



FUTURE PLANS

S&SHIS is now in the unique position that all stakeholders, including the CSU and CCG, are connected via the COiN. Furthermore, as CSUs are encouraged to provide services beyond the core geography, it's imperative that the network can be flexed as requirements change over time.

As the S&SHIS COiN has diverse links into Updata's core network, the local health economy can provide services across the country.

For many NHS bodies wanting to provide network services, the elephant in the room remains the N3 spine, the national applications that run over it and the loss of funding for N3 reference circuits and COiNs.

By limiting their reliance on N3, keeping traffic local and restricting the amount of connections, S&SHIS has been able to maintain access to core applications such as Choose and Book.

In addition, Richard tracked developments from the Cabinet Office regarding its Public Services Network (PSN) initiative. The PSN is a network over which government can safely share services, to collaborate in new ways, more effectively.

There were early indications from the Cabinet Office that health would be obliged to meet the PSN connectivity standards. As such, Richard was adamant that his network needed to be built from the ground up with PSN in mind, and ultimately the PSN for Health.

Richard comments: "It was important that whoever we partnered with on this network was an accredited PSN provider. We were not building a PSN, but our network needed to be of PSN standard. So, no matter which direction network design took in healthcare, we had Updata who could offer both N3 connectivity and also the ability to transition to PSN, if the need arose".

>> To find out more about how Updata can assist you in meeting your network and financial goals, please contact tellmemore@updata.net, or call 08455 650555 to speak to your Account Director.

STAFFORDSHIRE PROSPERS IN NHS LANDSCAPE

>> Updata supports Staffordshire and Shropshire Health Informatics Service through innovative network technology and flexible partnerships



RICHARD MCCUE IS NETWORK AND SYSTEMS MANAGER FOR STAFFORDSHIRE AND SHROPSHIRE HEALTH INFORMATICS SERVICE (S&SHIS).

An extremely driven, forward-thinking professional, he has proven to be innovative in his use of technologies for the benefit of the organisation and its IT and network users.

Richard inherited a plethora of network connections to multiple sites across the organisation. The network had evolved on an ad-hoc basis resulting in an infrastructure that didn't meet the needs of the business and its users. From a network management perspective it was complex, costly and not fit for the organisation's wider network and service delivery ambitions. There was also an over-reliance on the NHS network (N3), for local voice and data traffic. Overall, the connection to N3 was costly, slow and not flexible enough for S&SHIS to benefit from the latest networking technologies and applications.

Richard says: "The network had become an inflexible burden – we had a massive amount of connections running on different contracts, which were just too complex and hard to manage. We struggled with connection problems and quite frankly, I simply couldn't see how the existing network would support the organisation as we evolved in the future, without this burden increasing".

In September 2010, led by Richard's vision, S&SHIS selected public sector managed network specialist Udata Infrastructure Ltd (Udata), to build and manage a region-wide Community of Interest Network (COiN). In under 12 months the COiN had connected 112 sites across the region including hospitals, primary care centres, dentist surgeries, health centres, child health clinics and children centres. The COiN now delivers circa £100,000 savings per annum and provides connectivity to nearly 4,000 PCs and 8,000 users.

Richard now needed his network to:

1. Reduce management complexities
2. Reduce network costs even further
3. Be flexible to accommodate evolving circumstances, e.g the commissioning and decommissioning of new sites without it being financially or technically punitive
4. Provide a platform to facilitate shared services with partner organisations
5. Take advantage of new technologies and applications such as Voice Over IP (VOIP) to reduce costs
6. Be compliant with current and any forthcoming information assurance standards from the Department of Health

In 2012, Richard faced a backdrop of challenging healthcare budgets and a rapidly changing and dynamic healthcare industry, primarily driven by pending changes to the make-up of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and the introduction of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Commissioning Support Units (CSUs). In December 2012, the North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group was in the first wave to be authorised by the NHS Commissioning Board, (NHSCB). Its membership includes all 33 GP practices in North Staffordshire including doctors, nurses and practice teams.

Richard adds: "We chose Udata initially because we needed a network partner that we could work with collaboratively – that I could trust to help me develop the network, to take a flexible approach to how the network could expand and to support the Trust and its network users in the future".

SITE PROVISIONING TIME HAS DECREASED BY 90% AND INSTALL COSTS FOR NEWS SITES HAVE FALLEN SHARPLY, IN MANY CASES BY 70-80%

Integrity, scalability and flexibility of network in a dynamic and changing health landscape

In addition to the CCGs, S&SHIS now also provides connectivity for:

- Staffordshire and Lancashire CSU – the organisation responsible for, amongst other things, the provision of IT services to the CCG
- Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust, who provide community health services and adult social care in Staffordshire and health services in Stoke on Trent.

