NHS Digital splash over £10m on remote working devices

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NHS Digital, the national provider of IT systems and data for the health and social care sector in the UK, has splashed out over £10 million on remote working devices to assist with remote working over the pandemic.

The data, retrieved by the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and analysed by the Parliament Street think tank, observed the number of laptops, tablets, and mobile phones purchased by NHS Digital over the past five years as well as the average cost per device.

During the height of the pandemic, between November 2019 and October 2021, NHS Digital purchased 7,767 electronic devices for £5,367,245, accounting for 53 per cent of the device spend over the past five years.

Over half of the devices purchased were laptops (56.5 per cent), with mobile phones making up 5,548 of the devices (42.7 per cent). Only 89 tablets were purchased over the five-year period.

Achi Lewis, Area VP EMEA for Absolute Software, commented:

“With the advent of a work-from-anywhere world, large organisations like NHS Digital should be commended for their investment in devices to allow staff and patients to connect no matter where they are. Particularly during the pandemic, the adoption of remote technology has become the most favourable working model and the investment in technology for staff will comprise part of the network infrastructure for businesses for many years to come.”

“Alongside devices, it is important that organisations also consider the cybersecurity implications of remote working, ensuring staff have been properly trained to detect and report threats, leveraging automated technology to block attacks, and provide centralised IT teams visibility into suspicious activity on a network.”

“Connecting to an organisation’s network, using Zero Trust Network Access (ZTNA) for example, enables secure access for staff with each connection authorised on a context-based basis as opposed to an ‘all-or-nothing’ approach through legacy VPN systems. This provides visibility for IT teams, alerting them to suspicious activity on certain applications or devices and allowing them to shut off, or freeze, compromised devices to prevent further network damage.”

The news comes after Advanced, a software supplier for the NHS, was struck by a major ransomware attack earlier this year, compromising patient data, with the effects still being felt three months on.

About the Parliament Street think tank

Parliament Street is an innovative think tank dedicated to creating a community of ideas. They aim to give members a high return on involvement through participation.

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