"Protect me from theft."

"Among all the systems that the Trust has put in place to help protect sensitive data and hardware assets, we see Computrace as the best security product that we've bought. We don't have sensitive data on our laptops, but with Computrace and our other encryption policies, we've added an even more secure defence to ensure the Trust and the patients we care for are fully protected."

Alan Boardman
Security systems engineer
Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust

Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust secures computers and sensitive patient data with Computrace One by Absolute Software

Challenges

- Maintain the Trust's reputation for providing highly secure information protection
- Large mobile workforce using 100s of laptops across a wide geographical area
- Meeting the requirements of tough new data protection rules carrying fines of up to £500,000

Solution

- Computrace One

Results

- Helps to ensure sensitive patient data is fully protected
- Provides auditable proof that all data is wiped from stolen or mislaid devices regardless of location
- Protects investment in Trust assets by recovering loss and stolen hardware
- Helps the Trust meets stringent Data Protection Act rules for data security
- Complements existing asset management systems with real-time, off-network tracking

Challenge

The Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, established in 2002, provides a range of mental health services for children and adults, along with substance misuse services, for a population of around 1.4 million people in Lancashire. Approximately 3,500 employees work for the Trust from over 100 sites across the region. As well as its own IT servicers, the Trust also looks after the IT for other organisations in the area.

As a public sector organisation and particularly as a health service, the Trust has a duty of care to ensure that it protects the privacy of its patients as well as protecting investment in Trust assets. One key challenge facing the Trust is a shift in NHS practice to take health care services out into the community resulting in an increase in mobile workers using laptops off-site. Additional pressure to maintain data security comes from a recent government ruling that can impose a fine of £500,000 for breaching the Data Protection Act.

It is the job of Alan Boardman, Security Systems Engineer for Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, to implement security for the Trust's computer systems. The Trust has put in place a number of policies which have largely mitigated the threat of data loss. All data is securely held in a data centre and accessible only through the network. However, some data such as cached emails may still reside on a computer which needs protecting. Boardman says, "The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) recently introduced a new fine for any serious data breach. All public bodies can now face a £500,000 fine. Computrace is a key part of several security layers we employ to help reduce the risk of data loss. And it's not just the financial risk- we also need to protect our reputation for providing a high level of data security."

Solution

The Trust has 3,500 computers. The split is roughly fifty-fifty between laptops, and desktops, although the Trust is increasingly replacing computers with laptops. Lancashire Care started buying Computrace® licences for all new computers in 2006. It now has 2,500 laptops and desktops protected by Computrace, spread throughout its five primary care areas, and the other organisations for which it provides IT support.

The Trust chose Computrace as part of its strategy to make computers and data more secure for its increasingly mobile workforce. Boardman says, "As a Trust, we cover a wide and disparate area across the North West region and we have a lot of community-based teams and individuals who can spend days or even weeks away from their office. They rely on their laptops to manage and deliver services in the community, but it is a big challenge controlling and keeping track of 100s of computers spread across the region."

Two features in particular attracted the Trust to Computrace. One is the Device Freeze feature – where a device screen can be frozen remotely, displaying a custom message requesting the end-user to take specific action to unfreeze the device – and the other its ability to wipe a hard disk remotely. The Trust has used both to provide additional protection against data being accessed on stolen or mislaid devices. "If someone does steal a laptop and even if we're pretty sure there's no data on it, we like to be able to audit the fact that we've wiped the machine," says Boardman.

Results

Computrace has helped the Trust implement very robust protection against loss of sensitive data, enabled the Trust to recover a number of devices that would otherwise have been lost forever and provide audit trails to ensure it adheres to new data protection rules.

Computrace operates by automatically reporting asset information, every 24 hours, to the Absolute® Monitoring Centre. Boardman can access this information online via his Absolute Customer Centre account, and view a real-time inventory of hardware and software on the computer. Boardman can monitor changes in asset information and proactively respond. For example, most stolen computers are rebuilt within days of being stolen, so even if a theft hasn't been noticed immediately by the user, Boardman is alerted to the fact by hardware and software changes.

Computrace has also proved very useful in complementing the Trust's asset management systems because it can track a device and associated software and hardware, even when the device is not connected the Trust's network.

In addition, Computrace is also proving very useful to tracking down and recovering devices that have been mislaid. With over 3,000 devices to manage, keeping track of every device is very complex. One doctor who left the Trust had inadvertently forgotten to return his laptop. While looking at the Absolute Customer Centre, Boardman noticed that the laptop was still being used by the doctor. The Trust was able to contact the doctor who, realising his mistake, returned the device immediately to the Trust. Boardman says, "This is one of the fantastic things about Computrace. It tells me that something is missing. We have systems in place to

manage assets, but sometimes a procedure elsewhere might go awry and Computrace will come in and save the day."

In another example, a stolen laptop was quickly found using Computrace. The device was stolen during a domestic burglary and although the thief was caught quickly, the laptop had already been passed on. Once the machine was switched on however, the Computrace Agent, which is embedded in the device BIOS and so extremely resistant to tampering, alerted the Absolute Theft Recovery Team. Along with a variety of forensic tools, the team was able to pinpoint the exact location of the laptop and work with local police to physically recover it from an address in South Manchester.

Boardman says, "In the past when equipment was stolen we never got it back. But with Computrace, it's much more likely we'll recover it. And for a product that has saved us so much, Computrace is quite inexpensive. But Computrace is more than just about money that it has saved the Trust, I think the return on investment is our integrity."