

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



Releasing more time for patient care by simplifying access to clinical data

Overview

The need

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (HHFT) wanted to free its clinicians from the time-consuming paperwork required for processes such as patient handovers and e-discharge summaries.

The solution

By creating a solution that uses IBM software to unite access to more than 30 clinical systems, HHFT has given clinicians an easier way to report and review patient data throughout the entire clinical journey.

The benefit

Saves time for clinicians, helping them focus on patient care. Provides a complete view of patient activity and boosts data quality, enhancing both clinical and corporate decision-making.

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (HHFT) provides healthcare services to a population of approximately 600,000 across the Hampshire and West Berkshire regions in the United Kingdom. Offering emergency, inpatient and outpatient care through a number of hospital locations, HHFT is also a centre for pioneering treatments for urology and breast cancer patients, provides specialist services for liver and colorectal cancer, and is a national surgical centre for a rare cancer, pseudomyxoma peritonei.

Giving time back to patient care

HHFT recognises that every minute a clinician spends on administration is potentially a minute taken away from patient care. The Trust set out to give its medical staff a simpler, faster way to access and input patient data – but first, it needed to overcome the lack of integration between its various clinical systems.

Andy Thomas, CIO at HHFT, explains, “Our hospitals rely on more than 30 clinical systems, such as those managing radiography, patient notes and dispensation of drugs. Until recently, a clinician treating a patient would have needed to access a number of different systems, spreadsheets and documents to gain an overview of the patient’s stay at the hospital or to add essential data about the care they were giving. These processes would take up valuable time that could be better spent on seeing patients and making clinical decisions.”



By creating a single, trusted view of each patient’s clinical journey through the hospital, HHFT is seeing a positive impact on decision-making throughout the organization. “Today, both clinical and corporate-level decisions are based on the same data, which is now up to twice as accurate as it was before,” says Andy Thomas, CIO at HHFT.

Solution components

Software

- IBM® Blueworks Live™
- IBM Forms
- IBM Integration Bus

IBM Business Partner

- ThinkShield
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This manual approach was a particular burden when handing over patients at the end of a doctor's shift, for example, or moving a patient from one department to another. Since the handover process often involved passing on data in unsecured formats such as Word documents and spreadsheets, it also introduced the risk of error or data loss.

Taking a different view

HHFT decided that the answer to these challenges lay in the creation of an electronic patient records (EPR) solution. The CIO, a newly appointed Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO), and a steering group of 20 clinicians worked together with IBM Business Partner ThinkShield to integrate the 30 clinical systems and provide access to them via a single web-based user interface.

“The first step was to move from our legacy eGate integration platform to IBM® Integration Bus,” states Andy Thomas. “This was where ThinkShield really demonstrated their expertise with NHS integration technologies: the migration was completed within a matter of weeks, and without any serious issues.”

Next, the trust began capturing, modelling and redesigning its clinical processes using IBM Blueworks Live. This user-friendly process modelling tool helped all the HHFT stakeholders understand and agree on how the new processes should work once the EPR solution itself had been developed.

Finally, the project team used a combination of open source software to create the web-based EPR solution, and set an agile six-week release cycle to continuously deliver and enhance its functionality.

Healing the breach between clinical and corporate data

“Before EPR, there was a disconnect between the clinical systems on the ground and our corporate-level information – and our corporate data quality was quite low as a result,” says Andy Thomas.

“The only solution was to give our medical staff an incentive to provide the data our corporate decision-makers need, and that's why the EPR solution is such a big win for both sides. Clinicians are keen to input accurate data because it helps them improve patient care, and all this accurate data now automatically flows up to the corporate level for our management to use as well.”

“Integrating our clinical systems has streamlined our patient handover and e-discharge processes – helping us cut admin and improve the quality of care.”

— Andy Thomas, CIO, Hampshire Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Introducing elements of automation

As part of the EPR project, HHFT used IBM Forms Experience Builder to create a custom, self-service web form application that optimises the delivery of the e-discharge summaries that are issued to patients upon their discharge from the hospital.

Andy Thomas elaborates: “E-discharge summaries are important to patients because they explain the treatment they have received and are also passed onto their GP. They are also important to us, because they ensure that we receive funding for each patient’s treatment. With IBM Forms Experience Builder, we can easily and accurately pre-populate the majority of the e-discharge form with data from our clinical systems, which saves on administration for clinicians and speeds up the discharge process for patients.”

HHFT is now also using IBM Forms to help automate many of the other forms used in its hospitals. This will help the trust move forwards towards the UK government’s ambitious target of a paperless NHS by 2018.

Everything in one place

Clinicians can now enter and retrieve patient data through a single web-based solution, and gain a comprehensive view of the patient’s clinical journey with a few clicks of the mouse.

“The EPR solution helps us give more time back to patient care,” comments Andy Thomas. “Since freeing our clinicians from day-to-day maintenance of Word documents and spreadsheets, we have seen a true shift in attitudes. They are motivated to keep data up-to-date, and are equipped with the information they need to take a more holistic view when treating patients.”

He continues, “Whether they are handing over patients to another clinician’s care, or reviewing the work of more junior clinical staff, the solution gives our clinicians confidence that they can gain accurate information about all their patients at all times.”

Seamless integration in action

The solution was really put to work when HHFT acquired the Winchester NHS Trust, playing a key role in easing the merger between the two organisations. Andy Thomas explains, “Before we deployed IBM Integration Bus, integrating Winchester into the Trust would have been a much more painful process. Because we can now synchronise patient IDs across all systems, we were able to rapidly and efficiently harmonise patient information across all our hospitals.”

He concludes, “By making it possible for our clinicians and administrators to work more efficiently and effectively, the IBM solutions help us make the right decisions at both the clinical and the corporate level, ensuring the best use of our resources and ultimately delivering the best possible care to patients.”

About ThinkShield

ThinkShield is an agile IT Healthcare Services and Solutions company, with many years' experience of delivering successful projects in busy hospitals. The company's core skills are integration, application development, mobile development and support.

To learn more about services from ThinkShield, please visit www.thinkshield.com



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PO Box 41
North Harbour
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO6 3AU

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