

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust



UK-based NHS Trust deploys Alluvio™ Aternity from Riverbed® to enhance the digital experience and improve patient pathways.

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) is one of the largest NHS community health providers in England, serving a population of about 1.4 million. KCHFT’s IT team is responsible for over 5,000 staff, including doctors, community nurses and many other healthcare professionals, as well as hundreds of applications and hardware assets.

KCHFT wanted to procure a Digital Experience Management software platform that made it possible to view application and hardware performance issues, isolate problems, speed up root cause determination and resolution to optimise staff/patient journeys. By implementing Alluvio Aternity by Riverbed, KCHFT not only improved visibility but they can now understand and auto-remediate incidents. This has greatly improved productivity and avoids downtime for clinical staff which impacts daily operations and patient care.

In Brief

Challenges

- Limited visibility of clinician device performance
- Slow to determine root cause of performance problems
- No visibility of end-user experience
- Lack of early insight into the performance of Electronic Patient Records (EPR) system

Solution

- Alluvio™ Aternity Digital Experience Management (DEM)

Benefits

- Improving the quality of clinician experience
- Detailed visibility of applications and hardware
- Auto-remediate and troubleshoot issues proactively
- Lower asset refresh costs by only upgrading poor performing devices

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) offers practitioner-led and therapy-focused healthcare services. It receives over two million patients every year and its vision is “to be the provider of choice by delivering excellent care and improving the health of our communities.”

Challenge:

End-to-end visibility into application performance

As a Foundation Trust providing services across South East England, KCHFT attaches great importance to being responsive to its patients’ needs.

Historically, KCHFT had limited visibility of application and hardware performance issues, how to resolve the IT problems that arise, and how these challenges might impact its users. “One of my key priorities is to have complete visibility and understanding of our user experience. Auto-remediation of incidents is vital to ease time pressures and frustrations,” explains Darren Spinks, Head of IT Operations at Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust.

A desire to measure clinicians’ digital experience

Many of the staff and patients at KCHFT rely on applications to perform tasks related to patient care and treatment. Patient pathways are one of the key metrics and IT services want to make the patient experience as smooth as possible. A two-minute delay can negatively affect patients and clinicians. However, identifying and resolving these problems was almost impossible without full visibility across the IT infrastructure supporting the applications.

“From a software or application perspective, all we ever really knew was whether it’s working or not,” Spinks explains. “We couldn’t find out how much time a particular function or module took to perform a certain task.”

Apart from evaluating its clinicians’ digital experience, the IT team at KCHFT wanted to measure the impact of its changes across their IT infrastructure. “We wanted make sure our new solutions delivered the expected improvements,” explains Spinks.



Solution:

Gaining complete visibility with Alluvio Aternity

After a thorough analysis of other providers, KCHFT adopted Riverbed’s Alluvio Aternity Digital Experience Management (DEM) solution, deploying 6,200 licenses. Spinks was enthusiastic about the onboarding process: “The experience could not have been simpler! It took about five minutes to access the cloud environment,” he recalls. “From there, it was a case of deploying the agent to all the endpoints and watching the data come in. Almost immediately, we could see trends that sparked conversations and ideas.”

Internal stakeholders subsequently felt more empowered to address their IT-related issues. Spinks continues, “Clinicians experience matters and they should not be waiting for IT services to load or suffer performance issues where we could make improvements to the experience.”

“Due to the pressures clinicians are under, some of them didn’t have the time to contact the service desk. They just rebooted and accepted the experience. With Riverbed’s solution, we could now do something about it,” he concludes.

“Before Aternity, the IT team would receive call tickets that would bounce between teams to be resolved. Now that we are using Aternity, it’s significantly reduced all the interactions, as the real-time insights provide us with evidence that we can see on the platform. It has made things so much simpler, saving us time and increasing our productivity.”

Darren Spinks,
Head of IT Operations, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

As the NHS Trust builds its digital experience strategy and implements auto-remediation functions enabling the IT team to fix issues proactively, the advantages of Alluvio Aternity are already evident. “With the help of our Riverbed colleagues, we have created some bespoke dashboards, mainly around our EPR to understand its performance and day-to-day use,” Spinks explains. “The information on the dashboard has already helped us troubleshoot some issues.”

The solution has even highlighted critical events before they could turn into bigger issues. “Alluvio Aternity alerted us hours before our service desk received a call regarding the incident,” says Spinks. “With the Alluvio Aternity solution from Riverbed, we don’t need to wait for a user to tell us there is a problem. It informs us of the issue, its impact, and the implications regarding time and cost.”



Benefits:

Ability to make smart decisions around hardware management

“Implementing Alluvio Aternity helped us rethink how we deliver IT services based on what we can see,” explains Spinks. “The IT team can now prioritise tickets based on the most critical problems and as a result, we can make some significant improvements.”

Darren Spinks,
Head of IT Operations, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

Alluvio Aternity, part of the Alluvio Unified Observability portfolio from Riverbed, also allowed the IT team to make better-informed decisions about IT investments. “We have revised our asset refresh plan based on device performance. Aternity showed us we wouldn’t need to replace 42% of our 1784 devices aged 5 years or older. This has meant that we have already returned our investment in Alluvio Aternity.”

The Aternity solution provides KCHFT with auto-remediation actions that reduce service desk calls and automatically resolve IT-related issues before users become aware of any problems. The IT team also uses the solution to monitor its endpoints' power consumption and adjust energy usage accordingly to help reduce its carbon footprint. This supports the NHS sustainability agenda of becoming the world's first net zero carbon health service.

Alluvio Aternity is helping to improve the clinician experience at KCHFT, while enabling the Trust to understand the solutions' overall business impact. "Alluvio Aternity helped us discover an antivirus that was causing 'blue screen' on users' devices.

We reduced the number of specific Blue Screens by 99% from seeing 274 Blue Screens to one per day. This affected 200 clinicians and saved a total of 68.5 hours."

Given the success of Alluvio Aternity, it will continue to feature in KCHFT's plans for the future including further investment in Riverbed's Alluvio Unified Observability portfolio. "We are keen to continue reducing service desk call volumes using the Alluvio Aternity DEM solution," Spinks explains. "Also, with the help of the Alluvio Aternity dashboards, we intend to analyse trends and fix issues across all devices and speed up resolutions resulting in much better healthcare for our patients."

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