



Bringing hospital alerting up to date

Reference report: Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals, London, England

Just a few short weeks before the wave of Covid-19 (coronavirus) infections began to hit the United Kingdom in early 2020, a high-performance on-site paging system by Swissphone entered service at two major National Health Service (NHS) hospitals in London's southern suburbs.

Working closely with their Premier UK Partner, Maintel, Swissphone's system replaced an outdated paging installation from another manufacturer. The new network – at Epsom and St Helier hospitals, locations some 10 km apart – was very soon supporting both sites as they faced a medical emergency on an unprecedented scale, as well as all the day-to-day emergencies that the NHS deals with. Connecting more than 800 pagers and dozens of emergency teams of clinical staff and backstage personnel, the Swissphone system has been playing a key part in bolstering the hospitals' ability to meet this new and unforeseen threat.

«The Swissphone paging network delivers exactly the functionality that Epsom & St Helier NHS Trust was looking for – simple, effective and fast delivery of voice and data messages, that helps the staff to deliver excellent care to their patients.»

Simon Yapp, Sales Director Public Sector at Maintel

«A resilient paging system is important to ensure that our critical emergency teams get to the right place at the right time, as quickly as possible», explains Simon Owen, Head of Telecoms for the two hospitals. Though some may regard pagers as old-fashioned in a world of 4G and 5G telecoms, Mr Owen believes firmly that there is still no

adequate alternative to on-site paging. «I'm actually the chairman of the national performance advisory group for NHS telecoms», he says. «And other colleagues agree: there is no direct replacement available for on-site paging at the moment.»

Crisis management

Principal users of the system are the various emergency teams. «We'll have a cardiac arrest team at Epsom Hospital, a cardiac arrest team at St Helier», he continues. «We have adult fracture teams and trauma teams at both sites, paediatric teams, all the different types, as well as your normal fire team and security teams, major incident teams.»

Some NHS organisations seeking to modernize their communications have been attracted towards using smartphones with an app as their emergency callout device. But smartphones rely on adequate mobile and Wi-Fi networks being in place – and that, Mr Owen emphasizes, is not always the case. Simon Yapp, Sales Director – Public Sector at Maintel noted. «The Swissphone paging network delivers

exactly the functionality that Epsom & St Helier NHS Trust was looking for – simple, effective and fast delivery of voice and data messages, that helps the staff to deliver excellent care to their patients. The functionality complements many of the other critical communication solutions that Maintel deliver to the Trust.»