

Why Mobile Working Really Matters in Social Care

It is interesting to see how, irrespective of geography, the business pressures and processes are so similar in many respects between what we experience in local government in this country when compared to similar agencies in other parts of the world. For instance, within the UK we have Wolverhampton City Council who selected NetMotion Mobility as the secure mobile working architecture for their existing Social Care application, CareFirst. They had found that CareFirst performed poorly (or not at all) when using GPRS or 3G connections outside the office. Once they implemented a no cost evaluation of the NetMotion Mobility XE software, not only did the application work, but it shielded end users from frustrating interruptions in the application when the connection dropped for any reason, or when they were roaming from one network to another.

As a parallel to this, the Florida Department of Children and Family Services (DCF) is currently rolling out NetMotion Mobility XE to 4,000 Mobile Case Workers throughout the State of Florida (this includes agencies like OurKids - the focus of this case study)

I owe thanks for this article to a colleague from the analyst company, Strategic Analytics, Philippe Winthrop - Director at Strategy Analytics. Philippe describes the opening keynote of the Mobile Enterprise Executive Summit that was held in Los Angeles in November. It is a powerful reminder as to why secure mobile working matters so much today.

For IT technical folks, it is so easy to get caught up on issues around platforms, devices, carriers, suppliers, and every other issue that goes on within technology. A fresh perspective on how important this is comes when one shares in the presentation by Francis P. Allegra, CEO and Pat Smith, CIO of Florida's OurKids.

OurKids is a private, not for profit foster care agency for Miami and Florida Keys. They focus on helping some of the people who face the greatest needs and challenges - young children who don't have adult family members who can take care of them. As we prepare for the seasonal

festivities, stop for a moment and **really** think about that and consider how fortunate the majority of us are to have been raised in happy, healthy and safe homes. Here are some fast facts for you that the OurKids presentation shared about foster care in the USA:

- 800,000 children spend time in foster care each year in the US
- 60% enter in response to a report of child abuse or neglect
- Average time in foster care is 28 months
- A child in foster care changes homes on average 1-2 times a year
- There's almost a 50% turnover in case management staff

That offers a sense of the very strenuous work environment for OurKids care workers. Not only do they have to go to schools to see counsellors, teachers and principals, but it gets even more stressful when they have to go to court to testify on behalf of a child. It offers an insight into why there's such a high turnover in case management staff.

At this point the CEO of OurKids poses a question: now imagine if you didn't have the tools to do your job most effectively and efficiently so that you could focus on what really matters. The children.

OurKids' Chief Information Officer Pat Smith comes from corporate America (banking and pharmaceutical IT background) and joined OurKids so she could do something she found more gratifying. Soon after joining OurKids, she and the CEO launched a program to help the case management staff use enterprise mobility technology to spend less time doing paperwork and spend more of that time with children. From a technology perspective this implementation is a close parallel to the classic field service solution, or last month Westminster parking solution for mobile enforcement officers, when one considers the component parts required. By being able to extend secure mobile working to a Windows Mobile smartphone alongside a laptop OurKids have been able to accomplish (among other things):

- Better scheduling to know which children need to be seen that day and which are highlighted and have to be seen by the end of the month (every child needs to be seen every 6 months)
- Reduced time filling out paperwork in triplicate (getting rid of those carbon paper forms that never work)
- A way to track the children by taking a photograph of the child through the smartphone that also tags the photo with a timestamp and GPS location - which automatically gets uploaded to a central server through military-grade secure connection

- Mileage tracking and other analytic reporting to offer management and supervisory information to identify areas for improvement

There were a welter of other typical benefits users mentioned with the solution ... as well as the challenges of accommodating change in a stressful work environment that is already busy enough. The point they make is, technology not only improved employee satisfaction (they could focus on the priority, in their case, the children) but equally importantly it also improved the quality of care provided. In addition to being able to satisfy their financial responsibilities by demonstrating Return on Investment benefits, they have the satisfaction of the true ROI. As they put it is well - how do you measure the value of a good childhood? It's priceless.

