

Yorkshire Ambulance Service

Taking the pain out of policy management

How best-practice technology is enabling the Yorkshire Ambulance Service to pass on essential employee updates with minimal staff intervention

Ensuring employees read and comply with best-practice company policies is essential for all organisations. With sensitive information to protect and important updates regularly communicated, adherence is especially critical for those working for front-line public bodies.

Like all NHS operations, the Yorkshire Ambulance Service uses information governance to handle all organisational information, including confidential data about patients and employees, ensuring that personal information is dealt with legally, securely, and effectively. For the busy Service, good practice also helps to support the provision of high quality care for more than five million people across the county.

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Richard Price, Information Systems Manager

Cutting Costs

- Yorkshire Ambulance Service has automated the process for managing policies saving resources and money.

Improving Communication

- Automating the process using purpose-built software helps ensure that when a new policy comes into force or a change is made, employees are alerted straight away.

Best Practice

- Ensuring employees read and comply with best-practice company policies is essential for all organisations.



Case Study – Yorkshire Ambulance Service



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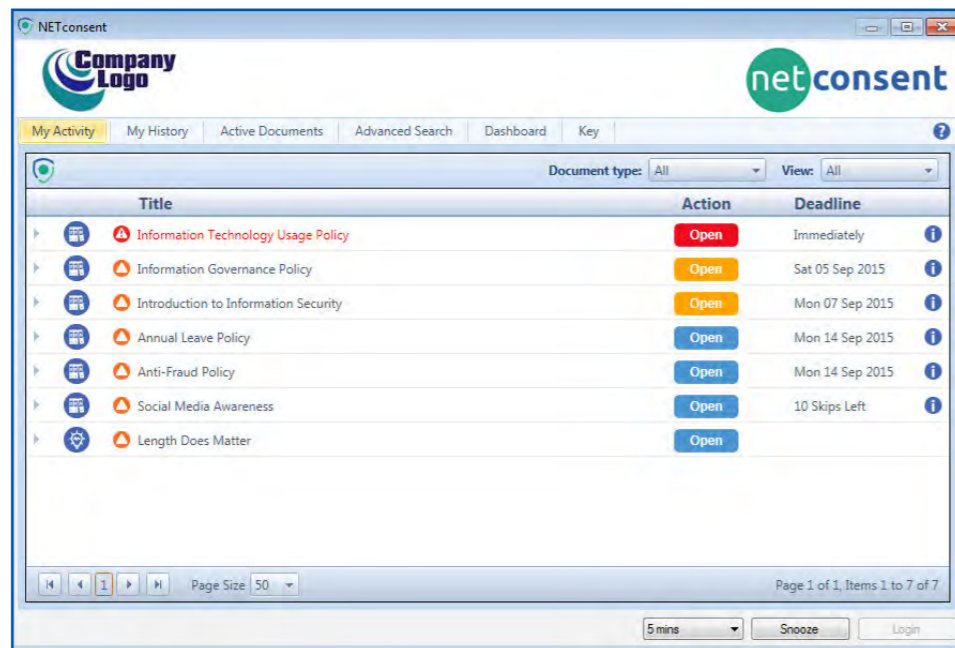
Richard Price, Yorkshire Ambulance Service Information Systems Manager

Overcoming time and cost challenges

The Yorkshire Ambulance Service employs over 4,300 staff, more than 80% of whom are operational and work on the frontline. The wide range of regulation it must comply with includes the Data Protection Act 1998; the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Confidentiality Code of Practice. Strict guidelines also exist on records management, information quality assurance, information security and information governance management.

Realistically, the time and cost involved in manually confirming that everyone has seen, read and agreed to a new policy update can make it an impossible process to manage with complete confidence. Yet, as the Yorkshire Ambulance Service has discovered, automating the process using purpose-built software helps ensure that when a new policy comes into force or a change is made, employees are alerted straight away. Five years ago, the Service introduced NETconsent automated policy management software, an efficient and cost-effective compliance and policy management system that enables them to systematically evidence compliance, instil best practice and improve and sustain controls.

“The messages which the system delivers automatically pop-up in each person’s task bar,” says Yorkshire Ambulance Service Information Systems Manager, Richard Price. “Unlike organisation-wide emails that are easy to miss or ignore, the software effectively demands action. Until the user logs in and confirms that they have seen and agreed to an update, it’s impossible for them to do anything else.”



