

# Enhanced control, robust security, and more efficient IT service delivery.



## Background

The North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS) provides consultancy, products, and services to over 25,000 NHS General Practitioners in the North East of England, North Yorkshire, York, and Derbyshire. NECS delivers these services through NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and supports critical aspects such as ICT services, procurement, application hosting, and data security for general practices (GP's) across the UK.



## Challenge

NECS faced a significant challenge in managing IT infrastructure for a widely dispersed client base, including 750 GP practices. Ensuring robust network security and device control was crucial, as any compromise in IT services could disrupt mission-critical healthcare operations. However, physical IT support was impractical given the geographic spread. Additional challenges were posed by devices that were not managed by NECS or devices that were out of support but still connected to their network, risking their service's robustness, resilience, and data security.

"With such a geographically disparate client base, we needed an efficient way of managing network control, security and access across the whole of our estate. Forfusion provided the technical expertise to successfully implement the outcome we were looking for."

**Graham Tye**  
Head of ICT Infrastructure, NECS



## Solution

NECS partnered with Forfusion to implement Cisco Identity Services Engine (ISE). This next-generation platform enabled NECS to establish a robust framework for access control, authentication, device identification, and policy enforcement across their extensive network.

This solution provided the necessary tools to protect their network perimeter remotely, ensuring that only authorised and compliant devices could access critical healthcare systems.

The deployment of Cisco ISE not only strengthened NECS's security posture but also streamlined the management of their geographically dispersed IT infrastructure, ultimately contributing to the delivery of uninterrupted and secure IT services to healthcare providers across the region.



## Results

By controlling access and ensuring device compliance, NECS improved the robustness and resilience of their services while safeguarding data integrity. This strategic upgrade provided peace of mind for both NECS and their service users.

- **Enhanced Network Security – Cisco ISE** blocked unauthorised devices, ensuring only compliant devices could access critical healthcare systems.
- **Streamlined IT Management –** Enabled efficient remote access control and policy enforcement across 750 GP practices.
- **Uninterrupted IT Service Delivery –** Ensured continuous and secure IT services for healthcare providers across the region.

"Having had experience in a previous role of the operational issues that can occur when ISE is set up incorrectly, I was very aware of the risks of poor design..... with poor set-up, there's a risk of locking out legitimate users, which could raise a clinical risk in a clinical setting. Forfusion were essential in making sure we deployed ISE safely."

**Graham Tye**  
Head of ICT Infrastructure, NECS

**The result:** Cisco ISE enhances network security by blocking unauthorised devices and outdated equipment while enabling easy expansion to new locations.



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