

# BELFAST HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST

## EMC Consulting and private cloud solution transform critical public health data processes



### ESSENTIALS

#### Challenge

To provide a centralization strategy that would help deliver safe, efficient, and modernized patient care; meet the UK Government's targets on patient access to treatment and care; and balance the books

#### Solutions

- Private cloud
- EMC Consulting
- VCE Infrastructure

#### Key benefits

- Significant cost savings of up to 50:1 versus legacy solutions
- Enables 600+ applications and thousands of users to access data simultaneously
- Minimizes management, maintenance, and overhead requirements
- Mobile and quickly deployed
- Backed by EMC Consulting, innovators in private cloud technologies

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust delivers a wide range of crucial healthcare and social services to more than 340,000 people in Belfast and provides regional services to all of Northern Ireland.

With more than 20,000 employees and a distinguished history of excellence, the Belfast Trust is one of Western Europe's largest public health and social care providers.

### DATA CENTRALIZATION WITHIN A DECREASING BUDGET

Due to the global economic downturn and ever-shrinking Government budget allocations, many public organizations are forced to search for new operating efficiencies and cost reduction strategies. In April 2007, the Belfast Trust assumed responsibility for six Northern Ireland hospital and community trusts. The principal objectives of this centralization strategy were to provide safe, efficient, and modernized patient care; meet the UK Government's targets on patient access to treatment and care; and to balance the books.

The Belfast Trust's IT & Telecommunications department was given a daunting task. Critical patient care and operational data was scattered across six separate sites located throughout the city. These silos of information were stored on a range of disparate IT infrastructure using many different applications and operating environments.

The Trust's IT & Telecommunications staff had to centralize that data, develop new processes, train staff, implement a robust backup and disaster recovery capability, provide instant multi-user access to critical data, and ensure that all data could be accurately accessed by the 600+ applications that the Trust used to drive patient services and operating requirements.

Moreover, the IT & Telecommunications department had to achieve those objectives without interrupting critical patient care—and within a budget that had been reduced significantly.

“Our budget allocation had been reduced by 25 percent, and we experienced a staff reduction of 30 percent,” Belfast Trust Co-Director of IT & Telecommunications Paul Duffy states. “Like many other public bodies, we were being asked to do much more with much less. The public depends on our commitment to care excellence. Therefore, and despite the challenges, a reduction in patient care service levels was never an option.”

### CONSIDERING OTHER OPTIONS

The Belfast Trust was faced with some stark choices. They could either maintain a legacy IT system that was characterized by fragmentation or they could tease out the benefits of a centralized IT solution that would radically alter data management procedures. Such a complete change in processes would require a comprehensive shift in the mindsets of a staff—a transition that at the time seemed difficult to achieve. Despite the possible challenges, the Trust chose the second option.

**“We can no longer ignore cloud. In the current times we live in, where there’s a huge pressure on the public purse, to ignore the delivery of public services more cheaply with innovative technologies cannot be ignored. Public bodies must consider private cloud technology. Big issues such as privacy legislation, compliance, and other data-related security concerns can be overcome. Cost reduction and the simplification of service delivery is absolutely key.”**

PAUL DUFFY  
BELFAST TRUST CO-DIRECTOR OF IT AND  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

“In researching our options, we studied recommendations from not only our existing vendors (including HP), but also IT companies that we had never worked with before,” Duffy explains. “We had long viewed EMC as a provider of quality data storage systems. We contacted them as part of our review process with the view that they could help us with data unification. We quickly discovered that the company also provided a breadth of advisory services and experience that could meet many more of our requirements—within tight budget parameters.”

## THE SOLUTION: A STAGED JOURNEY TO PRIVATE CLOUD

The Belfast Trust engaged EMC® Consulting to supply a comprehensive program that would achieve their operating and budget objectives. “EMC presented us with the opportunity to reconsider the way we used to deliver technology,” Duffy states. “We could have done more of the same (by maintaining legacy systems) but we wanted to take a radical view of how we delivered services to this new environment. While we initially saw EMC as coming to us with a storage platform that was fit for purpose, they ended up providing us with services that would help meet our objectives of centralization and rapid deployment.”

EMC Consulting developed a comprehensive roadmap that delivered an appropriate solution in a series of stages that were effective—but as importantly—met the Trust’s tight budget considerations.