Compliance management

The NETconsent system also plays a key role in compliance management, enabling Price and his team to send out important information such as updates to network terms and conditions. “Employees say they like the layout of the browser and find the system easy to use,” he says

“Some people obviously don’t like the fact that it forces them to look at the policy update before moving on to work. From an organisational perspective, however, it’s extremely important and allows us to comply with the statutory requirements of the Care Quality Commission which regulates all health and adult social care services in England, including those provided by the NHS.

“Recently, we asked NETconsent to adjust the system so that we can turn off the option to decline a new policy. We didn’t want to give people the opportunity not to accept as we simply don’t have the time and resource to follow-up with those who decline the policy to find out why.

“In most instances, the updates fall under the employees’ standard terms and conditions so they have to accept them anyway. NETconsent were quick to respond to the request and adjusted the code so that the option could be switched off, which enabled us to send out an important new update without having to delay.”

Currently, Price says that one of the biggest priorities for the Information Systems team is instilling a culture of best-practice around information governance and compliance. “It’s a particularly hot topic for all public sector organisations,” he says.

“While the Yorkshire Ambulance Service has not experienced any confidential data breach, there have been a number of instances reported in the media where sensitive data has been discovered because employees have not been as careful as they should have been.

“To protect employees, patients and the organisation itself, one of our highest priorities is to instill an organisation-wide culture where people are always vigilant and don’t leave their laptop unlocked, for instance, or write down passwords.”



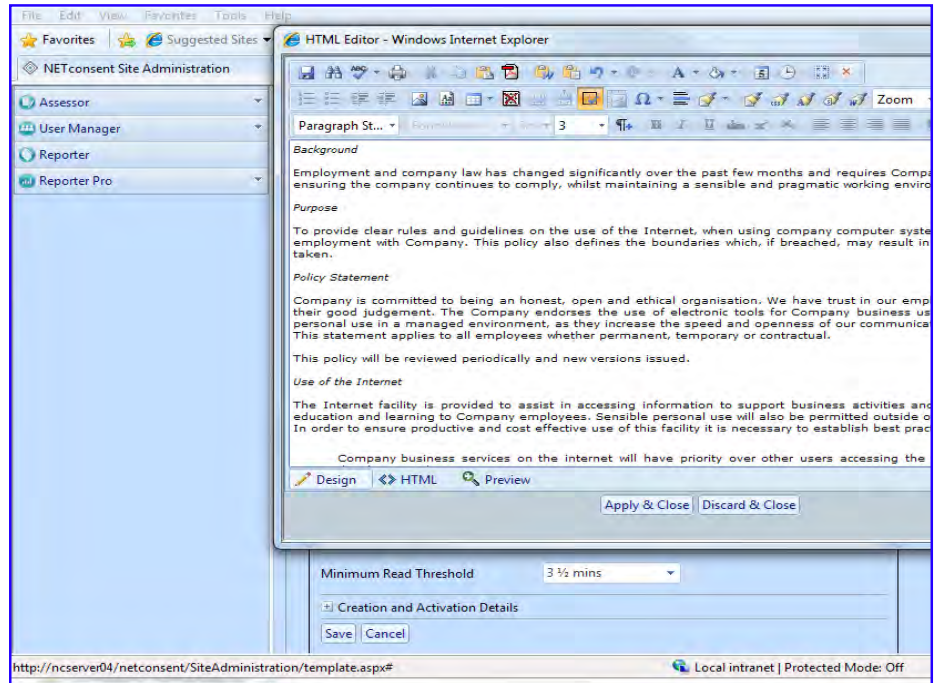
Cost effective compliance management

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At present, the Yorkshire Ambulance Service relies on the NETconsent system to send out organisation-wide information. In future, Price says that he would like to see it used to send updates to specific groups within the organisation such as clinical paramedics to provide them with important updates on the latest guidelines on the use of specific medicines or treatments, for example.

“In my view, the scope and value of the technology goes beyond compliance,” he says. “By enabling us to pass on messages and important updates on information governance, it also acts as a powerful real-time messaging tool.”

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