

CASE STUDY

NHS Trust leverages Sesui's Intelligent Networking Solutions technology to transform, share and improve patient care

Since October 2004, GP practices have needed to refer patients requiring urgent care outside of normal surgery times to Out-of-Hours (OOH) services. All providers of OOH services are required to meet national Quality Standards which include performance on call handling. Separately, there is a "Gold Standard" requirement that patients should only have to make one phone call to one number to access their GP practice.

Background

In summer 2005 an NHS Trust, which was running an OOH service for local GP practices, sought the advice of Sesui Ltd, an Intelligent Networking (IN) solutions specialist

The NHS Trust had been using a 08xx access number which terminated on the main number of their call centre. Problems the Trust experienced included callers receiving an engaged tone when trying urgently to access OOH help as the number of simultaneous callers often exceeded the number of lines available despite the use of a network queuing facility. Data on callers in the network queue were not readily

available to the service provider so waiting times and the number of people who hung up before being answered could not be correctly incorporated in their monthly performance figures. Not all callers were using the OOH service appropriately – for example staff resource was taken up by patients wanting regular appointments or repeat prescriptions with an adverse affect on performance.

Solution

Advisors Sesui Ltd added its data management and IN solution to the Trust's existing service. Callers were then first routed to Sesui's IN platform, allowing all callers to be answered and logged

immediately regardless of lines available at the host OOH centre. By incorporating Intelligent Call Queuing, all callers are ensured connection to an Urgent Care operator without having to resort to re-dialing; and the performance statistics now provide an accurate representation of real performance. The initial ringing tone that had greeted callers was replaced with immediate customized information. Written in consultation with the Trust, this information allowed callers to consider the appropriateness of their call to OOH services and suggested other possible routes. This approach to caller choice is fully supported and endorsed by the Transformational Government Strategy announced in 2005.

Benefits

By simply adding Sesui's advanced IN platform and powerful information management system, the NHS Trust increased its efficiency, reduced costs and improved its patient care. After implementation:

- An immediate gain of more than 15% in Service Performance Improvement was achieved
- Every call was connected – no patient received the engaged tone or needed to redial
- Access to an immediate response (the OOH message rather than a ringing tone) gave callers the comfort that their call was known to OOH staff
- Reduction of non urgent calls being answered by Urgent Care operators, meant those needing urgent care received a quicker response
- Immediate access to customised information allowed 1 in 6 callers to self select out of OOH and choose a more appropriate service.
- Sesui's powerful information management system can display actual usage patterns of the OOH service in real time and eliminate caller invisibility (previously callers receiving the engaged tone were invisible to the OOH centre)
- More accurate knowledge of demand levels meant staff shifts could be managed with maximum efficiency
- A saving of 90% in management time for the completion of Performance management statistics has been achieved.
- Enables OOH providers to meet the "Gold Standard" of one call to one number – no recorded message at the surgery to redial another number
- Advanced Service Continuity was achieved by Sesui enabling immediate invocation of predetermined Continuity call plans, including a location independent connection service to any phone, enhanced by whisper announced call identification.

Conclusion

Introducing Sesui's advanced IN platform and powerful information management system proved hugely beneficial both for the NHS Trust, local GP's and its patients, improving service performance, management efficiency and patient care, whilst using technology investment to enable a sharing of services and their ongoing Continuity.



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