

## Outsourcing IT support helps hospice increase home-based care

### Introduction

East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH), helps over 350 families a year caring for life-limited children. It receives only 10% of its £4M budget from statutory sources, so the recent loss of a three-year lottery grant has made a big impact on its finances. It approached CambridgIT to help it adjust its working practices to offer greater home-based care within a reduced budget.

### Issue

To increase its operational efficiency, East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH), wanted to improve its IT system to support flexible working; enabling nursing staff to gain access to information they need wherever and whenever they require it.

Nursing staff were unfamiliar with using laptop computers and other mobile devices so the system needed to be easy to use, robust and cost-effective to support.

EACH also wanted to reduce its operating costs and concentrate resources on retaining patient focussed staff.

### Solution

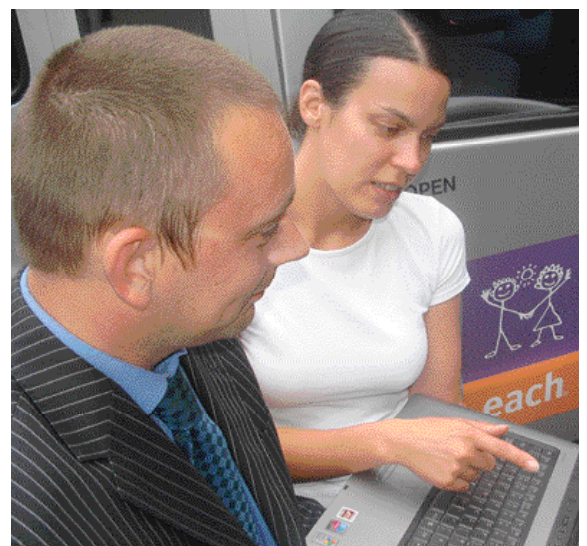
EACH approached Mike McIntosh, of CambridgIT to propose a solution. Mike reviewed the business and user requirements and provided an audit of the current IT system. His first recommendation was that the server was moved off-site and hosted securely. This ensures that all users have access to important information and that updates are managed to ensure data integrity and security.

With the server hosted in London, users can gain access to their emails and data at any computer worldwide. Another benefit of this is that EACH's staff can also get support wherever they are. Using CambridgIT's 'Remote Access' capability, it is possible for Mike or one of his colleagues to quickly diagnose and solve problems by logging onto the user's computer over the Internet to show the care worker – on their own computer screen – what to do.

This is extremely useful where staff are not confident computer users, as Remote Access can also be used as a training aid. Many frustrating problems are caused by a lack of knowledge and can be quickly fixed. These calls might only last five minutes, but getting advice and tips for software problems as they occur, can really improve staff efficiency.



Mike McIntosh, of CambridgIT



CambridgeIT also developed a number of system improvements that supported the users and enhanced productivity. These included an online booking system for reserving pool cars, shared access to schedules and diaries, improved email management and protocols to reduce the amount of non-essential emails, and the creation of electronic folders for staff information to reduce use of paper, while ensuring that information is regularly updated.

Once the system was in place, Mike advised on the selection of mobile devices that would be appropriate for the needs and budget of the organisation, and assisted the introduction of these to ensure user confidence and acceptance.

## Outcomes

Roger Wood, Facilities Manager at EACH, and a former logistics company manager comments:

“With the improvements in the IT support nursing staff can have greater contact time with families in the field and spend less time spent doing administration in the office.”

In future this will include the ability to access patient records electronically.

“The time saved by staff not having to travel back and forth from the head office to collect files could be spent with the children in their homes. We also want to be able to interface directly with the NHS computer system – giving our staff access to all the information they need at their fingertips.

“It’s easy for a charity – or any smaller organisation – to think that they are saving money by doing everything themselves. But by outsourcing we have access to top quality IT support and advice available 24/7 for less than the cost of employing our own IT person.

“One of the benefits of going with CambridgeIT is that they are independent – we wanted the best solution for us, not the one the hardware vendor wanted to sell us. This is particularly important when moving into a new technology area and where compatibility with other systems is vital.

“We needed an IT partner – a company who would look at where EACH was going and propose the best technology solution to help get us there. This requires an understanding of the comparative benefits of the technologies and also of the user issues. Staff unfamiliar with using computers or mobile devices need to be able to use them confidently while providing care to seriously ill children.”



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Roger Wood, Facilities Manager at EACH

## About CambridgeIT

CambridgeIT provide computer maintenance, support and consultancy to small and medium sized organisations. Offering a range of services from emergency call-outs to a complete outsourced IT department, the CambridgeIT team has a wealth of experience in all aspects of information technology.

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