CASE STUDY

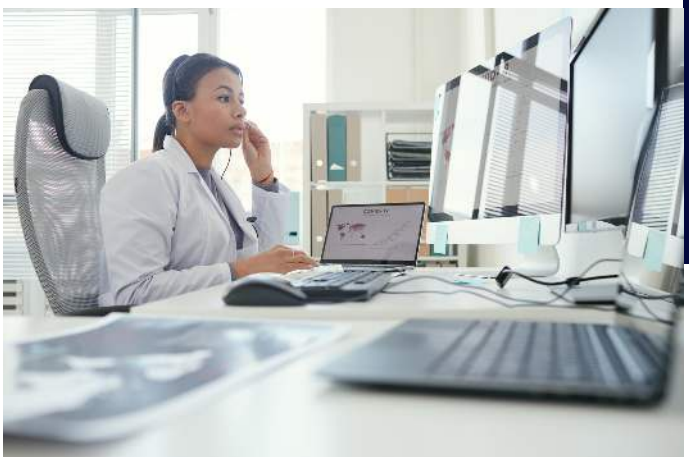
Virtual CISO: Strengthening an NHS Trust's Cyber Security Posture and Resilience

NHS
University Hospitals of North Midlands
NHS Trust

Overview

Annually, University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM) cares for over two million people seeking emergency treatment, planned operations, and medical care across two sites: Royal Stoke University Hospital and County Hospital in Stafford.

With increasing numbers of remote workers and devices, UHNM needed to ensure consistent levels of end-user security across all locations. The Trust's Chief Information Officer (CIO) and Head of Service Delivery sought an interim Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) in order to counter resource challenges by managing cyber security operations. i3Secure were introduced to the Trust as a new supplier by a trusted partner and provided the service of a virtual CISO.



The Challenge

The original request was to provide an on-site consultant to replace a departing employee. However, in response to COVID-19 challenges, the Trust opted for a virtual CISO solution.

i3Secure emerged as the preferred cyber security supplier, impressing the Trust with its dedication to delivering value for money, unmatched flexibility, and particularly its specialised consultants with extensive experience of working with NHS clients.

The virtual CISO solution presented numerous benefits that aligned perfectly with the Trust's evolving needs, thus providing a flexible and scalable approach to the Trust's resourcing challenges.

In line with the Trust's key requirements, i3Secure's experienced, CISSP-qualified CISO adeptly ensured Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT) compliance. They also expertly managed technical systems and network firewalls, confidently led incident response plans, and developed the cyber security strategy.

Deploying a virtual CISO at short notice (within three weeks) for a three-month period was testament to i3Secure's agility as well as commitment to providing timely, efficient, and high-quality cyber security solutions to organisations.

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Our Solution

i3Secure's CISO promptly initiated work on both the cyber security roadmap and business plan, earning acclaim from the Trust's senior leadership team.

Merely a few weeks into the role, our consultant faced the task of managing the Log4j incident, which had far-reaching implications. With commendable dedication, the CISO effectively led the Trust's response to the incident while collaborating tirelessly with internal staff around the clock, resulting in laudable outcomes.

With threats constantly evolving on an unprecedented scale, the guidance of an experienced CISO was invaluable. Integral to their risk-focused strategic plan was developing a comprehensive, clearly defined process for incident response planning and disaster recovery.

Our Virtual CISO skilfully devised protocols for identifying, containing, and evaluating incidents, complemented by effective procedures for remediation and enhancement. Drawing on compliance standards, our CISO established a robust framework that both showcased best practice and fortified the Trust's resilience.

Our Client's Words

"The i3Secure consultant responsible for delivering our CISO as a Service has been exemplary. He has completely focused on the Trust's needs rather than any third-party commercial drivers. His integrity, knowledge, ability and flexibility to go above and beyond have been second to none. I am thoroughly satisfied with the solution provided and would not hesitate in recommending it."

Head of Service Delivery, UHNM

The Result

i3Secure's virtual CISO played a key role in bolstering UHNM's cyber security and resilience. Following the successful management of the Log4j incident and the development of a comprehensive cyber security roadmap, our Virtual CISO quickly emerged as the go-to expert for cyber security matters within the Trust.

Leveraging their exceptional expertise and experience, our CISO provided invaluable guidance and strategic insights to UHNM's senior leadership team. Recognising the significant impact of i3Secure's contributions, the Trust extended the contract for a further three months, allowing for continued support and enhancements.

With a solid foundation in place, UHNM's cyber security efforts saw a remarkable transformation. The CISO's proactive approach and continuous monitoring enabled the Trust to identify vulnerabilities and strengthen its incident response and disaster recovery capability. This minimised potential disruptions whilst instilling a sense of confidence and preparedness throughout the Trust.

Our consultant's expertise and understanding of UHNM's unique challenges positioned them as a key stakeholder in shaping the cyber security strategy. The Trust sought their involvement in the interview process for a full-time CISO role, ensuring seamless continuation of progress achieved and strong alignment with the ongoing vision.

UHNM now maintains a robust, compliant cybersecurity framework aligned with industry best practices. Our CISO's dedication to fostering a cyber-resilient culture and staying ahead of evolving threats made them an invaluable asset to the Trust. They successfully ensured safeguarding of critical assets and helped UHNM to remain resilient amidst cyber security threats.

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