



## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

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# NHS Lothian Beats Budget Cuts and Improves Patient Care with Polycom Unified Communications Platform

### Industry

- Healthcare

### Daily use

- Staff meetings
- Training
- Patient care
- Executive meetings
- Team collaborations

### Solution

- A complete unified communication and collaboration solution to improve and ease all services of NHS Lothian: prison services, clinical services, neonatal, remote stroke, physiotherapy, remote services and sleep services

### Results and benefits

- Significant saving in travel costs per year
- Shared resourcing
- Improved patient care
- Improved staff qualifications
- Increase face-time with patient

### Overview

Due to tightening budgets in the public sector, NHS Lothian, working with partner health boards in Fife, Borders and Dumfries and Galloway, took up the challenge to look at innovative ways to deliver the same quality of care and service with a reduced budget.

While other organisations explored ways to make cuts with the least impact on essential services, NHS Lothian began looking into alternative methods of providing world-class primary and secondary healthcare to 200 sites. With 27,000 staff, it was essential every worker was efficient and using their time productively.

NHS Lothian decided to adopt Polycom video conferencing and unified communications solutions to reduce waiting times and clinician and patient travel times. In the past, specialists travelled throughout the regions to treat patients. By employing a state-of-the-art video conferencing approach, NHS Lothian staff is able to diagnose patients without the need to travel. In turn, this has led to faster diagnosis and treatment of patients.

Furthermore, the organisation has been able to establish remote learning, to increase the skills of staff to help minimise the skills gap between acute care hospitals, surgeries and community hospitals. All training takes place using Polycom video conferencing, allowing larger groups to be trained in a single session, and saving on travel time and expense.

### Specialist solutions for specialist care

NHS Lothian has made use of video conferencing facilities in the oncology department since 2007. The team found many benefits in using the system, mainly for internal meetings across practices but the quality of the existing facilities was not satisfactory for accommodating patients.

The team saw the need for a tightly-knit unified communications environment, and had the desire to upgrade their video solution to HD systems. NHS Lothian needed a supplier to link the two together.

“Polycom has the right technical solutions; and it has a great team with a complete service solution. It is very important to us, when doing business, to have a positive experience.”

Iain Robertson, head of IT infrastructure and operations at NHS Lothian

After speaking to several suppliers the team felt Polycom had the strongest offering with HD technology enabling high-quality video, and the ability to link via unified communications.

Iain Robertson, head of IT infrastructure and operations at NHS Lothian, said, “We have a number of partnerships with technology organisations, and it is important that there is a two-way relationship. Polycom has the right technical solutions; and it has a great team with a complete service solution. It is very important to us, when doing business, to have a positive experience.”

Over the last 18 months, NHS Lothian and Polycom have developed a collaborative working environment, benefiting staff, patients and the health board as a whole.

“We made the right decision choosing Polycom. We now have the ability to connect to remote teams. We are more connected than ever before through unified communications. Choosing a solution and deploying it was made really easy with Polycom’s help,” said Robertson.

Today, the applications of the telepresence solutions are numerous, with all departments and services of NHS Lothian benefiting.

### Prison services

Video conferencing was the perfect solution to facilitate prison visits and to manage prisoner healthcare, especially in the mental health units where patients don’t necessarily need constant bedside care but do need constant monitoring. By installing video conferencing in the secure mental health units, clinicians can keep track of their patients’ health in a fast and efficient way.

### Clinical services

With limited qualified staff on-call during some shifts, NHS Lothian aimed to increase the clinical services provided by deploying the Polycom Practitioner Cart. This provides less qualified staff with resources from neighbouring hospitals, enabling a faster diagnosis.

### Neonatal

One of the areas of use for video is in the neonatal departments. Often, mothers and babies can be separated due to complications or illness at birth. Putting video beside the incubator, and a video screen next to the mother improves the patient experience during essential visits to hospital.

### Remote stroke

Time is a key issue with stroke patients. The quicker a specialist is able to identify the level of stroke and treatment, the quicker the road to recovery. A visual consultation enables the doctor to interact with the patient and determine which drugs should be administered. If treated in one to two hours, patients can be out of hospital in one to two days.

The telestroke solution can be used by specialist clinicians from their homes at any time of the day or night. It is also possible to view MRI scans, and confirm if the patient should be thrombolysed, a treatment which can make the difference between life and death and has a window for diagnosis of just three hours.

“We are more connected than ever before being able to use video, unified communications and telepresence all in one call. Choosing a solution and deploying it was made easy with Polycom’s help.”

Iain Robertson, head of IT infrastructure and operations at NHS Lothian

### Physiotherapy

NHS Lothian previously had just one person running a physiotherapy clinic each morning. With the installation of Polycom’s HDX system, two physiotherapists are now able to reach a minimum of three sites and run several sessions through a single laptop.

### Remote services

It can take patients from eastern areas of Scotland more than two hours to reach skin specialists in Lothian, by using cameras connected to video conferencing clinicians are able to review rashes or skin complaints in a shorter period of time.

### Sleep services

NHS Lothian is deploying Vpod (a unique standalone fully integrated videoconferencing environment) and video conferencing solutions, enabling patients to experience a better level of service in a private environment, and closer to their home. Video facilities are also used to train other consultants giving them important exposure to the visual aspect of the job.

In addition to specialist areas, NHS Lothian has deployed video solutions for consultants who drive more than 75 miles a week to service over 3,000 clients. A significant saving in travel expenses.

“Owing to the success of the recent Polycom installations we are now looking at other solutions that can help staff maximise their time,” said Robertson. “We have identified a genuine way to reduce costs without compromising on quality so it makes sense to search out other areas in which video conferencing can benefit our workplace.”

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### About Polycom

Polycom helps organizations unleash the power of human collaboration. More than 400,000 companies and institutions worldwide defy distance with video, voice and content solutions from Polycom. Polycom and its global partner ecosystem provide flexible collaboration solutions for any environment that deliver the best user experience and unmatched investment protection.

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