

A New Approach to NHS 111

DHU's legacy phone system couldn't cope. NICE introduced CXOne—suddenly staff had data, faster workflows, and better tools. Call routing improved, patient care got safer, and response times dropped. What really made it work? Trust, shared learning, and full team involvement.

NICE

DHU
Healthcare

When **DHU Healthcare**, a not-for-profit Community Interest Company that provides NHS services in the Midlands, were looking to modernise the telephone system for its NHS 111 service, they were looking for more than just a tech supplier.

As a patient centred organisation, they were looking for a like-minded organisation who understood the challenges associated with providing 24/7 urgent healthcare, valued clear communication and could provide a system that could manage millions of critical calls every year. It needed to be a partnership that could develop and grow along with the new system they were looking to introduce and alongside **NICE**, they've helped to reshape how its 111 service is delivered to patients across the Midlands.

As a health service provider for more than 30 years, DHU has a strong reputation for high-quality, compassionate healthcare that has grown from small beginnings in a GP practice in Derbyshire to become the single largest provider of NHS111 services. As part of its bid to provide the service to the whole Midlands region, their existing analogue telephony system was holding them back. They needed a solution to modernise their operations to make them more flexible, responsive, and efficient.

The move to the cloud-based NICE CXOne system across four sites was a major shift. Overnight, they went from limited data access to a system that gave them real-time insights into every aspect of their service. Finding patient call recordings became 80% faster and 90% easier, admin time dropped significantly, 99% of user management tasks vanished, and password resets became history. This was a change in how DHU were able to support patients, protect staff, deliver statistical analysis on calls that could support new training techniques and improve services.

Collaboration was key and NICE already had a professional working relationship having worked together on introducing a workforce management system for DHU 111. From the start, DHU and NICE worked closely to test and refine the system, with 80% of frontline staff involved in the process to draw on their expertise and knowledge of how calls needed to work. The system was designed with people accessing and providing care in mind to be certain that the workforce had the right tools, training, and confidence to embrace the new system.

The benefits quickly became clear. DHU could track and analyse calls to identify abusive callers and better support vulnerable patients. Response times improved, and the service became more adaptable to crises. During the CrowdStrike incident in July 2024,



DHU changed internal routing and updated patient-facing messages within 15 minutes. That level of agility would have been impossible before.

This partnership has helped to future proof DHU's 111 provision up for the future, a fact recognised by NHS England who invited DHU to pilot new initiatives, such as the Natural Language Processing IVR system. Their expertise is now shaping how NHS 111 services evolve nationwide.

None of this would have been possible without a trusting and mutual partnership that relied purely on a service provision. NICE Value Realisation Consultants embedded themselves in DHU's journey, providing ongoing support, insights, and strategic input. and co-facilitate Strategy workshops', Regular meetings, shared learning, and open communication meant that challenges were tackled together and if something didn't work, they adjusted and explored in collaboration.

For others looking to modernise healthcare services, there's a lot to take from this story. The right technology is important, but success depends on how it's implemented, how people are involved, and how partners work together. DHU and NICE showed that, with a shared vision and putting people in the middle of it, real change is possible.

This wasn't just about updating a system. It was about making healthcare better, more effective and responsive for those who rely on it. And that's a partnership worth celebrating.

