



Customer Story

Healthcare Industry

Midwives improve the quality of patient care with PowerTerm WebConnect RemoteView



“PowerTerm WebConnect improves the quality of our patient care, because midwives have more information at their fingertips when talking with patients.”

Dr Zafar Chaudry
Chief Information Officer
Liverpool Women's and Alder Hey
Children's NHS Foundation Trusts

Liverpool Women's
NHS Foundation Trust 

The Liverpool Women's Hospital endeavours to provide a high standard of care for all its patients – whether they are being cared for in hospital or at home. It recognised that it could improve the delivery of anti-natal and post-natal care, by giving midwives secure remote access to the hospital's core clinical systems, from patient locations all over the city.

It selected Ericom's PowerTerm WebConnect RemoteView solution to provide midwives with a fast, secure and easy way to access patient records using lightweight laptop computers and a 3G network. The solution has led to higher standards of care for women in the community, as well as improved mid-wife productivity and more accurate administration.

INDUSTRY

Healthcare – Government

CUSTOMER

Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS
Foundation Trust

PRODUCT

Ericom® PowerTerm® WebConnect
RemoteView

CHALLENGES

- Provide remote access to clinical systems for midwives working in the community
- Improve the administration of patient visits
- Help midwives to work more efficiently
- Improve the accuracy of payment by the PCT for delivery of services

SOLUTION

- Deploy Ericom's PowerTerm WebConnect RemoteView
- Connect using lightweight laptop computers and a 3G network
- Provide secure access to protect patient records

BENEFITS

- An improved quality care for women in their own homes
- Improved administration and communication within the organisation
- Reduced duplication leading to greater productivity among midwives
- Real time records contributing to more accurate funding from the PCT

“PowerTerm WebConnect improves the quality of our patient care”

The Liverpool Women’s Hospital can trace its roots back to 1796, when a group of public-spirited ladies set up a charity to provide medical care and assistance with childbirth for ‘reputable married women and widows’ in the growing port of Liverpool. The medical care provided by this charity was not based in a hospital, but was provided by doctors and midwives in patients’ homes.

Over time, this charity grew and was eventually amalgamated with other local hospitals and medical facilities. In 2005, it became the first NHS Foundation Trust in Merseyside, and today it is recognised as the largest women’s hospital of its kind in Europe. Despite the passage of over 200 years, one of the founding principles of the organisation remains the same today: wherever possible, the Liverpool Women’s Hospital likes to care for women in their own homes.

A NEW APPROACH TO PATIENT CARE

The hospital has a team of over 90 community midwives who visit pregnant and post-natal women across all areas of Liverpool. To enable them to work more effectively and provide a high quality of care, the Liverpool Women’s Hospital wanted to give them remote access to clinical and non-clinical information systems.

“Having the right information available is very important,” says Dr Zafar Chaudry, Chief Information Officer for Liverpool Women’s and Alder Hey Children’s NHS Foundation Trusts. “In order to provide patients with access to the best care when you are in their homes, you need access to information about each patients’ full medical history.”

Midwives used to carry large volumes of patient notes with them to each visit. Then, if the midwife needed to find out a detail about a previous pregnancy, for example, she would have to trawl through many pages of handwritten notes until she could

find it. Most of the time, midwives also had to write paper notes about their visits and then enter the information into the central systems days later, when they were next at the hospital.

“We wanted to move from a paper heavy to a paper light strategy,” says Chaudry. “We also needed to accurately capture information about visits in the community, so that we could ensure that we were paid correctly by the Primary Care Trust.”

A QUICK AND COST EFFECTIVE SOLUTION

The Liverpool Women’s Hospital started looking for a solution that could facilitate fast, secure and reliable remote access to centralised applications over a 3G network connection. Specifically, it sought a solution that would be both easy to use and easy to implement. “There is no point having a brainwave and then spending years trying to develop and deploy it!” says Chaudry.

Price was obviously another key consideration for the organisation.

The hospital ruled out terminal emulation products due to security issues and found itself with a short list of two vendors: Ericom and Citrix. “The Ericom solution was far more cost effective than Citrix,” says Chaudry. “Citrix’s licenses were more expensive, and Ericom delivered everything Citrix was known for.”

