CASE STUDY

Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

Delivering Outstanding Care and Speed of Services During Crises

Avon and Wiltshire NHS
Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust

- 16 inpatient hospitals
- Four community sites
- 97 community bases
- Over 3,400 whole-time equivalent staff
- Over 700,000 service user contacts / year
- £198 million annual expenditure
- Serves a population of 1.6 million in a 2,200 square mile area
- Headquarters: Chippenham, England

www.awp.nhs.uk

"AWP is better able to protect its services, customers and reputation with the use of MissionMode."

– Mike Relph, Assistant CEO

Summary

The Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (referred to as AWP or the Trust) recognized the need for mass notification and crisis management tools after major snow storms. Quality of care and speed of services must be met, regardless of the disruption. The organization wanted to not only send alerts, but manage an incident across numerous sites and collaborate on the response. A robust audit trail was a key requirement, due to regulatory and legal requirements. AWP chose MissionMode's Notification Center and Situation Center online software to meet those needs.

About AWP

AWP is a not-for-profit provider of mental health and social care services in the southwest region of England, serving a population of 1.6 million people. Services are delivered at a combination of 16 hospitals, over 100 community sites, people's homes, and several secure units. The organization has more than 700,000 patient encounters per year.

Business Continuity is a Critical Function

Business Continuity is a critical function within AWP. Services must be provided, regardless of the disruption or emergency. The organization places a high priority on maintaining its exemplary record of mitigating critical incidents. But, even a single misstep during a crisis could have a significant impact on patient care.

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Continuity planning at AWP covers a wide range of incidents, including snow storms, heat waves, fuel shortages, flooding, IT network outages, and supply-chain interruptions. In addition, when other health-care organizations respond to emergencies that AWP is not affected by, AWP may be asked to provide support.

Providing quality services becomes an even greater challenge given the large number of community-based staff who care for patients in homes and at community sites. A high degree of coordination is necessary, and the ability to communicate in any circumstance is crucial.

The Need for Fast, Accurate Communications

The need for mass notification and incident management tools became apparent during heavy snow-storms in the Winter of 2009/2010. Chris Williams, Emergency Planning Manager, said that "during the storms, it became increasingly difficult to track how the weather was impacting the ability to deliver services."

The organization relied on email to give a clear picture of how services were suffering, and the challenges faced. However, it rapidly became apparent that staff on the front line did not have time to keep checking their email for the latest information.

"In times of crisis or disruption, notification speed is crucial," stated Chris Williams.

AWP uses a wide range of tools to facilitate communication, including email and intranet. Email is the standard means of sharing information, but it's often over-used and not given the priority it needs.

Manual telephone cascades are inherently time-consuming, even assuming that all telephone numbers are correct and answered at the first contact attempt. There's also the danger of miscommunication as information is passed down the line.

The organization recognized the need for a method of rapidly contacting staff members, one that did not rely on email. There was also the need for tools that went beyond just notification—tools for managing the response itself.

Management knew that any solution had to be resilient and intuitive. Other requirements they identified included:

- Easily send timely alerts and notifications.
- Manage an incident across numerous sites.
- Collaborate remotely between Trust headquarters and affected sites.
- Minimal dependence on the Trust Network or IT infrastructure.
- Electronic log of communications and events.

They assigned priority values to each requirement and compared solutions against the requirements. Initial and ongoing costs were also important considerations. Executive buy-in was obtained early in the process, which accelerated the procurement of the application and its integration within the organization.

MissionMode Provides the Solution

Several vendors met some of requirements, but only MissionMode met all of them. AWP selected Mission-Mode's web-based Notification Center and Situation Center.

The Notification Center can send alert messages via phone, SMS, email, fax and pager—and it tracks real-time responses from recipients. The Situation Center is a virtual command centre for managing the details of a critical event—communications, resources, task assignments, collaboration, team status, and more.

"The MissionMode system is intuitive and easy for staff to use 'cold' during a critical event," according to Chris Williams. "We can immediately notify everyone involved, provide accurate information, get real-time updates from staff, manage an incident response, and collaborate remotely. And, the system did not require us to change our processes."

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MissionMode

AWP primarily uses the Notification Center for sending SMS text alerts. During a major incident, or when a wider response is called for, voice alerts are added. The Notification Center sends voice alerts that are automatically created from text messages, or they can be recorded in someone's voice.

The organization used MissionMode successfully during its 2010 emergency response exercises. In this year's exercises, participants will use the online Situation Center to monitor and assign tasks and track the status of team members. They will access plans and other essential documents in the Situation Center's resource library. During the post-exercise debriefing, the Business Continuity team will use the detailed log of events and communications to evaluate the exercise and recommend future actions.

Audit Trails Provide Crucial Evidence

AWP's audit plans become critically important when a disruption or emergency occurs. MissionMode's audit trail provides vital evidence for mandatory incident reports that are required by regulatory agencies. The reports can also be used in a court of law.

"Incident plans are developed with our commissioners," according to Chris Williams. "If we don't handle them well, they won't commission our services."

This could significantly impact AWP's revenue, as well as its reputation. Apart from the impact on those who depend on our services, there might also be financial penalties for not delivering proper speed of services. Chris stated, "It's essential to have a detailed, accurate record of every aspect of a response. MissionMode fulfils that need."

Protecting Services, Customers & Reputation

"AWP's reputation as a mental health care service provider is based entirely on its ability to consistently deliver high quality and safe services, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year—whatever the weather, whatever the circumstances," stated Mike Relph, Assistant CEO.

"Swift, accurate and reliable communications lie at the heart of the Trust's emergency and business continuity plans—and this is where MissionMode adds value. AWP is better able to protect its services, customers and reputation with the use of MissionMode."

Manage an incident in the palm of your hand

Contact us to learn more or schedule a demonstration.

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About MissionMode

Smarter Emergency Notification

The Notification Center™ is built for mission-critical enterprise use, yet it's easy to use and manage. Intelligent, customized automation adapts to changing situations and ensures a successful alert. Features that you won't find in many other systems include device-specific alerts and alerts recorded in your own voice.

Incident Management Simplified

The Situation Center™ provides the tools to remedy an incident better and faster—share information, monitor tasks, track people's status, send alerts, access any type of file, and more. It's a streamlined virtual command center that enables you to put your plans into action with the click of a button.

Interactive Mobile Communication

EarShot™ goes far beyond ordinary notification. Communicate with rich 2-way messages using text, forms, photos, documents, profiles and GPS location. Increase situational awareness, get on-the-scene intelligence, communicate with field personnel, and much more.