



PROACT

CASE STUDY



Northern Care Alliance
NHS Group

Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust

Transforming radiology services with 'Imaging Anywhere'

Summary

Challenge

Demand for Radiology services has dramatically increased in recent years and UK Radiologists are in short supply. Northern Care Alliance needed a solution to enable remote radiology services for the Trust, so radiologists can do their job from any location and be employed both nationwide and worldwide.

Solution

The trust implemented a new high-spec VDI solution, powered by Dell VXRail and Nvidia. This enabled graphic-intensive radiology workloads to be carried out from any location, which opened up a worldwide talent pool, increased employee flexibility and expanded the capacity of current teams.

In recent years, there has been an increase in demand for medical imaging services, as scans are now used to identify a wider range of illnesses at an earlier stage. There is also a shortage of radiologists in many parts of the UK, including the north of England. These two issues are creating operational challenges for radiology departments all around the UK, and this was also the case at the Northern Care Alliance (NCA).

The situation was further compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, when radiologists were asked to work from home. The speed of processing scans over VPN was unworkably slow and reduced the throughput of the team.

The NCA, in partnership with Proact, looked to provide an innovative solution to combat these challenges.

Project aims

There were two main reasons that the Trust needed to make remote working practical. Firstly, it was important to enable productivity for the current radiologist team, when working off-site. Secondly, providing access to a global talent-pool enabled the Trust to address staffing challenges within the radiology department. They could be based in any country, anywhere in the world, but would be working directly for the Trust.

NCA needed a solution that would enable a fundamental change to how they reviewed scans, so they could be processed entirely offsite.



Working with Proact has enabled us to deliver radiology transformation very quickly. Some trusts can take a couple of years to deliver projects like this; with Proact, we did it in 6 months. Their breadth of knowledge, experience and in-house skills really add value."

Jav Yaqub,
Head of Infrastructure, Northern Care Alliance

About Proact

Proact has over 25 years of experience supporting the NHS sector and currently works with over 50 healthcare customers across the UK. Our tailored solutions and technical expertise enhance healthcare services by supporting you to store, protect and gain valuable insight into your data.

We've completed thousands of successful projects around the world, have more than 4,000 customers and currently manage hundreds of petabytes of information in the cloud. We employ over 1,000 people in 13 countries across Europe and North America.

Founded in 1994, our parent company, Proact IT Group AB (publ), was listed on Nasdaq Stockholm in 1999 (under the symbol PACT).

Traditionally, radiologists required high-powered, on-premise desktops to process scans. Whilst these devices can be configured to work remotely, they operate extremely slowly over VPN, with unfeasibly large file sizes being transferred. Additionally, these systems would be very difficult for the IT team to maintain if they were located worldwide.

In collaboration with clinical stakeholders, Proact helped the NCA team to scope, trial and implement an innovative 'Imaging Anywhere' VDI solution.

Scoping the solution

Proact and the NCA liaised with clinical teams throughout the Trust to understand workflows and challenges. Clinical and technical experts were brought together to scope a new solution and to ensure it was well-considered.

The platform, based on Dell VXrail and Nvidia technology, enabled high-resolution graphics to be served to radiologists over thin-client. The iGel terminals used were capable of powering up to three medical-grade, 4k monitors and the technology ensured that all the graphics processing was done server-side, enabling minimal data transfer through VDI technology.

Outcomes

NCA's radiology platform now gives the Trust flexibility to hire radiologists worldwide. This has enabled throughput of the department to increase and has improved patient care. Jav Yaqub, Head of Infrastructure said, "It's not just the increase in department capacity that's important, but the inherent flexibility that the system provides. A radiologist in Australia can process scans overnight where we would have previously had to wait until the next day at a minimum. It's also quickly scalable and provides flexible working benefits for existing staff."

Nearly all complex systems maintenance and patching can now be delivered centrally, with end-user technology being simple to administrate and maintain.

Working with Proact

Jav Yaqub, Head of Infrastructure at Northern Care Alliance, said "What I like about Proact is the level of depth they go to in their scoping, designs and in handover documentation. It's very detailed. The whole process, end-to-end, was very good."

Jav added, "Working with Proact has enabled us to deliver radiology transformation very quickly. Some trusts can take a couple of years to deliver projects like this; with Proact, we did it in 6 months. Their breadth of knowledge, experience and in-house skills really added value."

And concluded with "Working with Proact is like a true partnership; it's two-way. They are responsive and flexible. If we need urgent work completing before a PO is raised, Proact do everything they can to help. If we have to reschedule work with a fair amount of notice, they are always as flexible as possible. A lot of companies don't operate like this and it's refreshing to work with one who do. They're very much an extension to our team."

About Northern Care Alliance

Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust is newly established, amalgamating Pennine Acute & Salford Royal to better serve patients in North Manchester. The Trust serves over 1 million residents from four major hospitals and employs over 20,000 staff.

Proact have worked with NCA (formerly Pennine Acute Trust) on various IT infrastructure projects to help drive forward the standards of patient care in Manchester.

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