

EDUROAM EXTENDS CONNECTIVITY TO NHS

HEALTHCARE STUDENTS NOW BENEFIT FROM BANDWIDTH 'IN THE FIELD'

Ed Wincott, eduroam(UK) service manager at Janet, part of Jisc, which provides eduroam national services in the UK

Students studying medicine, dentistry, nursing and clinical researchers spend a significant time in hospitals and on-site in NHS services. Although nearly all UK universities use Jisc supported eduroam® for guest network access, clinical students and researchers can miss out on easy connectivity when “in the field”. In fact, the NHS has typically less bandwidth available and more limited user access.

In large cities where the big teaching hospitals are often very close to the partner university campus, the locally agreed solution has often been to extend the university eduroam footprint through the hospital’s wireless network. Both the authentication and resulting network access traffic is routed through a local firewalled link from the hospital to the partner university.

There are some hospitals that are more distant from a main university campus so a local link to support eduroam is not cost effective. The University of Bristol found an alternative approach to extending the eduroam footprint. They managed the authentication process on behalf of Weston-Super-Mare hospital (via a tunnel between the national NHS network N3 and Jisc’s education and research network Janet) while the hospital provided the connection to the internet. After a successful pilot year, this model is now being explored by



similar hospitals with their university partners.

The advantages of eduroam to the health service community are clear. The South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, part of the King’s Health Partners Academic Health Science Centre, has joined the eduroam federation in its own right. This approach could be used by other NHS organisations as a way of providing the

“visited service” and, if policy allows, possibly a home service too (currently only those users involved in research and education are eligible).

The benefits of extending eduroam connectivity to NHS premises is a vital step to ensuring that UK clinical students and researchers can continue to benefit from a high-speed, reliable connection, wherever they study.