



Staffordshire is at the heart of the geographical and industrial heartland of Britain, and at the heart of Staffordshire is its County Council.

As the biggest employer in the county, the council has over 30,000 staff on its payroll including teachers, administrative workers, road engineers, scientists, crossing patrol wardens, social workers and librarians. Serving a population of 800,000 people, the council provides vital services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Problem

The council had evolved the nature of IT support for over 300 council locations. Originally, shift-based technicians were employed to identify, diagnose and initiate remedial work on network problems. This was very costly and inefficient and was not proving to be best value for money. Changes in working practice were needed and when the shift based system was abandoned, it forced the council to reassess how it could continue to offer timely and professional IT services.

Len Venables, Communications Network Service Controller at Staffordshire County Council explained; "Having removed the double-day shift meant there was always the possibility of coming in to the network being down at eight in the morning with internal and external customers such as schools and public libraries needing service, but not being able to offer a fix until perhaps noon".

The Answer

Complementing the council's on-site systems, Networks First provided **swift** based in their Network Operations Centre. This provides secure, VPN based, remote network management of elements of the council's IT network. **Swift** monitors key council sites and links, and generates alerts to Networks First staff about potential network problems. These events are passed in near real-time to key council IT team members, allowing them to make best practice decisions on the next course of action.

The Result

The council are delighted. Not only do they get early warnings at reduced cost from Networks First, they also have a comfortable two hour on site, two hour hardware fix arrangement - all from one company.

Venables concluded, "From our point of view, it is saving us money, while the customers see no difference, they still get the same level of proactive management". The difference is how Networks First and **swift** have allowed the council to work more efficiently and cost effectively.

Summary

Supporting IT for a round the clock organisation like this calls for innovative and responsive services. Deploying **swift** allows Networks First's most skilled engineers to see the same network problems as the customer. This results in the same benefit of easy access to all the network devices to diagnose faults accurately and quickly team.