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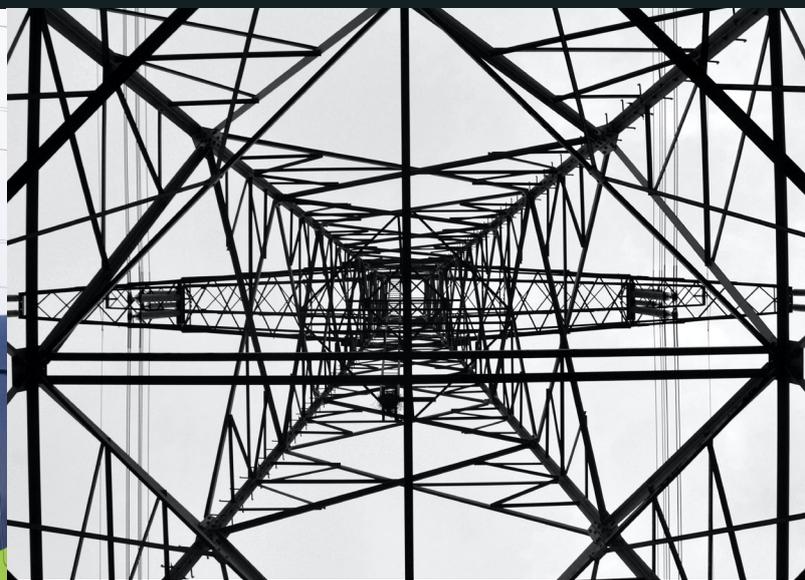
Electricity North West Services versus Lockdown

Case Study

" The speed of reaction really mattered to us. We made an overnight decision to act, and the very next day the triopsis team was on it."

Paul Wild, Operations Manager
Electricity North West Services

The world we live in has never been immune to catastrophe, but few events have hit as rapidly and with such impact as the spread of COVID-19. As a global health crisis, the pandemic has brought many human tragedies in its wake, but it has also turned the everyday world of work and business upside down.

Electricity North West Services is a company that provides services that help keep households and businesses connected to the electricity they need. It isn't unique in having had its regular activities disrupted by the nationwide lockdown, but its foresight and rapid reaction has helped it to limit some of the damage.

As the global situation developed throughout the first three months of 2020, Electricity North West Services were quick to identify that there were serious problems ahead, and triopsis was able to support them as they took urgent action in response.

▶ The challenge

As a company involved in the ongoing roll-out of smart meters — often requiring access to people's homes to replace the 'cut-out' fuse — the prospect of lockdown conditions spelt trouble for Electricity North West Services. The company's Operations Manager, Paul Wild, knew it was an issue that needed to be urgently addressed. Wild explains:

" If the cut-out needs work doing on it to allow a new smart meter to be fitted, that comes through to us as a 'data flow',"

Under normal circumstances, Electricity North West Services schedules an appointment with the property owner, then visits the property and carries out the necessary work. But without any access to properties due to the impending lockdown, the routine work would inevitably grind to a halt.

" As the COVID-19 situation developed," says Wild, "it became apparent very quickly that we were going to be severely impacted. It was going to restrict our cashflow and the work coming in, and we identified that we needed to diversify quickly.

To do that, we needed to keep a good record of how COVID-19 had impacted us. We'd need a record of any new workstreams that were coming online, and we needed to know how we were going to track that work and close it within our IT system. We knew our existing system wasn't going to do what we needed it to do, so I made a phone call to triopsis to find out how they could help."

▶ Our solution

Electricity North West Services was already using triopsis to manage its workforce. Wild says:

❝ Everything we do is wholly managed through triopsis,"

Past experience told him that the company would be able to grasp the problem.

❝ The way triopsis has always interfaced with us as a company is brilliant, and because they understand how we operate, they could identify some of the changes we needed. Thanks to their knowledge of us as a client, they could very easily put us a package together, making recommendations as to how we could change the existing IT solution and adapt it to suit what we needed to do. They also gave us ideas about additional benefits that we'd not even considered."

Triopsis is a 'no code' platform that can be easily altered without going through an extended development process, and with a plan in place, the team was able to act at speed. It took just five days — from signing off the plan and budget to completing the roll-out — for the system to be adapted to the new COVID-19 reality.

❝ Some changes were done immediately, and the rest was done within days. It was faultless."

▶ The triopsis difference

COVID-19 has had an impact far beyond the emergency's most pressing health concerns, and the harm to business and the economy has been severe. But thanks to Paul Wild's foresight and the speed with which he and his team reacted to the developing situation, Electricity North West Services has been able to mitigate some of the potential effects.

Because the company acted promptly even before the lockdown came into effect, they have been able to reallocate resources efficiently rather than struggling to respond too late. The fact that they were already benefiting from the paperless triopsis workforce management system certainly helped. Wild explains:

❝ Because we are paperless, we could transfer work in order to maximise the output of particular teams. Where we might previously have had 20 to 25 teams working on site, we could condense that down to around 15 teams, and reallocate work without moving any paperwork. That was a huge benefit. The other ten teams could then be quickly deployed onto other workstreams that were captured and recorded through triopsis thanks to the changes that were made.

It's been massively reassuring to know there's a company that will work with us, that understands our needs, and that can be trusted to deliver a timely solution at the right cost. The situation could have had a very significant impact on our cashflow, turnover, and everything to do with running the business. But it was very quickly mitigated by the speed and adaptability that triopsis gave us."

▶ Facing the future

While the government-imposed lockdown remains under review, the longer-term situation in the UK and around the world is uncertain. The phased lifting of restrictions is one possibility, but the nature of everyday life after the virus remains unknown.

Electricity North West Services, however, remains ready to respond to what comes next, supported by the detailed data that triopsis delivers about the process so far. Wild says:

> All the data about how COVID-19 has impacted us is there. What we did, how our decisions affected us financially — we can look back on it all through triopsis and know the data is accurate. We're planning for the future but we need to understand what's happened in the past, and triopsis lets us do that.
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> At the moment, the system is robust and clever enough to do everything we need, but we also need to be looking two or three months in advance. So we're working with triopsis on what the return to 'business as usual' might look like — whenever that might be."

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