

West Midlands Ambulance Service Relies on Agile and Secure Asset Management for Rapid Response

“It’s quicker for me to try and tell you what BMC Helix Client Management can’t do as opposed to what it can do.”



Rich Monkton | IT Support Manager | West Midlands Ambulance Service
University NHS Foundation Trust
(WMAS)



2,400

assets managed



2 days

for critical security patching



+7,500

users supported

Business Overview

The West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust is the first ambulance trust in the UK, the second-largest ambulance service, and the only ambulance trust to be rated outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). It is the authority responsible for providing National Health Service (NHS) ambulance services within the West Midlands region of England. It employs around 6,500 staff and is supported by about 1,000 volunteers. The trust now responds to over one million 999 emergency calls every year.

Business Challenge

After a merger of several trusts formed WMAS in 2006, the service inherited a number of standalone control rooms, resulting in five centers spread across the region operating independently using varying levels of technology at the different sites.

After reconfiguring its emergency operations centers (EOCs), WMAS now operates one of the most sophisticated dispatch systems in the country from two EOCs merged as a single virtual EOC, allowing calls at either center to be answered by the other. This increases the speed at which vehicles can be dispatched.

The growth of WMAS has enabled its commitment to patient care, but it has brought about its share of technology challenges as the Trust manages the coinciding growth in demand. Along with the additional buildings and ambulances themselves, WMAS has also had to scale its infrastructure and technology offerings to support its additional staff.

To support this expansion and allow WMAS to remain agile enough to manage capacity needs as they arise, the organization has adopted a cloud-smart strategy, with a careful balance of on-premises and cloud-based servers equipped to handle its robust call system.

BMC Solution

West Midlands Ambulance Service implemented BMC Helix Client Management with the original goal of consolidating its mix of homegrown, manual, and vendor tools to more effectively manage and track its assets with a robust solution deployed from one location. The IT team is very pleased with the solution's endpoint management capabilities, as well as its ability to scale up or down when needed. BMC Helix Client Management deploys the proper software specific to the device and the user, ensures organizational and industry policy compliance, and keeps patches up to date until the device is retired. In recent days, as the COVID pandemic took workers offsite and then returned them to the office, the solution has allowed WMAS the flexibility to accommodate both onsite and home-based workers, with critical security patching extended easily to remote locations when needed, accomplished in just one weekend.

WMAS has also benefited from the solution's easy-to-use management capabilities that help enable a seamless service desk experience for end users whether onsite or remote, while minimizing cost, maintaining compliance, and reducing security risk. BMC Helix Client Management's comprehensive automation capabilities help ensure that both part-time workers and full-time employees are able to effectively manage the Trust's growing number of technology assets without troublesome or time-consuming hand-offs.

Further, the time savings BMC Helix Client Management has provided for software and application deployment, patching processes, and audit preparation can't be overstated. The hours and effort that had previously been dedicated to manually performing these tasks, often in silos rather than simultaneously, has allowed WMAS engineers to focus on more transformational work. Auditing within the NHS system has escalated sharply since the WannaCry ransomware attack of 2017, and BMC Helix Client Management has assisted WMAS with its automated discovery and inventory capabilities, mitigating costly fines. Importantly, the Trust has also been able to reduce its compliance risk by automating policy compliance and remediation for endpoint access. Ensuring that all assets on the network follow established WMAS policy helps maintain the organization's rigorous security posture.

With BMC Helix Client Management, WMAS has seen drastic time savings and efficiencies while helping to maintain the Trust's secure, stable, and readily available emergency services:

- The solution has **easily scaled with uninterrupted service** as WMAS assets have grown, from 1,200 to over 2,400 dispersed across both onsite and offsite locations.
- Automation capabilities ensure **timely, efficient, and reliable performance** of the critical functions needed for effective endpoint management: patching, inventory, compliance, and deployment.
- To help manage patient calls during the COVID crisis, the BMC Helix Client Management system **automates a critical call flow**, maintaining important communication pathways and reducing clinical risk
- As the need for proactive security measures escalates, WMAS benefits from the solution's **comprehensive management and patching capabilities**, freeing the IT team for other important work.



“ With the recent surge in requirements for home working, BMC Helix Client Management has been a critical asset to West Midlands Ambulance Service as it has allowed the Trust to provision, secure, and support thousands of end user devices for our employees and more quickly than ever before. It is the best product I have ever seen or used. ”

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