SUCCESS STORY

IT Communication specialists Lìonra

Bringing Advanced Communications to NHS Western Isles

Doctors and healthcare professionals needed new comms to provide healthcare – a case study

Modern comms are essential for healthcare providers

Introduction

IT Communication specialists Lìonra upgraded the remote Miavaig surgery to fast reliable broadband. Other options were not viable and the system needed to be robust to cope with steep hills and harsh winter weather.

The Problem

The NHS Western Isles (NHSWI) trust provides healthcare to over 26,000 people located over a large and rugged area of Scotland, employing around 1000 staff. The existing contract was ending and the location is well beyond the reach of the BT fibre network. Modern, effective healthcare is increasingly reliant on high-quality communications infrastructure to support messaging, internet access, video and image viewing. Therefore an upgrade was urgently needed.

This site is in a secluded dip surrounded by steep hills which obscures any 4G connectivity. During the bitter Lewis winter, the area regularly experiences significant and damaging weather conditions.

The Contract

Lìonra had done previous work NHSWI which was an IT audit at the Western Isles Hospital. Discussions led to exploring the 4G capability that was available. Jon Harris, NHSWI IT director says, "Lìonra provided a fully costed proposal and detailed solution, this was on the back of various discussions around their requirements and the lack of options available from our traditional suppliers."

Installation

An existing mast was used to create a Layer 2 Point to Point secure link with a strong signal to the surgery, and onward to Stornaway General Hospital using 4G. From inside the surgery direct internet access was good, exceeding the requirements of the brief.

In Operation

The service is delivered using a combination of 4G via the Mobile Network Operator (MNO), and VPN tunnels that traverse the public internet between Miavaig surgery and Stornoway hospital. Use of 4G, however, has some downsides as connectivity to the surgery depends on the availability of and performance of the mobile network which varies with weather and use by other network customers.

The Results

Overall the surgery is well-connected and various options are being explored to improve the system's already-excellent performance. Primary and secondary healthcare professionals now can send and receive important medical data from the surgery and mobile devices quickly and efficiently. There was an improvement in broadband speeds and a system that enables the IT team to have more flexibility.

Lìonra also supplied a monitoring service to ensure continuous operation and monitor any issues. They also instructed staff on basic fault finding on the installed solution.

Lìonra

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About Lìonra

Lìonra translation: Scottish Gaelic to English meaning Network.

Lìonra is a specialist IT resource company supplying professional & skilled IT engineers who are based across the Highlands & Islands.

We provide a wide range of IT engineering skills alongside a flexible pricing model.

Contact us for a free consultation
if you need IT services: info@lionra.co.

Testimonial

"Lìonra provided us with exactly the solution we were after – bringing broadband over 4G into a site which is a very remote and difficult to serve: a 'notspot'. The solution has been working well for several months now, carrying all the internet traffic for a remote GP surgery - including video and voice services using Wifi calling - without any service issues or downtime. We could not be more satisfied with the solution deployed."

Jon Harris NHSWI IT Manager and lead for e-health

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