London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust

Case Study

Northwick Park Hospital is a major NHS hospital situated in Harrow, North West London, managed by the London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust.

The Challenge

The lifts within the hospital are connected to the fire alarm. As a fire safety precaution, a fire event will send a signal to the lifts to travel to ground level. This will also happen when a false fire event triggers the alarm.

A series of six sub-terranean undercrofts are used for service distribution, including steam. Steam is a common cause of unwanted fire alarm activations, as it has characteristics of a real fire. Steam is distributed using pipes, which transfer the steam at high-pressure. There is always the possibility that leaks will occur, which is what began to happen at Northwick Park Hospital.

Summary

ICU COVID-19 patient transfers were at risk due to lifts being grounded following steam leaks activating the fire alarm system. Using Drax 360's software, Northwick Park could quickly identify and isolate the detector(s) which had activated.

The Challenge

When detection in the undercrofts activated following a steam leak, it was extremely difficult to determine exactly where this was happening, creating long delays and the critical lifts remained grounded.

The Solution

Using Drax 360's AMX, engineers can rapidly investigate the event. Custom buttons were added, and following confirmation of a false alarm, the device can be disabled, allowing the lift to be used once more.

The Results

Without this in place, there was a real risk that patients would either be seriously delayed in their transfer, or, would have to be taken via a different route, putting other patients and staff at risk.

> We approached Drax 360, our incumbent contractor, for a solution. What they have provided has reduced the risk considerably and gives us scope to incorporate additional cause and effects for other scenarios going forward.

John O'Keefe
Head of Operational Estates

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The Solution

For many years, Drax 360 have been developing a specialist critical alarm management software solution, AMX. AMX is used to centralise & distribute critical alarms from multiple systems, including fire alarms.

Read more about AMX

Using AMX, our engineers were able to create maps of the six undercrofts, overlaying the position of all the fire detection equipment. Interfacing this with the fire alarm system(s), it was possible to programme AMX to raise a detailed alarm in three locations.

The alarms are audible, have detailed text, and provide automatic floorplan/map pop-ups. This ensures that everyone viewing the alarm event has a full understanding of what has activated, and crucially, where it has activated.

Using the graphical interface, Northwick Park Hospital engineers can rapidly investigate the event. Custom buttons were added to AMX, and following confirmation of a false alarm, AMX is used to disable the device, allowing the lift to be used once more.

The Results

Patient safety is paramount to Northwick Park Hospital staff. The implemented solution ensured that COVID-19 patients could be safely transferred, via a specific route (and lift). Without this in place, there was a real risk that patients would either be seriously delayed in their transfer, or would have to be taken via a different route, putting other patients and staff at risk.

25+

Years on site at NWP

2 days

Time to implement changes

What Northwick Park Hospital had to say about us.

"Although rare, fire alarms activated due to steam leaks had the potential to disrupt the designated Covid-19 patient pathway. This was already on our risk register, but due to the requirement to have specific routes and lifts to ensure we kept Covid-19 and non Covid-19 patients separated the risk level increased.

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John O'Keefe
Head of Operational Estates

£2.3K
Total project cost

Meet one of our fully qualified and certified engineers

Drax clients provide me with opportunity to work on many different systems in a range of environments – no two days are ever the same!

Glenn Creighton

Fire Alarm Technician

View Linkedin profile

Glenn has been working with Drax 360 for 15 years having joined the company in 2006. Having worked for a Drax Technology Partner previously he has over 20 years' experience working on Drax software. He has vast experience with analogue equipment though to IP based alarm monitoring equipment.

Over the years he has worked on many fire alarm manufacturer products including Advanced, Gent, Kentec, Morley & VESDA in many ranging industries such as airports, hospitals, universities, prisons, shopping centres, offices & residential premises.

Glenn says, "I have a passion for technology and have found that Drax 360 are at the forefront of this. I have enjoyed working on many large scale projects satisfying clients requirements of collating & displaying critical alarms from multiple remote sites back to a central point.".

DRAX360

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If you need advice or a quotation on your latest project one of our team would be happy to assist. Click the link below to book a call or site visit with one of our team.

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