

Every single day in the UK, up to six teenagers or young adults - between the ages of 13 and 24 - will be told that they have cancer; they put their life on hold, just as it is starting to take off. In the midst of their already difficult journey to adulthood, these young people suddenly face a possibly life-threatening illness. A teenager under 16 is likely to be treated in a paediatric ward, alongside children and toddlers, while a teen who is over that age can expect treatment in an adult ward with elderly patients.

Cancer in teenagers and young adults has a distinctive pattern, different from that experienced by children and older adults. It is important for their physical health and psychological welfare that treatment is delivered from within a specialist facility, purpose built to meet their needs. At the same time it is critical for their emotional well-being that they are treated in a familiar environment, one where the opportunity exists to get together with other people of their own age who will understand and relate to what they are going through.



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# Teenage Cancer Trust

Case Study

The first Teenage Cancer Trust (TCT) unit was established in London in 1990, as a specialist facility within the Middlesex hospital, offering a dedicated space for teenage patients, designed to provide an environment conducive to recovery. It was created to ensure that teenagers and young adults could be diagnosed efficiently, treated effectively, and then have the support they would need to make it through their treatment and to rebuild their lives, careers and futures after cancer. The Trust's main ongoing priority is building more units within NHS hospitals.

## Excell & TCT

The Excell Group has a long standing association with TCT and, from the outset, have recognised that Internet based technologies which would enable secure, person to person communication, which are simple yet far reaching in their capabilities, would be of significant practical and financial benefit to the Trust. It has been a logical progression for Excell to be engaged at the cutting edge of delivery of systems, services and applications to support the charity's efforts to help teenage cancer patients and reduce telephony costs at the same time.

The foundations were laid with the delivery and installation of an Avaya IP Office telephony system, complete with VoiceMail Pro in the Teenage Cancer Trust's Newman Street head office in London. This small but powerful IP PBX has enabled the TCT to streamline their company communications and save money on calls and line rental. The VoiceMail application has provided a front line means to route calls to the correct destination while allowing for voice messages to be left in the absence of the intended party.

Darren Strowger, Excell Chairman and TCT Patron commented; "Teenage Cancer Trust is a fantastic charity striving to make life better for these young people. As a parent myself, I feel it's important that we recognise that teenagers have different needs from children and adults and to that end,

it's important that we do what we can to help. Creating awareness of the TCT and the fact that the specialist needs of these teenagers are not currently recognized within the NHS system is an ongoing challenge and Excell strive to promote the remarkable work being done by Simon and his team"

Yet delivering head office technology was only the starting point for Excell in providing more support to young adult cancer patients, equivalent Avaya IP Office systems were installed in the TCT units in Manchester and Leeds.

As further new units opened, networking them together to support a broad range of Internet based applications became of strategic importance to TCT. The next step for Excell is to provide voice and data solutions at new units in Sheffield, Birmingham, Newcastle, Liverpool and Addenbrooks Hospital in Cambridge.

The data network enables conference calls between units at no cost to the Trust. This has not only driven down the cost of advanced communications for TCT, it also has also allowed the Trust to be able to reflect the PCT's vision of "a better experience" for each cancer patient.

## Talk isn't cheap – it's free!

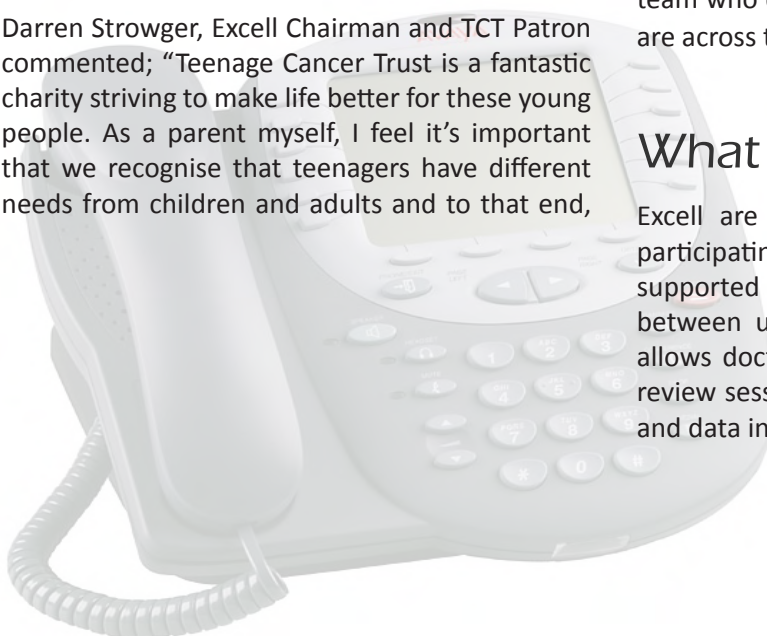
Putting teenagers in touch with other teenagers has been identified as one of the strongest methods to assist in remission. For the patients, it means that they can do so for virtually unlimited time with other patients across the UK at no cost, sharing their experiences and advice on coping with cancer.

