



Case study: Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

Enhancing technological availability and service quality

A flexible and specialised partnership to provide the Trust with access to innovative medical technology and services

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The customer

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust is an integrated care organisation, providing care in the community at over 20 health centres and clinics as well as services such as district and school nursing. Bolton NHS Foundation Trust also provide services at the Royal Bolton Hospital.



The challenge

In the NHS system, demand for radiological imaging has been increasing overall by about five percent every year. The rise comes from the ageing of society and from an increased reliance on advanced imaging equipment.

Emancipated patients influence physicians' decisions regarding imaging requests. "These expectations are controlled by ethics and appropriateness of ionizing procedures", says Catherine Walsh, Radiology Services Manager.

"For some modalities such as MRI and ultrasound, the rise in demand has been exponential."

"In the light of these trends, we have had to take on additional staff and expand hours, sweating the equipment assets", explains Catherine Walsh.

Government drivers and clinicians have developed new treatment pathways such as for vascular and surgical services which aim to create specialist centres. This centralisation has a knock-on effect on departments such as Radiology because some devices may no longer be required in general hospitals. This in turn impacts on future equipment planning for hospitals such as Bolton.

On the other hand, new options may arise, due to changing disease patterns and treatment guidelines. In this changing healthcare landscape, uptime is essential. "We cannot afford to leave equipment out of service. Patient throughput is at a maximum, and targets for delivery of care are steep", adds Catherine Walsh.

However, the cost of replacing radiology assets can be a challenge for Trusts to anticipate, and manage.

Catherine Walsh explains, "Radiology is the most expensive department in the hospital. Traditional approaches are problematic unless you have a very robust equipment replacement programme which not many hospitals have. All a Trust's annual capital budget can be swallowed up by the replacement of a single room."



The solution

In 2010, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust and Siemens Healthineers entered a 15-year Value Partnership.

“We wanted a company with a longevity and standing which made it appear robust enough to withstand financial pressures, and with the technological and manufacturing acumen required for updating equipment”, says Catherine Walsh. “It needed to provide well organised and efficient processes.”

The partnership includes the updating, maintaining and supporting of devices, alongside a de-scoping clause allowing for flexibility in the number of assets.

“Siemens Healthineers came up with a detailed plan for our changes. With the staged installation our transition turned out to be very smooth.” According to Catherine Walsh, the applications training was geared well towards the department needs

Additional potentials for improvement are being identified and realised through the development and installation of a Radiology Performance Management Service (RPMS).

The RPMS helps to analyse and assess operational Radiology workflows combined with a monitoring dashboard to illustrate key operational metrics, like throughput, turnaround times and workload.

The RPMS development was based on both an on-site analysis, and an interview phase that resulted in a visualisation of the current operational Radiology workflow. This additionally highlighted the current improvement potential based on the agreed quantification values.



The results

“I am incredibly proud of this contract and the massive difference it has made to the department. It has significantly improved operational efficiency and the quality of patient care.”

Catherine Walsh
Radiology Services Manager, Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

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Summary

The 15-year Value Partnership between Siemens Healthineers and Bolton NHS Foundation Trust was established to support equipment availability and technological appropriateness by replacing the ageing diagnostic radiology equipment portfolio at the Trust.

To boost quality of care, the Value Partnership has offered robust planning for radiology services through the development and installation of a Radiology Performance Management Service (RPMS).

Catherine Walsh summarises, “I would never go back to the time before the partnership. It is brilliant. We do not need to renegotiate service contracts every year, another advantage is that our Trust today is attractive to new staff because they know we have up to date equipment.”

The Value Partnership has had a significant impact on clinical, operational and financial aspects of service delivery.

The Value Partnership has helped Bolton NHS Foundation Trust:



Improve patient satisfaction



Improve staff retention



Create financial transparency and stability



Realise long-term clinical service strategy



Keep medical equipment up to date

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