



Transforming collaboration in the NHS

How the cloud can help create
a more efficient and streamlined
healthcare system



It's so important that NHS staff can do their jobs effectively and uninterrupted.

From surgeons conducting life-saving operations to doctors delivering cancer treatment, nurses doing their rounds or receptionists scheduling appointments, connectivity and collaboration tools help them do their jobs and provide the best possible patient experience every day.



What are cloud collaboration tools and why does the NHS need them?

Digital collaboration tools are software applications that allow teams to work together seamlessly, wherever they are.

They enable staff to communicate and share information securely in real time with features such as video conferencing, instant messaging, file-sharing and virtual whiteboards.

Some well-known examples are apps like Cisco Webex and Microsoft Teams.

Because these solutions run in the cloud, your people can securely access them from anywhere with an internet connection.

This makes it easier for health professionals in different organisations to collaborate.

Underpinned by a cloud-based network

Powering your collaboration tools with software defined networking (SDN), means you can increase the speed and security of your internet connection without having to pay for expensive physical infrastructure.

This is because the network is managed through a centralised software platform rather than hardware.

Having a managed network and the flexibility of a cloud-based approach means you'll have the power to scale or make changes faster and more easily than before.

'We need to use the tools we already have to try and reduce the burden on staff and make their lives easier. That's where technology lends itself to enabling efficiencies, in improving working life for our people.'

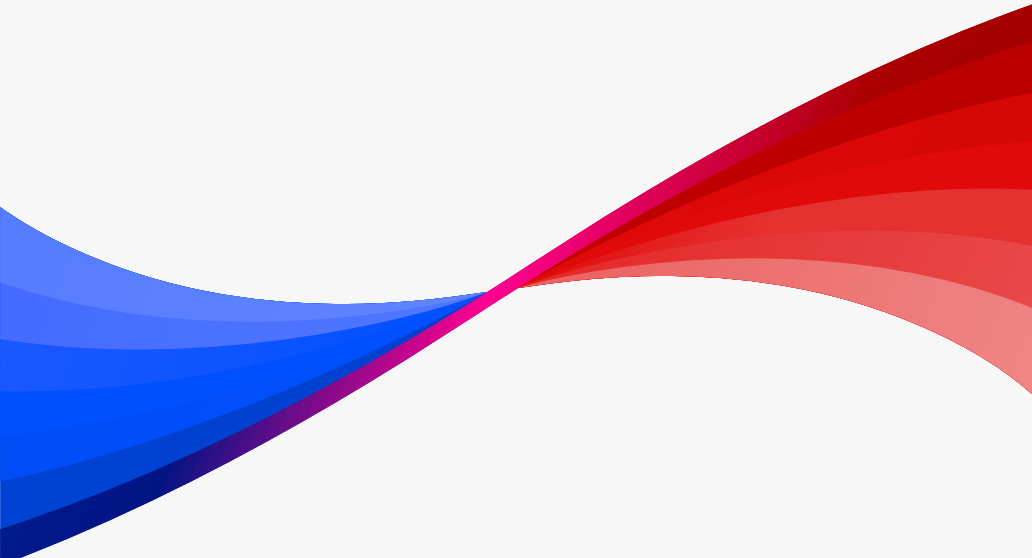
Graham Walsh, Medical Director,
Yorkshire and Humber Academic Health Science Network





‘Digital services should be delivered from (or move to) the public cloud unless there is a reason not to do so.’

NHS architecture principles



NHS cloud migration is gaining traction

The NHS finished moving its Spine system to the cloud in October 2023 to improve the security, efficiency and sustainability of digital infrastructure.

This includes the Electronic Prescription Service, the Personal Demographics Service,

the Summary Care Record and the e-Referral Service.

While individual NHS Trusts and hospitals currently continue to operate their own data centres, the intent to move to the cloud is clear. At the same time, there’s a real

need to make sure the whole Integrated Care Board is on the same playing field.

And with the big **analogue switch-off** looming, going digital for communication is more important than ever, since all the traditional landlines in the UK will be switched off.

‘The NHS is transitioning to cloud with an estimated 15-21% of trusts now hosting something off-site.’

Digital Health Special Report: Cloud 2023

How cloud collaboration tools can help you achieve four key NHS goals

1. Improve patient outcomes

The NHS faces immense pressure to deliver better patient outcomes despite funding constraints, clunky IT, interoperability challenges and digital inequality.

Cloud collaboration tools can help improve access to patient care while empowering frontline caregivers to deliver the quality of care patients deserve.

88% of clinical staff surveyed say digital tech can cut frontline workload and patient wait times.¹

Improve patient accessibility and convenience

Cloud collaboration enables virtual consultations which are particularly helpful to those with mobility issues, in remote areas or during high demand periods.

Increase remote patient monitoring

Wearable health monitoring devices can transmit real-time data to care teams, enabling timely interventions and adjustments.

Reduce administrative burdens on clinicians

An integrated cloud collaboration platform streamlines communication and data sharing among healthcare professionals, enabling them to focus on patient care.

Provide more coordinated and personalised care

Enable healthcare professionals such as GPs, specialists, therapists and social workers to seamlessly communicate and collaborate, wherever they're working.

Remote patient monitoring in practice

After undergoing major surgery, a patient might be discharged from hospital but require close monitoring during their recovery at home.

