

De Zande Community Institution



Customer

- De Zande Community Institution, The Flemish Government's Agency for Youth Welfare, Belgium

Industry

- Healthcare

Challenges

- Wireless communications across the three separate campuses
- Migration to an efficient alarming system

Solution

- An NEC telecommunications system connecting the three campuses
- Integrated MobiCall alarmserver supporting all messaging
- Alarming and distress signals sent to cordless handsets
- Robust and ergonomic NEC I755 DECT handsets

Results

- Increased safety on the campuses
- Better collaboration and communication between the three campuses
- Easy to configure MobiCall server and subscribe handsets
- All staff reachable at all times
- Immediate assistance in emergency situations
- Single number system across all campuses

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“Colleagues can be contacted at all times on their DECT handsets, and they also feel safer thanks to the MobiCall alarm system, which is activated with a press of a button on the device,” says Erik De Corte, Assistant Director and Technology and Security Coordinator, De Zande Community Institution.

Challenges

De Zande Community Institution has three sites in the north west of Belgium. Expansion of the institution with the third campus located in Wingene, in addition to the existing campuses in Ruiselede and Beernem, was the main reason to modernize the installed and dated telephone exchanges.

Good communication is essential on De Zande campuses, which house young people with problematic situations at home. It's crucial that all staff members can be contacted anytime anywhere on site in order to ensure continuous, good and safe operations. Staff therefore carry cordless telephone handsets with them at all times, also during the various outdoor activities. This means the devices need to be robust and shock-proof too.

Above all, personnel safety needs to be guaranteed at all times. It's important that all employees, often working across different departments, can quickly make each other aware of possible problems in emergency situations, so that appropriate assistance can be provided quickly.

De Zande's expansion with a third campus in Wingene forced it to review its existing telephony systems and underlying network. The institution decided to replace its two existing exchanges with one single, central telecommunications system for all three sites.

Because of the size of the institution's sites it was very important to install a powerful and robust system. The system also definitely had to be user-friendly as members of personnel not always have technical backgrounds.

Solution

De Zande Community Institution teamed up with NEC. "There are historical reasons for this choice. We chose Philips as a partner thirty years ago, and we've remained a loyal customer, also throughout the gradual takeover by NEC," explains Erik De Corte. "A tender for our telecommunications system has since led to a framework contract between NEC and the Flemish government, which we are also benefitting from."

De Zande opted for the robust NEC DECT I755 as the standard cordless device for its personnel: shock-proof handsets, very useful for the various staff activities. The DECT handsets also improve collaboration between the various campuses: "We used to communicate mainly to settle administrative affairs," says De Corte. "Now we have a single number system across all our campuses, all connected via fibre optic cabling. No external lines for the separate campuses are used anymore, which saves costs on phone calls between campuses. A unique, closed number plan was created for the three sites, all with the same prefix. The sister sites make external calls via internal connections through the main site, resulting in a significant cost reduction on network line lease. Now it is also possible to have an around the clock, single, central telephone reception (Auto-Attendant). The multi-site DECT facility furthermore improves access to employees operating at all three sites."

With the DECT handsets the youths' and employees' safety is also improved. De Zande also implemented MobiCall, a modular and scalable alarm server, fully integrated with the NEC communication system. Erik De Corte: "We have to protect the youths daily against themselves and against others. This is why we attach so much importance to security. Anyone can send a distress signal, by calling a number or pressing the DECT alarm button."

MobiCall then sends the signal to other members of staff, who get an alarm and a message on their device. The first two people responding to the alarm can hear what's happening at the other end from where the call was initiated.

"In contrast to our previous system, we can now fully configure the alarm server to satisfy our requirements. You can for example contact external organizations and add new numbers," says De Corte.

Results

Communication has become simpler for its personnel since switching to the new NEC telephony solution.

"Our employees can now be contacted at all times, and communication between sites runs very smoothly. De Zande is also saving a lot of money thanks to the single number system."

Security has improved too. Erik De Corte: "One member of staff pressed the red button on the DECT handset by mistake. We noticed that everyone sprang into action and all procedures were followed to the letter. Looking at this as an exercise drill, we can now be 100% confident that the system works as it's supposed to. Members of staff feel calm, and that's a big bonus in our sector."

"The collaboration between NEC, system integrator RealDolmen and our institution has been excellent. We chose the devices and the alarm server in consultation with our ICT partner. Everything was prepared in great detail: the installation in Ruiselede only took ten days, for example. The switch over to using the new numbers also went very smoothly," concludes Erik De Corte.

About

The community institutions provide support to young people with problematic situations at home or who have committed a crime. De Zande Community Institution has three sites in the north west of Belgium; campuses in Beernem (closed campus for girls) and Ruiselede (semi-open / semi-closed campus for boys) and as per mid 2014 a third campus in Wingene.

For further information please contact your local NEC representative or:

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