Keeping the Lights On

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It's no longer just keeping the lights on....

It's keeping our data flowing
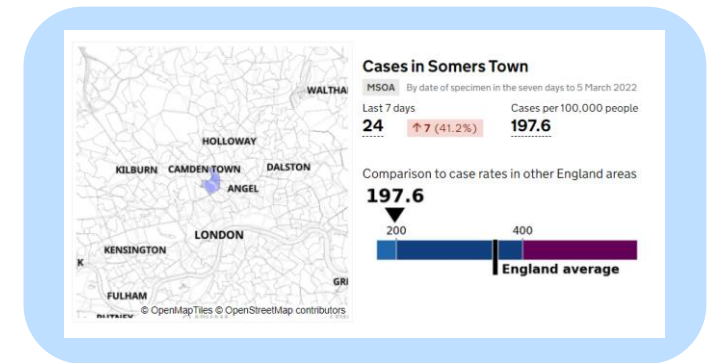
It's keeping our systems connected

It's ensuring that our digital solutions are available and responsive whenever we need them

Responding to the pandemic

NHS Digital has a strong track record of delivering highly available critical national services.

Covid-19 threw a set of challenges at us in a way that we had never had to deal with before

What we did in Live Services

We built an IT Operations Centre to monitor our services 24*7 and to respond immediately to alerts breaching defined thresh-holds

We brought together all suppliers within the services daily to review performance and address issues

We established a Service Integration team who could own complex incidents, ensuring route causes were identified

We implemented a common language and approach with all contributing organisations

We put in place hyper-care processes for major releases

We reduced our 'path to live' processes and criteria and took more risk that we would usually

What I'd like to share from Live Services

The Service Integrator role is important when there are multiple parties involved in service delivery

24*7 monitoring and clear run-books averted many major incidents, and accelerated the time to fix when an incident occurred

Our contracts did not align initially, we had to rely on building relationships with all parties

Our processes couldn't move quick enough so we had to do things differently

Our services were only ever as strong as their weakest point

Providing a hyper-care service after each major release avoided service impacting incidents

We moved from providing B2B tech and data support, to providing it to citizens

Our communications channels and requirements shifted constantly

When you are planning the next steps of your digital journey keep IT Operations at the front of your mind

Who will be looking at all the data flows between systems and acting quickly when data doesn't flow?

Who will be co-ordinating your IT change management across multiple systems and organisations to ensure one small change doesn't have downstream consequences?

Who will be owning major Releases being tested and implemented ensuring the ongoing availability and safety of your system?

Who will your end users be contacting when there is a problem, and who will you be proactively telling when there is a system outage?

Who will be ensuring your contracts / service agreements align so that suppliers and teams have the same language, complementary service levels and the same approach and purpose?

Will what you've built so far (over the years or more recently) be good enough to support further integrations and dependencies?

Is your 1st line support structure equipped to deal with citizens?

What level of system unavailability is acceptable?

Is there a gap for an IT operations and service management community?

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