

**Bolton NHS
Foundation
Trust (UK)**



**A case study in
smooth
planning
and efficient operations**

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust experiences financial transparency of top service quality

The Bolton NHS Foundation Trust opted for a game-changing contract to ensure availability and technological appropriateness by replacing its ageing diagnostic radiology equipment portfolio. Since 2010, Siemens Healthineers has helped the Trust achieve these aims as well as offering financial transparency and robust planning to boost quality of care.





Asset Management Programs and the Managed Equipment Service (MES)

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust's MES contract was developed from Siemens Healthineers' Asset Management portfolio. This tailored program provides a flexible and specialized partnership to provide hospitals with access to innovative medical technology and services. This healthcare partnership typically covers a period of 10 to 25 years (sometimes longer), for a fixed annual fee.

Before Managed Equipment Services

When Catherine Walsh joined Bolton NHS Foundation Trust in 2005 as Radiology Services Manager, it was apparent to her that a new approach was required to bring their diagnostic equipment up to date. According to her,

"We needed a drastic change to take our department into the 21st century."

Rising demand and trends

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. "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 the Radiology Services Manager. Overall the only thing that is constant in the NHS is change. "Governments have kept reinventing how we should deliver care under a mounting cost pressure for the tax-based service which has expanded enormously from its inception."

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.

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 the Radiology Services Manager.

Negotiating change

Indeed, Catherine Walsh's ideas were game changing. The Trust hadn't developed an MES scheme before, and it took quite some time to get approval for the contract which is now in place. Its length and value were also unheard of at the Trust at the time. Whereas other Trusts include a wider range of equipment, Bolton only needed to address Radiology.

"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 of a Trust's annual capital budget can be swallowed up by the replacement of a single room.

The only sensible way forward is to streamline availability of modern equipment in an MES contract with a reliable partner."



About Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

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. They also provide services at the Royal Bolton Hospital.

“We formed a project group which involved the Divisional Manager and the Director of Procurement and the clinical lead for Radiology.”

“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 Trust signed the 15-year MES contract with Siemens Healthineers in 2010. “Vendor-neutrality is a key component. However, we find that we keep choosing Siemens Healthineers equipment for the ‘big ticket’ items.” The MES contract on updating, maintaining and supporting devices includes a de-scoping clause allowing for flexibility in the number of assets. Importantly we negotiated a ‘banding’ platform which allows us to maintain technological equivalence, underlines Catherine Walsh.

MES in everyday routine

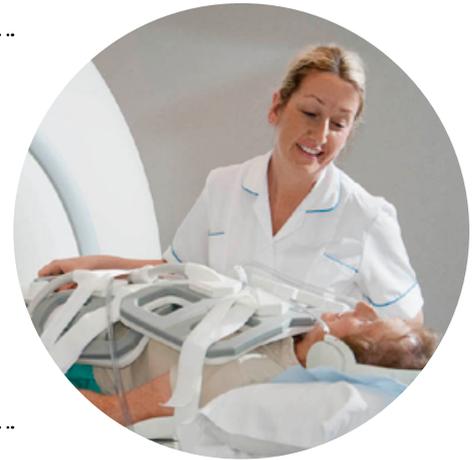
“Siemens Healthineers came up with a detailed plan for our changes. With the staged installation our transition turned out to be very smooth.” According to Catherine Walsh, the applications training was geared well towards the department needs.

“Today, there has been a clear embracement by staff. Staff members who were here in the times before the MES absolutely appreciate the difference – the equipment uptime is very good and complies with what we agreed in the contract, and people no longer fear breakdowns which could last for long periods because parts for the old devices were hard to come by. Any repairs today are carried out much faster by engineers either remotely or on site. We have an Investment Committee at which we regularly discuss replacements and maintenance activities.”

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 basis for the RPMS development was an on-site analysis and 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. As of March 2016 the RPMS has gone live at the customer site and helps the Radiology Manager to track operations.

The MES contract has helped Bolton to ...

- improve patient satisfaction
 - improve staff retention
 - create financial transparency and stability
 - realise its long-term clinical service strategy
 - keep their medical equipment up to date
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Conclusion

The Siemens Healthineers MES contract has been running for six years. Catherine Walsh is enthusiastic about the benefits it has brought to the department and the hospital. “Today, we don’t worry about equipment replacement, repairs or service. All these issues are resolved by Siemens Healthineers. There are regular payments in lieu of lump sums for investments and repairs. The finance department likes that because cost is predictable.”

“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.”

A personal view

“On a personal level, this MES contract has taken up several years of my life”, says Catherine Walsh.

“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. I do a lot of presentations describing the MES implementation, and feedback is really positive.”

The contract has had a major impact on clinical, operational and financial aspects of service delivery. “Although the contract may appear more costly compared to conventional approaches, benefits emerge when you look at it in the long term. The challenge in demonstrating these benefits is that most hospitals look at a 5-year plan for investment, maintenance, repair and depreciation and not at a fifteen or twenty year plan”, explains Catherine Walsh.

Perspectives

If I had the opportunity to go through this project again, I would include the Estate works that go with each replacement. At that time, there was no time to calculate the figures for each room and negotiate this aspect.

Furthermore, regional strategic plans will influence future activities.

“However the contract is flexible enough to be able to respond whatever the future may bring.”

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The statements by Siemens' customers described herein are based on results that were achieved in the customer's unique setting. Since there is no "typical" hospital and many variables exist (e.g., hospital size, case mix, level of IT adoption) there can be no guarantee that other customers will achieve the same results.

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