Of particular interest to the Belfast Trust IT team was that EMC’s roadmap recommended transitioning to a private cloud environment.

Due to a number of consumer privacy guidelines, most public sector organizations never considered cloud as an IT data option. “Half-way through the project, the whole notion of cloud started to be raised and other vendors were coming at us with cloud: Microsoft, Google, HP, for example. For us, it was about how we could use cloud-type services to make us run more efficiently,” says Duffy.

“I have a personal view that whenever companies as large as EMC and others spend significant resources creating a cloud capability, there’s a certain inevitability (to wholesale adoption). It’s a bit like King Canute standing with the tide coming in. You have to prepare yourself for this event because it’s sweeping your way,” Duffy concludes.

The Belfast Trust discussed how private cloud technologies could be used to achieve its specific objectives while also complying with privacy guidelines. Private cloud solutions from EMC would enable the Trust to create fully virtualized, next-generation IT infrastructure, while also complying with security requirements. This capability would present seamless services to the organization. With IT fully in control, EMC’s private cloud solutions combine the best of traditional data center technology and processes with the technology that organizations are using to build external cloud-based services. Satisfied with the EMC solution, the Trust began its journey to private cloud.

## EMBRACING THE CLOUD BY TRANSFORMING PERCEPTIONS

EMC—with other project partners including VMware® and Cisco (jointly known as ‘VCE’)—embarked on a data consolidation strategy that resulted in a private cloud environment. Powered by comprehensive VCE infrastructure, the EMC virtual private cloud solution “...has enabled us to deliver our applications more safely, more robustly—and importantly—more cheaply than we could have done before,” states Duffy. Critically, this transformation process also required a critical change to the mindsets and perceptions of Belfast Trust staff in order to ensure success.

“If you’re going to get it right, this type of project is going to take some time,” Duffy observes. “We’re now more than halfway along this process. We hope to have all users trained and working with the new solution this time next year. This is a major feat. We’ve discovered that it is only when all users see the benefits of the new cloud solution that it will be adopted across the organization.”

In fact, it turned out that the project was not only a technology project. Rather, it required a transformational journey as a critical part of its success. “The project has to engage with all stakeholders. We had to move from a disparate multi-site scenario to a single site. The need to engage with our staff—to provide them with a sense of ownership—is paramount to the project’s success. We found that communicating to staff throughout our journey was the most effective tool we could use. By doing so, we fostered a sense of team that enabled them to quickly embrace the new solution.

“Staff discovered that it made no difference where the data was held so long as it was accessible and helped them to serve their patients effectively. Any doubts about cloud technology were quickly dispelled.”

## SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS OF EMBRACING CLOUD TECHNOLOGY

Implementation of the EMC solution has already significantly benefited the Belfast Trust and the patients it serves. Costs have been significantly reduced through data centralization, migration, deduplication, and the reduction in maintenance and overhead costs. Duffy notes that data from 50 legacy servers can now be stored on just one EMC storage device utilizing VMware virtualization software. Due to economies derived from the project, the Trust’s scarce financial resources have been redeployed to other critical operating areas.

Cloud technologies provide instant 24/7 access to a wide range of front- and back-office staff. Data availability and response times to multiple application queries have been substantially improved. All benefits are enabling the Trust to meet—and exceed—its objectives.

“Through stealth and good luck we engaged with EMC and the other VCE partners to achieve a high-availability, low-cost service,” Duffy states.

Duffy notes that the Belfast Trust’s engagement with EMC has been a very useful and productive one. “With our partners that make up the VCE environment, EMC has enabled us to deliver our applications more safely, more robustly, and importantly, more cheaply than we could have done before.”

“We now perceive EMC to be a company that is much more than a supplier of spinning disks. Rather they are now active and reliable partners. They have delivered an effective, scalable, mobile private cloud solution. They have provided us with a much more robust and dependable framework than our legacy system. Their partnership has helped us to meet our budget objectives,” Duffy says.

“Most importantly, their professional interest and expertise now enables us to much more effectively serve the patients who depend upon us.”

### CONTACT US

To learn how EMC products, services, and solutions can help solve your business and IT challenges, contact your local representative or authorized reseller, or visit us at [www.EMC.com](http://www.EMC.com).

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