

# PRIDE AWARDS 2017

**Category:** Low Budget Campaign

**Company:** North East and North Cumbria urgent and emergency care network and 26 NHS organisations in North East and Cumbria

**Entry title:** Regional NHS response to the international cyber-attack

---

## **Brief and objectives:**

At 4pm on Friday 12 May, NHS organisations across the region were affected by a major international ransomware attack.

Key business and clinical systems were shut down to protect IT infrastructure, prevent further spread of ransomware and allow IT services to update virus protection. Shutting down these systems has a significant impact on our ability to provide services, (preventing access to electronic patient records or data) or to provide a management response, as some organisations could not access email or IT systems.

Weekends are peak periods for urgent and emergency care services (emergency departments, out of hours GPs, NHS 111 and 999, and walk-in services) as well as planned hospital care (operations, follow-ups and tests).

While most GP services close at weekends, there was uncertainty whether practices would have access to clinical systems on the Monday.

NHS communications leads across the region have strong network relationships. The challenge was for over 25 organisations to work together in a consistent public relations response, while also servicing internal communications needs, during a fast-changing situation lasting several days until Wednesday 17 May.

## Key objectives

- Co-ordinate a systematic public relations response across 25 organisations, plus mutual aid to communications colleagues
- Ensure consistent responsive key messages to support patient behaviour around use of services and ensure patient safety
- Maintain public confidence in region's NHS through a co-ordinated approach
- Co-ordinate media relations, particularly in support of NHS foundation trusts (FTs) whose clinical leaders were providing patient care and operationally dealing with the major incident

## **Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:**

- Work in partnership as colleagues, with effective and productive relationships
- Co-ordinate all NHS earned and owned communications channels, social, digital and media
- Draw on good relationships with media providers and journalists
- Draw on existing regional 'plasticine people' campaign to provide signposting to alternative sources of care to relieve pressure on hospital and NHS111/999 services

- Draw on behavioural analysis into how patients use urgent and emergency care services
- Draw on NHS Child Health app – developed with behavioural insight, tested with target parent groups and clinical staff

### **Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:**

- Strong leadership and quick response - first teleconference at 4.30pm, 12 May; 20 conferences in total. Key players invited to become involved in this unified approach including North East Ambulance Service, Trusts, NHS England, North of England Commissioning Support (NECS)
- WhatsApp group established by 5.15pm, 12 May: 39 members, 700 messages exchanged in time period. This allowed messages handled quickly while organisations were dealing with the incident. It also allowed regular updates so every partner was aware of key issues, how they were being addressed and what to do
- Coordination of media releases and requests via NECS, resulting in consistent regional messaging
- Five releases/updates agreed via WhatsApp and issued to media
- Clinical leaders doing media interviews to ensure consistent response to evolving situation
- Targeted TV and radio broadcasting
- Ensure public kept up to date with consistent messages through social media, radio and television, detailing what to expect if they had an appointment or were unwell

### **Implementation of tactics:**

#### Benefits

- Ensure safe patient care supported
- CCGs and Trusts confident in a joined up approach. Each organisation contributed to messages and sign-off process, presenting a unified front and clear, consistent messages
- Joint working meant organisations better able to plan ahead (e.g. NHS 111 increased staffing on rota for Monday when it became clear that some practices might struggle when they returned to work); those with no access to usual platforms (e.g North Cumbria University Hospitals) able to communicate with journalists through other means

#### Impact

Reported by hospital trusts and NHS 111/999 providers:

- Reductions in surge of patients attending emergency departments and calling NHS 111 on Saturday 13 May – no trusts had serious issues with A&E attendances
- Patients attending planned appointments with key documentation
- Patient understanding of difficulties caused by the attack

### **Measurement and evaluation:**

Friday 12 - Wednesday 17 May

TOTAL REACH: 7.97 million

North East & North Cumbria Urgent and Emergency Care Network: Twitter - Reach – 1.7m Retweets – 349, Facebook - Reach – 212,315, Engagement (clicks and reactions) – 11,056, Click through – 820, Web - 10,000 users, 77% viewed media update page, 8% health advice, 6% child page, media: 20 enquiries, Reach 2.7m (TV not included), 892 app

downloads

City Hospitals Sunderland: Twitter - Reach - 22.9k, Retweets- 85, Likes – 146, Click through – 60. Facebook - Reach - 41,008, Engagement - 3,593. Website - 2,867 users, 6,392 page views; 32.8% new visitors. Media – 2 enquiries

North Cumbria CCG: Twitter - 49,000 reach, Retweets 182. Facebook - 19,623 reach Engagement 4,750. Website Out of action 12 – 15 May

North East Ambulance Service: Twitter - Total impressions – 37,797, Engagement – 479. Facebook - Reach – 41,402, Engagement– 2,259. Media – 3 enquiries

North Cumbria University Hospitals: Twitter - Reach – 62k, Retweets – 370, Click through – 51. Facebook - Reach – 175,401, Engagement – 17,387

Cumbria Partnership FT: Twitter - 46,773 reach, 2,269 engagement. Facebook - 113,231 reach, 664 shares, 820 reactions. Website - 420 hits, 2,736 views of online bulletin

Gateshead FT: Twitter - 22,000 reach, 1,402 engagements, 1,415 click through. Facebook - 172,749 impressions, 2,530 engagements, Website - Cyber-attack page viewed 963 times

Newcastle Hospitals FT: Twitter - Reach – 32,900, Retweets – 174, Click through – 231. Facebook - Reach – 179,148, Engagement – 5,700. Media: 7 enquiries

Northumbria Healthcare FT: Twitter - Reach - 793,895, Retweets – 745, Click through – 749. Facebook - Reach - 1,494,938, Engagement - 13,038. Website - Website traffic - 20,963, Seven updates - 9,916 page views. Media – 15 enquiries

North Tees & Hartlepool FT: Twitter - 18k impressions, 93 retweets, 83 likes, 2.2% engagement. Facebook - Likes: 39,396, Reach, 45,602. Media: 10 media enquiries; one statement

Numerous positive comments received, saying communication was good and regular (13 comments); that they were kept informed, early (9); communication was effective, efficient, and kept to timescales (5); email/electronic communication highlighted (3).

**Budget and cost effectiveness:**

- Total spend was £500 for promoted social media posts
- Less than 1p spent for message reach per person