



Stockport NHS Foundation Trust Achieves Backup Simplicity, Cybersecurity, and Data Governance



Stockport
NHS Foundation Trust

INDUSTRY

Healthcare

USE CASE

Backup & Recovery, Disaster Recovery, Dev/Test, Anti-Ransomware

SOLUTION PARTNERS

Cisco

CHANNEL PARTNER

CDW

Key Benefits

- Increased operational efficiency for a small IT team
- Fast backup and disaster recovery delivered through one easy-to-use solution
- Data security capabilities strengthened and IT governance delivered
- Record time restores—from days to hours or minutes

IT plays an increasingly vital role in modern healthcare service provisioning, and data loss is not an option. Data backup and proper regulatory compliance are mission-critical requirements. After a major IT transformation, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust required a solution to help it deliver a more capable backup and recovery operation for its hospitals and a range of community health services, while also prioritizing security, simplicity, and data governance.

Challenges

Stockport NHS Foundation Trust began a major IT transformation project in 2018, and the team re-architected its infrastructure, moving towards a software-defined data centre.

By December 2019, the Trust's backup solution was the "Achilles heel" of the IT department, draining resources and increasing risks. A growing number of backup failures occurred and when combined with the overly complex processes for restores, a change was required. The Trust needed a solution that provided management simplicity, ease of deployment, and a minimal learning curve. Moreover, all-new infrastructure had to meet stringent UK regulations around data handling, privacy, and security. Finally, ISO 270001 certification was non-negotiable.

Solution

The IT team approached partner CDW for guidance on sourcing a scalable, future-proof backup and recovery solution that would increase security, streamline compliance, and was cloud-ready. The Trust's new storage systems were based on Cisco HyperFlex, and IT wanted a modern data management solution with capabilities to support future migration to the cloud. Cohesity on Cisco UCS was quickly identified as a clear choice due, in part, to its exceptional disaster recovery and security functionality.

Data security for UK hospitals is paramount. The Trust had previously fallen victim to a ransomware attack and suffered from long overnight restores, which it was keen to not repeat.

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"It could've been COVID, ransomware, or a flood, but getting our essential systems back up and running was crucial. Having seen other backup solutions, Cohesity was the simplest and easiest to use with the best data management capabilities. The search functionality, and how it can tightly couple with virtual infrastructure and integrate into Microsoft 365 was really important for us. What would take days now takes minutes or hours, which is very important for a small IT team."

Bhekimpi Sibanda, IT Technical Architect, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

The joint Cisco-Cohesity solution deployed at Stockport NHS Foundation Trust now can analyse the frequency of files accessed, the number of files being modified, added, or deleted by a specific user or an application—all critical in quickly detecting and mitigating any given breach or security incident.

Limitations with the Trust's previous vendors created a series of challenges: former solutions were expensive to scale, difficult to adapt, and hard to manage—which led to frustration and wasted valuable time. Simpson added, "The single pane of glass for operations is important – you want the feature set at your fingertips, not grabbing an instruction manual and going through various menus."

Results

With Cohesity now supporting physical, virtual, and SQL workloads, backups are now performing far beyond expectations. The Trust is using Cohesity's point-in-time feature with incremental backups to do high-performance restores. The solution covers all the restore and management needs of the Trust via one single management console, a contrast to the three previously installed vendor products.

This Cohesity Helios dashboard also allows the team to easily monitor usage and capacity and predict requirements for the future. The security resiliency of Cohesity's immutable file system and WORM functionality proved important for The Trust. Besides monitoring backup data change rates to detect a potential ransomware attack, the Trust's IT team can now detect and receive alerts for file-level anomalies within unstructured files and object data.

And uses for Cohesity have gone beyond the original project scope, Liam Simpson, Systems Manager, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust, explains, "We use Cohesity in many different ways; we've used the disaster recovery and the dev/test cloning capabilities for additions to server work, to replicate potential changes, and to see how it works—if there are any unexpected issues. Someone else would charge for it, and we get the foresight of doing it away from our production system. Previously, we didn't have the right infrastructure or capabilities to do this but now that we have the joint Cisco-Cohesity solution, we're saving the Trust money and reducing issues associated with changes."

Also, global search functionality allows the team to do file-level restores. Sibanda says the team recently had an issue with a 6 TB virtual machine (VM) and used the search functionality to quickly identify a critically needed file to restore, saving 24 hours of full VM restoration while improving the agility of the IT team.

The organization also has experienced exceptional customer support. Sibanda says, "The support we received from CDW and Cohesity was excellent. I pushed the team hard, but its ability to support us, while we were dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak, was exceptional from the early stages and that team exceeded our expectations. We didn't just get a solution, we got a working solution straight away that did what we needed specifically for our Trust. We can sleep easy knowing this aspect of our ISO 92001 is sorted."

The Trust is now exploring the potential of moving its file servers to be backed up on the Cohesity platform; Sibanda called it a "no brainer" due to it using the same amount of storage space as it would if the file server was located independently, and doing disaster recovery testing for the first time along with proactive backup monitoring.

Learn more at [Cohesity.com](https://www.cohesity.com)

COHESITY

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