The organisation selected Ericom’s PowerTerm WebConnect RemoteView product, a server-based solution that allows users to access central applications from mobile

“They (Midwives) probably couldn’t live without it now.”

laptops via the Internet. Ericom’s licenses do not have to be assigned to a named user, which helps to minimise costs. Initially, the hospital purchased fifty licenses, which was more than enough to roll out the solution to 75 midwives who work shifts.

A RELIABLE CONNECTION OVER 3G

Prior to going live with PowerTerm WebConnect, the Liverpool Women’s Hospital spent six months configuring applications, testing the 3G connections extensively and organising thorough training for all community-based staff. Within this time, the deployment of the PowerTerm WebConnect solution itself took less than three weeks. “It was all pretty straightforward; there were no complications,” says Chaudry.

The community midwives now take lightweight Dell laptops with integrated 3G connections to all of their appointments. They then use the WebConnect portal on their laptops to log in and securely access



clinical systems stored on the hospital's main servers. All of the information that they access is fully up-to-date, and they can make notes and changes on patient records in real-time.

A HIGHER QUALITY OF PATIENT CARE

Now, if a midwife needs to find something out about a patient at the bedside, she can easily check her medical history and even look at ultra sound scans and x-rays. "Having access to clinical systems makes patient care more accurate," says Chaudry. "If a patient needs a prescription for penicillin, the midwife can easily check to see if she has an allergy to it, for example."

He adds: "PowerTerm WebConnect improves the quality of our patient care, because midwives have more information at their fingertips when talking with patients."

Chaudry can see that the quality and consistency of patient records has also improved month after month. "This tells me that midwives are using the system and using it well," he says. "If you enter the information into the system while you are with the patient, it is very fresh in your mind and you are going to get it right first time. It leads to much more accurate records."

AN ACCURATE AUDIT OF ACTIVITY

Like most organisations in the health sector in the UK, the Liverpool Women's Hospital is funded based on patient numbers. The more patients that midwives see, the more funding the hospital receives. Use of PowerTerm WebConnect allows the hospital to better monitor midwives' activities centrally. At the end of each week or each month, managers can



see a clear record of patient visits that is accurate and up-to-date.

"Our use of PowerTerm WebConnect gives us an accurate way to audit our activity in real time and helps us to prove to the Primary Care Trust precisely how many patients we visit in the community," says Chaudry. "If we are reimbursed correctly for our work, it means that we can then reinvest in clinical services to benefit the entire community."

He adds: "The data collected also helps us to see if we have enough resources working in the community and predict where we might need to invest in the future to meet the needs of patients. Improving the collection of data is hugely important from a business perspective."

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Midwives at the hospital are using the PowerTerm WebConnect system more and more extensively with every passing month. "They probably couldn't live without it now," says Chaudry. "It allows them to work more flexibly and also check emails

more frequently, which is improving correspondence and communication within the team."

The Liverpool Women's Hospital is currently awaiting confirmation of funding for additional laptops. It will then roll out the PowerTerm WebConnect remote access system to over 90 midwives. In the near future, the hospital also plans to migrate from its existing ADSL 3G network to a dedicated SDSL 3G network. This will give the hospital guaranteed bandwidth and the added capacity that it will need to accommodate the planned increase in user numbers.

Chaudry believes that the Liverpool Women's Hospital has taken decisive step in the right direction. He says: "The health service as a whole is moving much more towards bringing secondary care into the community and treating patients at home. I can see an even greater need in the future for hospitals and medical facilities to be able to gain remote access to clinical systems from patients' homes. We are ahead of the game."

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North America
Ericom Software Inc.
231 Herbert Avenue, Bldg. #4
Closter, NJ 07624 USA
T +1 (201) 767 2210
F +1 (201) 767 2205
Toll-free 1 (888) 767 7876
Email info@ericom.com

UK & Western Europe
Ericom Software (UK) Ltd.
11a Victoria Square
Droitwich, Worcestershire
WR9 8DE United Kingdom
T + 44 (0) 845 644 3597
F + 44 (0) 845 644 3598
Email info@ericom.co.uk

International
Ericom Software Ltd.
8 Hamarpeh Street
Har Hotzvim Technology Park
Jerusalem 91450 Israel
T + 972 (2) 591 1700
F + 972 (2) 571 4737
Email info@ericom.com

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