## Mobility

Staff are taking advantage of the Avaya IP Office technology that Excell have introduced to each unit. IP DECT handsets are in use throughout the network and this overcomes so many of the normal restrictions associated with hospital voice communications. DECT removes the need for wired telephones and engenders a fully 'mobile' support team who can be contacted almost instantly no matter where they are across the TCT UK network of specialist units.

## What the Future Holds

Excell are introducing further cost saving applications to each participating unit. The need for teenagers to feel included and supported will shortly be extended to allow for video conferencing between units with the internet as the connection media. This allows doctors, nurses and oncologist consultants to hold patient review sessions 'online', saving time, while exchanging information and data in real-time.



The Video Conferencing facility will also enable patient participation in events and seminars that less fortunate bed ridden patients couldn't previously attend.

An exciting benefit of the video conferencing and the associated data connectivity between the units is that patients will be able to play video games against each other and open up alternative means of inter unit communication.

The IP technology provided by Excell has been of significant benefit to Teenage Cancer Trust. Excell are soon to extend their altruistic relationship with TCT and have identified, with the Trust, a shortlist of applications which will engender even greater confidence and freedom in teenage cancer patients. These applications will further drive down costs while saving time for the busy TCT units.

Aware that parents and siblings play a vital role in the treatment programme for these young people, the Trust are investigating a new FreePhone service, facilitated by Excell, to allow PIN authenticated telephone calls to be placed to residential patients from outside callers.

In addition, The TCT and Excell, through their long standing relationship with customers such as GE Medical Systems and Toshiba, are researching & developing a selfexamination package that will reduce the burden on teenagers who need to attend doctor's surgeries on an almost daily basis for simple yet vital tests. Armed with a testing kit, patients will be able to perform those tests at home and, using web-based applications will use the internet to download test results to a secure central system. From here, the patient's doctor and support staff will have immediate access to the results, allowing them to make decisions about follow up treatment, when it is required. This plan will free up doctor and consultant time considerably and will remove the need for unnecessary stressful and debilitating travel for patients and family.

Excell Group are proud to help the TCT find an answer to a substantial problem. Using technological know-how, combined with a firm desire to help and support young people affected by cancer, teenagers can now benefit from better advice, support and disease management, even after treatment has ended, in the hope of a long term recovery.



## Collaboration: Do something amazing

### What patients say

"Stepping from a ward onto the Teenage Cancer Trust Sheffield Unit is like moving from a hospital, into the corridor of a relaxed hotel or a friend's house – some of the snug doors are open and music filters out, making the atmosphere seem far more youthful, friendly and relaxed. Being treated in this environment helps to break down the barriers and dispel the feeling of isolation – something that is only too apparent on an adult ward. TCT has paid attention to every detail with direct thought for the teenage group. No matter how miserable you feel when you enter the hospital, the smiles of the patients and the feeling of togetherness created by the Unit never fail to brighten the day."

### What the Professors say:

"There is no doubt that young patients benefit from being treated in specialist units which focus on the needs of young people. Not only does this ensure that teenagers and young adults have access to specialist technical skills but also it ensures that their psychological and social needs can be met by healthcare professionals with a full understanding and training in this difficult field. The outcome of their treatment and their quality of life improves in specialist facilities".

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