

IMPROVING ACCESS TO LOCAL SERVICES



The Darzi vision, as laid out in the NHS Next Stage Review focused on the need to improve access to services, providing patients with wider and more informed choices. The review identified the need to develop new Equitable Access Centres, colloquially known as Darzi Centres, in each PCT to support the health requirements of the local community.



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Linda Ward, Practice Manager

BACKGROUND

Lakeside Plus is a new Equitable Access Centre, providing GP and nurse led walk in services from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week, in the East Midlands. It is an innovative organisation, and in SystmOne, it has a pioneering IT system to support it. The centre is in Corby, an industrial town in Northamptonshire with the kind of health and social challenges normally associated with inner cities.

The centre opened on 1 December 2008. SystmOne was deployed within a very short timeframe. The system had to be up and running within six weeks of the decision to adopt it. CSC, as the Local Service Provider, worked closely with staff from the centre and Northamptonshire PCT (NHS Northamptonshire) in a closely knit team to deliver on time. Over fifty NHS staff now use the system, including GPs, nurses, and practitioners covering out of hours.

BENEFITS

Six months on from the implementation, the centre is recognising the benefits of SystmOne. Practice manager, Linda Ward, is delighted: “From a manager’s perspective, it’s really fantastic because it gives you functionality that you just don’t get on other systems – it’s fast and it gives you the information you want.”

Linda is particularly impressed with the reporting functionality. Generating reports is “simple, the run times are fantastic, it gives me the information I need.” QOF reporting, in particular, is “much easier than other systems.”

Another significant benefit is that SystmOne is a centrally hosted solution. There is a shared server, rather than an individual one at each site. This removes the headache of managing and updating local servers. Linda knows how much time and effort this saves from her experience at another practice: “Back-ups take ten hours every night, QOF takes another nine. You’re always backing up. Not having to keep the server on site is great.”

More generally, the system is very “intuitive” to use. “I like the appointments system. And the reception staff took to it right away.” This was particularly important as the centre had recruited several new administrative staff. Equally, from a clinical perspective, health-care professionals have enjoyed “SystmOne’s rich functionality and user friendliness,” says Dr Susan Wandsworth. The system minimizes the time clinical staff need to spend on administrative tasks, freeing them up to focus on patient care.

THE FUTURE OF INTEGRATED CARE

The partners responsible for the centre also run the Lakeside Surgery, one of the largest GP practices in East Midlands SHA. The surgery, although situated next door, currently uses a different IT system. Having been impressed with SystmOne’s functionality in the centre however, a decision has now been taken to migrate the 28,000 patient records from the Lakeside Surgery to SystmOne.

“We think the easiest thing is to make it all one system so they can all talk to each other,” says Dr Wandsworth. “It currently takes a lot of time to throughput

RESULTS

BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

the patients. One record is really what's required." Linda Ward, practice manager agrees: "I can't wait until the whole practice moves across to SystemOne." Having one system will allow both the surgery and the centre to fully reap the benefits of sharing electronic patient records.

From a wider perspective, selecting SystemOne is helping the local health community to expand the coverage of shared patient records. Dave Marsden, CIO for the East Midlands SHA, recognises the broader

benefits of providing "information from a full patient record at the point of care delivery for everyone who has an interest in patient care."

Patients from any GP practice using SystemOne attending the centre have their full record available. Similarly, any information entered at the centre can be accessed by GPs when the patient returns to their practice, or when they are treated in any other care setting using SystemOne. This is the essence of integrated care.

"Information from a full patient record at the point of care delivery for everyone who has an interest in patient care."

Dave Marsden, CIO, East Midlands SHA



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