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## State-of-the-Art IP Communications Enable Optimised Work Practices

**New voice infrastructure enables agile working and helps staff deliver a more responsive service**

Supporting more than 8000 people living across London, this leading UK home care provider uses 21st century communications to deliver a flexible and dynamic 24 / 7 service that enables individuals to live more independently at home.



### Challenge

A boutique care service that delivers personal support and assistance to people in their own homes, SweetTree provides specialised home care services for individuals with a wide range of unique needs. Providing 24 / 7 support to clients and their families, a reliable telephony and communications infrastructure is vital for ensuring first-contact resolution and peace of mind for service users.

With up to 450 care assistants in the field and 70 office-based staff, communication technologies are also central to the day-to-day activities of SweetTree personnel.

Especially when it comes to enabling those all-important interactions with clients, social workers, district nurses, care managers and GPs that make the delivery of joined-up and informed care possible.

However, an ageing telephone system was inhibiting SweetTree's ability to make its workforce more productive and efficient. Worse still, having reached maximum capacity, the platform was no longer suitable for a rapidly expanding organisation. With new NHS contracts waiting in the wings, SweetTree wanted a solution that would deliver the resilience, agility and scalability it needs to cope with future demands.

"We took the decision to review the entire communications infrastructure – we had an extensive shopping list of requirements," explains Phil Bones, IT Manager at SweetTree Home Care Services.

"The ability to configure call groups was essential as was the ability to monitor and record calls for reporting and compliance requirements. We also needed to be certain we could seamlessly deal with out-of-hours calls in the event of a disaster or system failure scenario," he explains.



## The Solution

SweetTree turned to Focus Group to help it find the right solution. The answer was a Mitel VoIP platform that gives SweetTree all the future-proofed features and functionality it needs, plus the capacity to cope with future growth and evolving service delivery needs.

"I now have full visibility and day-to-day management of our telephony system, and it's a doddle to add new users or set up call hunt groups. But the moment I need to address a new challenge, Focus Group instantly step into action with hands-on advice and support," confirms Phil.

**"We operate in the emotionally charged world of care support provision – our telephony simply has to work. We know we can trust Focus Group to ensure that happens. Whatever the requirement, they always deliver."**

Phil Bones,  
SweetTree Care Home Services

From enabling hot-desking to initiating a disaster recovery plan that features backup lines and inbound services that keeps vital lines open for staff and service users, Focus Group has helped SweetTree gain the control it needs to make its workforce more productive and effective.

That includes, initiating powerful management reporting that evaluates the effectiveness of call routing schemes and, appraises the optimal workforce shift numbers required to cope with call volumes at every hour of every day of the year.

"We operate under strict SLAs that require explicit monitoring of our service quality and operational performance. Today we can instantly generate reports for Councils or NHS bodies showing how quickly we've responded to incoming service user calls – for example – and provide call recordings if required," continues Phil.

"We're also using insights generated by the system to undertake continuous workforce optimisation and identify call centre bottlenecks that lead to extended call wait times – ensuring we've got the right people, in the right place, at the right time."

## The Results

Today, the organisation's staff can instantly tell which colleagues are in the office or out in the field, thanks to presence technology, and toggle their communications to follow them from the desktop to the field.

"We've empowered our people with the latest voice telephony that enables them to work on the move, get messages and stay connected with colleagues, the wider social and care community, and of course, clients," says Phil.

Focus Group has played a key role in helping SweetTree evolve its communications infrastructure. So much so, that today Focus now also looks after the organisation's data circuits and mobile phone agreements.

"Alongside responding fast to our every need – whether that's advising us on the right solution or providing tech support – Focus Group has helped us streamline our operations. Most importantly, we now get a simplified single bill for all our communication services. Whether it's initiating a new handset and SIM for an employee or dealing with BT to get a new lease line installed, I know I can depend on Focus to make things happen – and make my job easier," says Phil.

It's this commitment to care and attention to every little detail that's made for a lasting and deeper relationship with Focus Group, as Phil explains. "The Account Team at Focus add a huge amount of value to the way our organisation operates. They totally understand how we work and always give us highly personalised yet totally professional service – I know that within minutes of talking to them, things will start to happen and that they're working hard on our behalf to find the best solution to any challenge I bring to them."

