

CASE STUDY

CHELSTON HALL SURGERY

Chelston Hall Surgery benefits from a single cloud-hosted telephone solution that cost-effectively links their three GP surgeries.

Chelston Hall Surgery is made up of three GP sites – lead surgery Chelston Hall plus Abbey Road and Barton – all located in the Torquay area. They have 24,000 patients making them one of the largest practices in the south west of England.

Abbey Road was already a branch surgery of our existing customer Chelston Hall when they then merged with Barton. Practice manager Mark Thomas was keen to review their telephony solution to create a fully linked GP group where calls could be seamlessly answered and transferred between the 95 end users across the three sites.

One of our senior account managers met with him to ascertain the surgery's exact requirements before recommending our Gamma Horizon cloud-hosted telephone solution to meet their current and future requirements, which may include a merger with other GP surgeries.

The Horizon solution is very effective at linking multiple locations as a single solution. As it is cloud-based, there is no need for on-premise telephony hardware to be located at one site and others linked to it. It also means that software updates are taken care of at cloud-level, along with system management and maintenance - the telephone system will always be up-to-date.

It is delivered over fully managed connections, also from Gamma, that are designed to support voice services. These are in addition to the surgeries' N3 connections, which are unsuitable. We also supply voice firewalls to prevent any unwanted intrusion from the internet.



Despite the financial pressures on GP surgeries, Chelston Hall had set aside budget for their telephony requirements after the merger but our recommended solution is provided on a monthly cost per user, so avoided the need for a large capital outlay.

The monthly cost covers everything – user licences, connectivity, calls, and support - which gives a clearly defined fixed cost moving forward for accurate budgeting. For GP surgeries, the cost of calling patients' home, work or mobile numbers has especially become a significant one with the rise of telephone appointments.

We were able to demonstrate that a move to the cloud could be achieved on a near cost-neutral basis with our account manager comparing their existing costs for support, lines and calls with the potential cost of cloud-hosted solution.

Chelston Hall chose our solution and we migrated them, after upgrading their local area networks at all three sites to support IP handsets, under the guidance of one of our experienced project managers.

The deployment process included administrator and end user training to ensure they felt comfortable using the solution from day one.

The three sites now enjoy a complete feature-rich and versatile telephony solution that can be managed in-house using a web-based management tool for easy adds, moves and changes, creation of directories, voicemail set-up, analysis of call traffic and much more.



Gamma
Platinum Partner

The Horizon solution provides all the standard features expected from a modern multisite telephone system, such as the ability to overflow calls between sites, internal dialing and call transfers, direct dial-in numbers and do not disturb settings.

It also provides additional services, including call recording, automated attendant, hunt groups, desk phone and mobile device twinning, with further applications being developed as the service continues to evolve.

Chelston Hall also wanted to make use of call queuing functionality to ensure they answer every patient call and that they are fairly queued.

In the rare event of an outage, incoming calls can be automatically diverted to a different number, such as a mobile, to ensure patients can always get hold of these surgeries during opening hours.

swcomms' experience in the health sector and knowledge of recent changes in the general practice landscape enabled our account manager to draw up his recommendation on the same day of his initial visit.

This helped Chelston Hall meet the tight deadline they had for this project.

“General practice is going through a significant period of change.

“The impact of change and the continued pressures on the NHS will lead to the formation of larger practices merging to become multi-site operations and the creation of larger groups of practices working together forming federations.

“The ability to communicate across practice groups such as these mean that traditional telephony services are no longer viable.

“We have three large premises and all are now connected as if one.

“The new phone system is extremely flexible and has seen a significant improvement to the way we work and the patient experience.”

“The ability to connect to other practice sites as we grow or federate wider will be another benefit from the transition to **swcomms'** Horizon solution making us future proof.”

Mark Thomas, practice manager

