

Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust

“The Observer Platform makes light of any problem, and in a fraction of the time it would have taken us previously.”

Hergy Galsinh | Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust
Network Manager

Challenge

The Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust provides specialist mental health and learning disability services to 572,000 adults, across 62 sites in the Leeds area which are connected by a complex, highly secure data network. Over this network run critical applications needed to support the Trust’s data and telecommunications needs. This includes patient records, mobile communications, and increasingly, VoIP and videoconferencing. Over 2,500 employees rely on these tools on a daily basis.

The Trust was suffering from the following network health challenges:

- Identifying causes of slow connectivity between sites on 1Gb core network
- Understanding why network issues were occurring inconsistently throughout the day

Solution

The Trust used the Observer Performance Management Platform to automate large parts of the network management process and reduce the time spent troubleshooting by 20 percent. The organization achieved a complete return on their investment within 24 months and eliminated all consulting costs. Additionally, alarms were set up to prevent future issues and enable immediate problem resolution.

Identifying the Symptoms

The data flowing across the Trust’s network is not only sensitive, but vital to patient care. This meant the network team had to immediately address the slow connectivity issues it was starting to experience between certain sites. But with no consistency to the connectivity problems, it was hard to identify the exact cause of the slowdown. From the team’s viewpoint it could be any combination of problems across their Citrix®, HTTP, SMTP or Microsoft® Directory services.

Trying to troubleshoot also opened up its own issues. It was a time-consuming process that forced the IT staff to focus on extinguishing immediate network fires rather than on issue prevention and long-term planning.

Hergy Galsinh, Network Manager for the Trust, and UK Netcom worked together to establish the best solution to the problem. They had looked at NetScout Sniffer, but it was the Observer Platform that met their immediate troubleshooting needs and continued expansion goals for optimum network performance management.

The Observer Platform's Diagnosis

Within 10 minutes of deploying the Observer Platform's powerful tools available in Observer Analyzer Suite as well as multiple Observer Expert Probes the team was able to analyze network, application, and server behavior and identify the cause of the network slowdown.

The Windows update server was identified as the primary culprit. Rather than sending out updates at off-peak hours, it was sending them via the main network during the busiest times of the day. The network witnessed significant bandwidth and contention issues when large files containing video or medical images were sent in parallel with key business applications.

The analysis capabilities of the Observer Platform not only located the potential problem but the solution's online reports provided substantial backup. With this data at hand, the team reset the updates to occur during off-peak hours. To avoid future problems, alarms were set to notify the team of abnormalities as they arose rather than waiting for user complaints. The Observer Platform not only provided the team with an unparalleled view of network and application performance but also enabled them to set internal service level agreements.

With the connectivity problems solved, the Trust started using the solution for preventative purposes, anticipating issues and planning activities and implementations in context of network demands and trends.

Leeds Partnerships **NHS**
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Focusing on Preventative Care

The Observer Platform was the missing link for the Trust's Network Services Department. Since implementing the automated troubleshooting – the team has increased proactive maintenance by 20 percent. Most importantly, the network manager saw a complete return on investment within 24 months.

"There have been no issues with the Observer Platform," stated Galsinh. "The training and consultancy we received as part of the package was top class and has set the team up to maximize the benefits of the solution. The technical teams at Network Instruments and UK Netcom have also proven to be extremely knowledgeable and any queries have been answered quickly and efficiently."

Additional Observer Probes have already been purchased to gain further insight and visibility into the network and to ensure that all remote sites can be monitored easily from a central point. Moving forward, Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust is considering the use of additional components of the Observer Platform to benefit the management and efficiency of the Trust.

About Leeds Partnerships NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust provides specialist mental health and learning disability services to over 572,000 adults within the Leeds metropolitan boundary. Each day the organisation provides help to over 2,000 people.

Service users are at the heart of the organisation. The Trust constantly strives to provide the best possible care and support, working closely with related organisations to provide effective, accessible and modern mental health and learning disability services. Working in partnership with local communities, the Trust's core purpose is to provide the best mental health services available to the people of Leeds.

www.leedsmentalhealth.nhs.uk/home



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