Milton Keynes NHS Foundation Trust: a secure and satisfied Sophos customer for over 15 years

Milton Keynes NHS Foundation Trust is a long-term Sophos customer. They have worked closely with Sophos for over 15 years and have recently extended their contract by another three. The IT team have faced constant changes and challenges over the last decade and a half. They have relied on Sophos to keep their systems and data safe during this time.

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Systems Engineer
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The IT team at Milton Keynes NHS Foundation Trust work hard to manage the network infrastructure of a growing hospital, cope with increased budgetary and data security pressures, and protect against the shifting threat landscape. The team have been supported by Sophos for over 15 years.

Business Challenge

Before the introduction of Sophos in 1998, users experienced significant problems with adware. This interrupted internet access and created unnecessary visits to desktops for the IT team.

More recently, challenges have included:
- Community growth and hospital expansion – this has necessitated the introduction of a brand new network infrastructure in 2014
- Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), increasingly in use at the hospital by doctors, clinicians, patients and visitors
- Keeping confidential patient data safe and avoiding Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) fines
- The ever-changing and challenging malware threat landscape
- Staying in control of shrinking NHS budgets

Technology solution

Back in 1998, Sophos Antivirus became an effective tool for the Trust. It eliminated adware overnight, even in the midst of system upgrades and the roll out of Windows® XP for a new patient administration system.

Nick Southern knew that Sophos Antivirus would meet his needs initially and continues to do so now. “It just gets better with each new release,” he says. “Functionality, ease-of-use, and deployment are all excellent.”

In addition, the Sophos Enterprise Console allows centralised deployment and updating of Sophos Antivirus in a matter of minutes, as well as network-wide configuration, monitoring and management.
“There simply isn't much out there that will beat Sophos.”

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Systems Engineer
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“Smart Views in the Enterprise Console enable us to instantly check the status of all our PCs,” says Nick. “We have configured our systems for speed, so Sophos Antivirus is set to scan when writing files to servers and reading from desktops, ensuring they are not scanned twice. The product also enables us to set pragmatic group-wide policies, so we are able to ensure that low-risk files such as X-ray images are excluded from scanning, and any urgent patient diagnoses are not impeded in any way.”

Sophos Safeguard Encryption is also now a feature on all PCs at the hospital, important for the protection of confidential healthcare information, and the avoidance of data breach fines. All emails are now protected with Sophos Secure Email Gateway which prevents the spread of spam and viruses. All Sophos products successfully slot in and work well alongside the NHS Gateway.

Business Results

Confidence in the capabilities of Sophos Antivirus has been high at Milton Keynes NHS Foundation Trust for many years. As Nick explains:

“When we first installed the software all those years ago, it sorted out so many of our PCs almost overnight. They ran faster and we were spared a lot of legwork. I consider it to be one of the best IT investments the hospital has made. In common with all healthcare organisations, the hospital also needs to safeguard the integrity of patient records. Consequently, every computer in the organisation is scanned out-of-hours to ensure continued protection from malware, including spyware that could steal confidential data.”

“Previously the IT team needed to visit around 15 computers a month to sort out problems, but now they are rarely called out at all. This is due to the outstanding level of protection provided by Sophos, as well as the centralised console, offering the ability to manage IT security from one desk. This also allows the team to shut down the system at the flip of a switch if it was ever necessary to protect the hospital in this way.”

Further standout benefits can be summarised as follows:

- The team now spend just two hours a week managing the Sophos solutions. In fact Nick believes that one person can now do the work of six people in previous years.
- Significant cost benefits based on preferential pricing for the healthcare sector from Sophos.
- Excellent support from Sophos: the team always receive a response to emails within ten minutes.
- Fantastic support from Sophos partner Foursys who regularly check up on the team at the hospital and offer fast resolutions to challenges.

“We have just renewed our contract with Sophos for another three years,” summaries Nick. “I have already recommended them to two other NHS Trusts and now they are Sophos customers too.”