmission rates have improved, while the IT department has seen a noticeable drop in calls to its helpdesk and is able to carry out its own tasks, such as the copying of files, much faster.

Although Chilvers is fairly new to his post, he has already struck up a good relationship with Damovo and his account manager. ***“Damovo aren’t pushy,”*** he notes, ***“the relationship works fine for us as I’d prefer to go to my account manager with requests rather than have him badgering me.”***

***“The deployment at Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust demonstrates what can be achieved when organisations consider how to make the most of their network,”*** says Paul Butcher, managing director of Damovo UK. ***“By planning ahead, the Trust has installed a network that not only provides greater resilience and bandwidth today, but also offers the potential to take advantage of new communications in the future.”***

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