Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS

Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

Profile

- Two hospitals with dedicated specialist facilities and 569 beds.
- Cares for 300,000 patients each year.

Users

- 3800 clinicians, managers and staff.
- Up to 12 passwords per user to remember.

Challenges

- Enhance login security and enforce strict hospital security guidelines.
- Improve working practice and productivity.
- Compatible with existing hospital information system.

Benefits

- Simplifies and securest access to key hospital applications.
- Expected to reduce burden on IT support staff by 70%.

NHS Trust secures access and improves staff efficiency.

Simplify the login process for healthcare staff

Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust manages Warrington Hospital and Halton General Hospital in the North West of England. The two NHS hospitals work together to provide high quality health care services for over 300,000 patients across the towns of Warrington, Runcorn (where Halton General Hospital is based), Widnes and the surrounding areas in the North West of England.

Managing over 3,800 staff who each require access to up to 12 different healthcare applications on a day-to-day basis to carry out key services, the Trust recognised that having to remember multiple passwords was placing a burden on its staff and IT support team.

The Trust therefore decided to look for a cost-effective, flexible and secure solution which would simply the login process for staff, reducing the problem of forgotten passwords, whilst maintaining the current high level of security essential in a hospital environment.

A cost-effective, flexible and secure solution

Following a four-way pitch, Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust selected Enterprise SSO, a single sign-on solution from identity and access management leader Evidian, to increase login security, improve staff efficiency and cut IT support calls.

Evidian's solution was implemented as it met the Trust's key requirements for security and flexibility; fit their network setup and complied with data security standards. It was also the most cost-effective and scalable solution for future requirements.

The Trust worked with Evidian to install and customise the Enterprise SSO solution at both locations during the summer this year. After installation the initial focus was on integration and testing with the Trust's key healthcare applications, followed by a pilot across 150 users.

The solution enables staff to login to 12 unique healthcare applications by enabling authorised clinical and admin staff from all wards to simultaneously login with a single user ID and password instead of having to remember multiple passwords for different applications.

Enterprise SSO secures access to all types of corporate application – whether Windows, Citrix, Linux, Unix, web-based or mainframe. It combines multi-factor authentication with a plug-and-play SSO solution, replacing user passwords with digital signatures based on certificates, smart cards, USB keys, or biometrics. Access is authorised according to existing security policies and enterprise directories.

Ability to quickly and securely switch between users

A key benefit of the Evidian Enterprise SSO solution is it simplifies access to key hospital applications, improving working practice and productivity for managers, clinicians and staff.

Its ability to quickly and securely switch between users on shared computers means clinical and admin staff are able to swiftly login with a single user ID and password instead of having to switch back and forth logging into multiple applications. This no-nonsense approach to accessing hospital applications is not only more efficient but more importantly, also more secure.

The Evidian Enterprise SSO solution encourages a greater level of compliance as it creates an audit trail of users, this minimises potential security breaches. The solution also improves staff productivity as it eliminates the need to juggle and remember several passwords – which is often time consuming.

An important factor in choosing Evidian's Enterprise SSO was its compatibility with Meditech - the hospital's information system. This system has been used by the Trust since 1997, keeping a record of clinical modules and all hospital admission, discharge and transfer details. It was imperative that any solution taken on should be compatible with Meditech, and during the four-way tender Evidian demonstrated how their solution would work alongside the Trust's system.

An additional benefit of the Evidian Enterprise SSO solution is its unique self-service password reset function, which lets staff reset passwords themselves by going through a series of pre-set security questions. As well as encouraging employees to use the full range of applications available to them it eliminates a significant number of password reset calls coming through to the IT helpdesk, meaning the IT department can focus their time and resources elsewhere.

Steve Nicholson, IT services manager of Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: *"[...] Although we evaluated four other solutions we opted for Evidian's Enterprise SSO because it offered greater granularity, flexibility and a wider scope of facilities – furthermore out of all its competitors Enterprise SSO was the most cost effective. We were also extremely impressed by Evidian's demonstration of how their system would integrate with ours, especially our Meditech hospital information system – which was a must"*.

Looking to the Future

Since the initial pilot Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has rolled out Enterprise SSO to almost 1000 users - including the busy A&E department. The Trust plans to train a total of 3500 employees in its use within the coming months.

"The Enterprise SSO solution has been so popular with staff that they are actually demanding to be signed up to it. It makes their jobs considerably easier and more efficient and also encourages a greater level of security when it comes to the use of healthcare applications. It will also make our job easier as we start to deal less and less with password related problems – we expect it to cut IT helpdesk calls by around 70%."

Steve Nicholson,
IT services manager,
Warrington and Halton
Hospitals NHS Foundation
Trust.