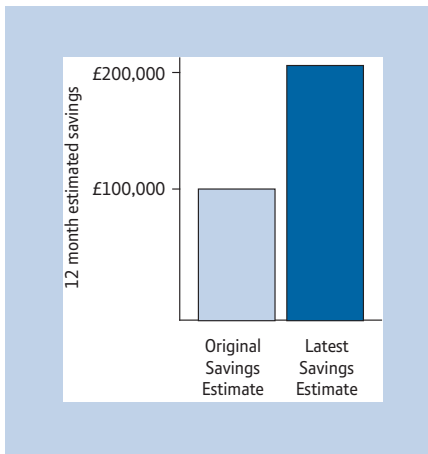


Hospital group saves £200,000 in one year by more careful management of its telecommunications estate



BT OneBill and BT Billing Analyst has enabled the rationalisation of telephony service yielding estimated savings of double the initial BT estimate

Newcastle NHS Trust was overwhelmed by literally hundreds of phone bills until BT helped it to take control through the combination of BT OneBill and BT Billing Analyst software

Executive summary

The Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust comprises three formerly separate hospitals, Newcastle General, the Royal Victoria Infirmary and the Freeman Hospital. Merging the three hospitals meant rationalising three separate phone systems from two providers and literally hundreds of separate phone bills.

The solution was a combination of BT OneBill – a single bill delivered quarterly on CD-ROM – and BT Billing Analyst, a powerful software package for analysing billing details. With advice from BT's Analyst Consult service, the Trust was saved hours and hours of sorting through hundreds of telephone bills, and was able to identify and release hundreds of unused telephone lines, making savings of more than £200,000 in the first 12 months.

BT OneBill and BT Billing Analyst are not only providing the tools to manage expenditure more effectively but are also yielding invaluable information for anticipating and planning future telecommunications requirements. The Trust has just entered into a second 12-month exclusive service contract with BT, and further ongoing savings are anticipated.

“The plus point is in having one provider instead of several, because it keeps things simple. I have complete confidence in BT. I know a lot of different providers have come into the market, but why change a winning team?”

Sue Wicks
Telephone Manager
Newcastle NHS Trust

Case study

Newcastle NHS Trust

“Having BT OneBill and BT Billing Analyst makes it a hundred times easier to manage the telephone system than previously. Now that we get our bill on CD-ROM we find that billing works much better. We can analyse every charge and then pass on the data to finance electronically once we’ve finished.”

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Marketplace

The Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust is a recent amalgamation of three formerly separate Trusts comprising Newcastle General Hospital, the Royal Victoria Infirmary and the Freeman Hospital. Communications is central to Newcastle’s health care operations in many critical areas including patient care, hospital administration and emergency services.

The new centralised Trust found that it had inherited two providers and a multitude of incompatible systems that had simply grown up over the years. In 2003, the Trust integrated the many disparate telephone systems it had inherited by installing a new digital exchange and Digital Cordless (DECT) switches in Newcastle General, the Royal Victoria and the Freeman. This enabled the Trust to centralise its telephone operations, but it still had considerable legacy problems.

Business opportunity

Newcastle Trust’s Telephone Manager, Sue Wicks, explains: “We inherited existing telephone networks, but some sites hadn’t documented everything as well as they could have done.” She began her task by centralising telephone records and having all bills transferred to her department. She was amazed to discover that there were literally hundreds of such bills.

The problem was that, for example, hospital employees had ordered new lines each time they wished to install a fax machine. But when the machines were subsequently moved or replaced, no one had notified BT and rental of the redundant lines continued. The same thing happened with existing lines when departments moved and people simply unplugged their phones and left, again without notifying anyone.

“I started tracking down all the lines and telephones installed,” Sue explains. “We didn’t have a clue where many of the phones were, so we rang each number until it was answered. If, after several tries, we didn’t get a reply we simply ceased the line.”

BT solution

Once the new digital switches had been installed and telephone communications had been centralised within the Trust, Sue Wicks sought a way of rationalising the many hundreds of bills that she and her staff had to deal with. A BT consultant, provided free of charge by her local Newcastle BT office through the Analyst Consult programme, was able to propose a solution that was estimated would save around £100,000 in a year. The solution was BT OneBill, a single consolidated bill delivered on CD-ROM quarterly, together with BT Billing Analyst software to enable the Trust to drill down into the details of each bill.

Sue Wicks says: “The lines that were definitely in use were consolidated onto one bill. I did have lots of other individual bills, but I thought it best not to put them on until I had identified the lines and found whether they were still in use.”