Please click on 'next' below to refer to the case studies of care professionals that have benefitted from secure mobile working. If you would like to measure these benefits for our organisation, please [click here](#) to request a no cost evaluation of NetMotion Mobility XE software.

Case Studies

[Puget Sound Blood Centre](#)

Puget Sound Blood Centre is an independent, community-based non-profit organisation with a tradition of blending volunteerism, medical science and research to improve the patients' lives. The Blood Centre maintains 18 mobile vehicles that collect blood donations and, on any given day, the units travel all over the western part of the state between Canada and Oregon. The Blood Centre required a remote access solution that gave the blood technicians secure and continuous connectivity to transmit critical donor information collected at the mobile units. Puget Sound Blood Centre looked to NetMotion Wireless for a solution to help them overcome the challenges presented by the critical need for reliable connectivity. After implementing Mobility XE, the blood technicians are now able to transmit information to the mainframe in a secure, continuous data stream all day.

[WCBC](#)

WorkSafeBC (Workers' Compensation Board) is an agency dedicated to promoting workplace

health and safety for workers and employers. They consult with and educate employers and workers alike and monitor compliance with Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. In the event of work-related injuries or diseases, WorkSafeBC works with the affected parties to provide return-to-work rehabilitation, compensation, healthcare benefits, and a range of other services.

Each year the prevention officers complete over 20,000 inspections of businesses, organizations and job sites to ensure safe work environments. For each inspection, the prevention officer must fill out site inspection documents which are uploaded to their system for reporting purposes. The officers lacked remote wireless access on their mobile devices so the reports were stored locally on the device in a database and later uploaded at the office into a corporate database. To complete the inspection report process, other WorkSafeBC office staff would review the uploaded data to ensure accuracy.

WorkSafeBC's goal was to improve the productivity and efficiency of their prevention officers by simplifying work flow. Read this case study to discover how NetMotion Mobility helped achieve this by wireless-enabling existing applications

[Lee Memorial Health System](#)

Florida-based Lee Memorial Health System wanted to improve the quality of service provided by its home health workers. To accomplish this, they required a remote access solution that provides its clinicians with secure, continuous access to critical patient information from the hospital or patient's home. Lee Memorial replaced its inefficient paper-based system and dial-up connections with a notebooks loaded with Mobility XE, allowing workers to access and update critical patient records from virtually anywhere. The new solution improved worker productivity and efficiency, and reduced Lee Memorial's remote access costs by 20 percent.

[Marshfield Clinic](#)

Widely recognized for innovation, Wisconsin-based Marshfield Clinic information specialists were early adopters of wireless networking. With NetMotion Wireless' Mobility XE Mobile VPN, Marshfield doctors, nurses and medical assistants can seamlessly access and update critical medical records as they move between home wireless systems to cellular networks and LANs in

hospitals, retirement homes and other medical facilities.

[MHMR Centres of Texas](#)

The Camino Real Mental Health Mental Retardation (MHMR) Centre provides at-home support and assistance services for persons with mental illnesses and development disabilities. Now with Mobility XE loaded on their laptops, MHMR clinicians are able to spend more time in the field seeing patients. Mobility XE provides them with a secure, persistent connection to their medical and patient database letting them retrieve information on-the-fly wherever and whenever they need. MHMR clinicians are seeing increased productivity by no longer having to coordinate their schedules around office visits to gather and upload patient information, instead performing these tasks at the point-of-care.

[Visiting Nurse Service of New York](#)

Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) selected NetMotion Wireless' Mobile Virtual Private Network (VPN) solution to provide a home healthcare workforce with real time access to critical data and applications at the point of care. VNSNY is the largest not-for-profit home health care agency in the USA with nearly 10,000 care providers that make more than 2.2 million home visits per year to an average of over 30,000 patients each day. More than 2,500 VNSNY clinicians use Mobility XE, NetMotion's Mobile VPN software, to improve productivity and connect securely to applications, roam seamlessly between multiple wireless networks, and maintain applications even when users move in and out of wireless coverage areas.