By using secure cloud collaboration tools, clinicians can remotely track the patient's progress, adjust their treatment plan and schedule virtual follow-up appointments as needed.

This reduces the risk of readmission and improves the overall recovery experience.



1. Source: Virgin Media O2 Business Survey of 1,000 NHS decision makers undertaken with Censuswide, Jan 2024



2. Support NHS staff

The NHS needs to enhance staff experiences to ensure a motivated and productive workforce, especially when [our survey](#) showed healthcare professionals are becoming frustrated with technology.

Cloud networking can provide the answer. Scalable, flexible and reliable, it brings the internet connectivity cloud collaboration tools need if they're to lighten the load on NHS workers.

Reduce administrative workload

One simple-to-use platform for managing communications and sharing data means less time spent on admin and more time focusing on crucial core patient responsibilities.

Make mobile working environments better

Cloud collaboration enables staff to access information, communicate and provide virtual consultations from anywhere, boosting productivity and flexibility.

Reduce troubleshooting time

One trust we talked to reduced troubleshooting time by 61% with a managed cloud solution, allowing frontline and IT staff to focus on patient care and core responsibilities.²

Secure and compliant communication

Unified recording protects staff communications and ensures compliance with legal and data protection requirements so staff can perform their duties with confidence.

Streamlining workflows in practice

In busy NHS trusts, nurses often find themselves juggling multiple systems and apps to coordinate patient care.

An integrated cloud collaboration platform enables them to securely access patient records, communicate with other clinicians and even conduct virtual ward rounds from a single interface.

This unified solution reduces the administrative burden, allowing the nurses to focus on delivering high-quality patient care efficiently.

² [Figures](#) derived from interviews with NHS employees and other prospective customers in Oct/Nov 2023 relating to a range of SD-WAN cloud solutions currently available in the market. Figures are an average from the interview responses (where interviewees provided figures). Savings figures are indicative only and may vary based on context.

3. Drive efficiencies and value for the taxpayer

The NHS faces immense pressure to maximise return on investment and boost operational efficiency despite funding constraints.

Software-defined networking can help the NHS do more with less and deliver now and in the future.

Reduce your trust's connectivity costs

One trust reduced its network costs by 36% when moving to a managed network solution.² This enabled the team to spend more money elsewhere.

Increase operational efficiency and productivity

Streamline communication and data sharing, spend 61%² less time troubleshooting network issues and prioritise bandwidth for telemedicine applications with a software-defined wide area network.

Get rapid return on investment

NHS employees we spoke to said software-defined wide area networks can pay for themselves in just 17 months² on average.

Scale and flex as your trust changes

Our solutions are designed to integrate with your existing IT infrastructure while future-proofing your digital capabilities.

4. Enhance security

The NHS faces complex integration and security challenges. For example, differing IT systems can hinder interoperability and increase vulnerability to cyber threats.

Cloud collaboration tools powered by a software-defined network can provide your trust with robust data security.

Safeguard patient data and staff communications

Built-in security measures in our managed cloud collaboration tools ensure strict compliance to regulations such as General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Get end-to-end protection for cloud applications

Our managed software-defined wide area network seamlessly integrates network and security functions.

Reduce the risk of cyber threats and data breaches

Implementing cybersecurity on laptops and phones keeps your clinicians safer, wherever they're working.



How one NHS trust reduced costs through digital transformation

The Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust's old infrastructure was inflexible, lacked scalability and incurred high costs with limited capabilities, averaging one or two serious network outages weekly.

We partnered with the trust to implement a software-defined wide area network to improve network

performance, reduce complexity and enable cloud-based services.

The transition, including integrating 150 GP surgeries, was seamless with proper planning and has delivered significant cost savings for the trust, along with a tenfold improvement in network speed and resilience.

² **Figures** derived from interviews with NHS employees and other prospective customers in Oct/Nov 2023 relating to a range of SD-WAN cloud solutions currently available in the market. Figures are an average from the interview responses (where interviewees provided figures). Savings figures are indicative only and may vary based on context.

Move to the cloud with confidence

Five key considerations when moving to cloud communications

1.

Make sure your digital partner will manage the transition for you, to reduce disruption

2.

Take advantage of a proof-of-value trial to ensure the solution works for your trust before investing further

3.

Consider a managed service where your digital partner supports your IT teams and provides ongoing tech support

4.

Ask your digital partner if they can estimate your ROI before you move to a cloud-based network

5.

Check if your digital partner offers digital skills training to ensure both staff and patients can make the most of the new tools on offer

Get a care-ready cloud solution

In healthcare, no two days are the same. You need tools and connectivity that are ready for anything, with the kind of support and security that won't let staff or patients down, wherever they are, whenever they need it.

By supplying your trust's cloud-based collaboration tools and the software-defined network (SDN) that underpins them, we can make sure everything works smoothly, prioritising bandwidth where you need it and giving you software or network-related support.

Everything we do is focussed around safety, simplicity and support, giving you secure, integrated connectivity for modern digital healthcare – all from one provider.

'My managed software-defined wide-area network costs are 40% cheaper than my old VPN costs, just on rental alone... it's cost negative. I'm literally saving money at every single site.'

Chief Technology Officer, NHS



Want to learn more about cloud collaboration?

[Visit our website](#)

Or get in touch with our dedicated health sector lead,
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