Once full details were available via BT Billing Analyst, the Trust was able to gradually rationalise the remaining bills and either replace them with lines through the new digital exchange or cease them. “Having BT OneBill and BT Billing Analyst makes it a hundred times easier to manage the telephone system than previously. Now that we get our bill on CD-ROM we find that billing works much better,” says Sue. “We can analyse every charge and then pass on the data to finance electronically once we’ve finished.”

The BT Billing Analyst software is of particular help in making sure that all Trust staff stick to the rules about going through the central telephone office rather than incurring costs for new lines or services on an ad hoc basis, as in the past. In one case, for example, the bill showed that a member of staff had accepted a reverse charge into a conference call for close to £100. The person concerned was horrified to learn how much the call had cost. An email was circulated, reminding people to book their conference calls through the central office.

Case study

Newcastle NHS Trust

BT was able to help with rationalising the Trust's lines in other ways. Because trust records were incomplete, the Trust was uncertain whether some lines with low (or zero) traffic were simply no longer in use or were critically important alarm lines. Sue Wicks says: "BT was able to help right away by telling us if a line was actually a fire alarm. It was brilliant that BT had a record when the hospital had none. I was really impressed by that and we received a lot of help on similar problems."

By June 2005, the Trust was sufficiently pleased with the BT OneBill and BT Billing Analyst results that it ceased its contract with other providers and signed a 12-month exclusive service contract with BT. That contract has now been re-signed for a further 12 months. Sue Wicks says: "Thanks to an increase in DDI ranges we are now able to cease dedicated fax lines and save more money. Already we've got a further 12 old fax lines cancelled. It mightn't sound a lot but that alone adds up to more than £2,000."

Results

In practice, BT's original estimate of £100,000 proved to be conservative and to date the Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust has made savings estimated at more than £200,000. As well as direct cost savings in the first year, with further savings in prospect, using BT OneBill and BT Billing Analyst has conferred other important benefits to the Trust.

Sue Wicks and her staff were spending literally hours sorting out telephone bills. With BT OneBill, the public lines and private circuits that appear on the Trust's account can be located anywhere in the UK. A single bill saves them significant amounts of time and releases them to concentrate on ensuring the best possible telephone service to staff and patients.

BT OneBill used with BT Billing Analyst provides the management tools to control expenditure. For example, the BT Billing Analyst software can automatically highlight changing usage patterns, such as call charges that have gone up by 10 per cent in one month.

Equally important, having accurate up-to-date billing and usage information also provides a sound basis for planning future telecommunications requirements and assessing new technologies. The Trust is currently carrying out trials of Voice over IP, and BT OneBill – together with BT Billing Analyst – is providing accurate information on which to base a business case for possible future convergence.

Sue Wicks concludes: "The plus point is in having one provider instead of several, because it keeps things simple. I have complete confidence in BT. I know a lot of different providers have come into the market, but why change a winning team?"

Why BT?

- BT Consultant was able to discover major cost savings
- BT OneBill saved hours of management time
- BT Billing Analyst software tracks all telephone usage details

Case study

Newcastle NHS Trust

Technology blueprint

BT OneBill is a value added service offered to BT customers free of charge, as part of the company's commitment to help them control their communications spend. It consolidates an organisation's bills into one document that is provided either in standard A4 format or on a CD-ROM. The bill is fully itemised, with customers choosing which services to include and when and where to receive the bill. Customers can use an 0800 number to call BT's dedicated billing team if they have any questions about a BT OneBill statement.

Customers can choose how much detail they wish to see, down to the level of individual calls on the BT OneBill statement. For example, the hundred most expensive international calls each month in one report, and all lines with usage that falls below £10 per month in another report.

BT Billing Analyst complements BT OneBill by offering customers over 60 programmable management reports with which to analyse the information in their CD-ROM statement. Free of charge, the software can be used to select or exclude calls, compare current and historical bills over a two-year period, and customise search criteria. BT Billing Analyst can also create reports on FeatureNet networks, recurring rental charges, BT Telemarketing numbers, BT private networks, and BT Mobile phone usage.

Main BT products and services

- [BT OneBill](#)
- [BT Billing Analyst](#)
- [BT Analyst Consult](#)

Offices worldwide

The services described in this publication are subject to availability and may be modified from time to time. Services and equipment are provided subject to British Telecommunications plc's respective standard conditions of contract. Nothing in this publication forms any part of any contract.

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