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Supporting Outstanding Healthcare Services: Faster Remedies for IT Issues

Arden&GEM

Profile
Provider of commissioning, clinical and business support, and integrated solutions for the healthcare sector

Location
United Kingdom

Industry
Healthcare

Website
www.ardengemcsu.nhs.uk

Solution
- Ivanti® Xtraction

Benefits
- Reduces time spent by the organisation on compiling IT service delivery reports by up to 60 percent, increasing efficiency and enabling a greater focus on service optimisation
- Enhances performance against service level agreements and decreases support call queues, removing barriers to healthcare clients' productivity
- Helps the support teams manage their workloads by prioritising the most urgent requests, minimising the impact of IT issues on care delivered to patients

NHS Arden & Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit (Arden & GEM) delivers high-quality, end-to-end commissioning support services to customers, including more than 60 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), NHS England, STPs, local authorities, and a range of care providers located in the UK. Employing 1,200 people and a diverse network of partners, Arden & GEM aims to help clients tackle the challenges faced in building integrated, cost-effective services that lead to better health outcomes for patients.

Evolving in Line with Client Needs

As part of its business-support offering, Arden & GEM provides a range of IT services to its customers. With the role of IT in the management and delivery of modern healthcare increasing, the organisation is pressured to find new ways to meet growing client expectations within limited budgets.

Paul Miller, Head of End User Services at Arden & GEM, took up the story: "As an organisation, we are driven by our customers' needs. Currently, we support between 25,000 and 30,000 devices, deliver services that touch 60,000 users, and strive to exceed a complicated set of SLAs [service level agreements].

"Recently, the boom of personal computing has led to a demand for consistent user experiences across multiple devices, with people wanting to use their smartphones and tablets in the same way they use their desktop computers. In the face of growing complexity, we wanted to take steps to ensure that we could keep delivering the same—or even higher—quality of IT support."

Arden & GEM recognised that the key to better IT service management is being proactive in identifying and responding to issues with greater speed and effectiveness. But to do this, the organisation needed greater visibility of IT service delivery.

"Before, our understanding of IT service delivery was limited to fairly basic internal and client-facing reporting," said Paul Miller. "We built reports in spreadsheets using snapshots of our databases, which was a very labour-intensive process that did not produce the most visually appealing results. Without easy visibility of trends or bottlenecks in our support processes, it was difficult to prioritise requests. We wanted to move away from fire-fighting issues as they arose, in order to communicate our performance against SLAs to our clients more effectively."

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— **Paul Miller**
Head of End User Services, NHS Arden & Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit

Looking to a Trusted Partner

To enable new transparency around IT service delivery, Arden & GEM chose to deploy Xtraction, a reporting and dashboard solution from Ivanti.

As long-term users of Ivanti technology, choosing Xtraction was an easy decision, as Paul Miller explained: "Ivanti Service Desk, powered by Landesk, has been Arden & GEM's IT service management tool for 10 years now, so it made sense to look to Ivanti for a way to gain a deeper view of this environment. We have built up a solid relationship with the Ivanti team, who are always very responsive, and continually propose new ideas that could help us make life easier for employees and better for clients."

With help from an Ivanti consultant, Arden & GEM was able to implement the solution fast, allowing the organisation to start enjoying the benefits sooner.

"The Ivanti consultant worked with our systems team to deploy Xtraction in just two days," recalled Paul Miller. "The solution proved to be even more powerful than we initially expected. Once you define the parameters of your analysis, it crunches through the data extremely quickly to provide detailed reports. We also use it to provide dashboards to our support teams, helping them manage their workloads more effectively."

At-a-Glance Reporting

Deploying Xtraction has revolutionised IT service delivery reporting processes at Arden & GEM, with the organisation able to produce internal and client-facing reports at greater speed and depth than before.

"It used to take us up to two days to put together some of the reports that we deliver to clients," noted Paul Miller. "Now, the effort is all front-loaded: once we have set up a report in Xtraction, we can simply refresh it whenever we want the latest view. Such reports are now available in about two hours, although many are ready in near-real time. Overall, we estimate that Xtraction has reduced our reporting overhead by as much as 60 percent—a huge time savings. We can use this extra time for value-added activities such as investigating customer trends around incidents and non-business-as-usual requests, helping us take proactive steps to optimise our services."

Arden & GEM is also using its new reporting capabilities to enhance its relationships with clients, as Paul Miller elaborated: "With Xtraction, we can provide much richer reports to clients that look a lot more professional than the ones we used to produce.

We are able to show them our performance against SLAs in much greater detail, helping us demonstrate the value that we deliver. By allowing them to drill down deeper into the data, we can drive more intelligent conversations with them about how we can provide an even better service."

Capitalising on Actionable Insights

Armed with real-time insights into IT services, Arden & GEM can take effective actions that raise service levels.

"With Xtraction, we can gain an immediate overview of IT service delivery, uncovering the patterns that help us pre-empt problems and resolve them faster," commented Paul Miller. "The solution allows us to look at our complex IT services landscape from a variety of different perspectives, revealing where we are performing particularly well or where there is room for improvement, so that we can replicate desired behaviours."

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By enabling Arden & GEM's support teams to prioritise requests more effectively, Xtraction helps them ensure that none slip through the net. In a particular case, one support team at the organisation had an average of over 250 calls in their queue, with over 90 breaching the agreed service levels.

"A situation like that is a vicious cycle, as frustrated callers escalate their issues, resulting in even more calls in the queue," explained Paul Miller. "With Xtraction, the team was able to get on top of the backlog by identifying the most urgent requests and rapidly dispatching resources to resolve them before SLAs were broken. Our range of SLAs exist for a reason, so it is vital that we address the most critical first, or risk affecting services to patients."

He concluded: "Thanks to Xtraction, the team was able to successfully reduce their queue to 80 calls, with just four of them breached. As a result, our clients are much happier, and can also get back to their core business of delivering exceptional healthcare services a lot sooner."

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