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Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Intelligent hospital asset tracking

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Stuart Barton

DSFS Specialist Clinical Engineer and Equipment Library Team Leader
Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Challenge:

Automating asset tracking to improve trust-wide visibility for Derbyshire Support and Facilities Service (DSFS)

With vast amounts of essential equipment and no technology to keep track of it, the DSFS Clinical Engineering team at Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust knew they needed to find a different approach.

The Trust's inventory of medical devices is held on a central database, with all assets logged manually. In order to carry out essential maintenance, staff needed to walk wards and departments to locate equipment. This was time and resource intensive and, in some instances, it would take longer to locate the equipment than the time required to carry out maintenance on it.

With equipment moving constantly and frequently going missing, the team wanted to automate the process to deliver a better patient experience and greater efficiencies through improved asset visibility.

Specifically, DSFS aimed to:

- Provide a safer patient environment – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Help the trust locate critical equipment, aid patient care and better facilitate patient flow – especially during periods of high demand
- Improve the quality of the service they provide to Chesterfield Royal Hospital
- Identify where equipment is immediately to help facilitate the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) alerts and manufacturers upgrades
- Manage equipment on hire, loan and rental better



Solution:

Implement Idox's largest Radio Frequency ID network and expand its use during the outbreak of COVID-19

Based on their list of requirements, DSFS, in conjunction with the Trust, selected Idox as its preferred supplier to lead the rollout of iAssets – part of the iFit tracking and hospital management solution – which uses RFID technology to manage hospital assets, and provide a 360-degree view of their location at all times.

Once items are tagged, the hospital can use the system to monitor and review their movement, ensuring vital equipment is always there for patients, minimising the chance of missing critical assets.

Stuart Barton, DSFS Specialist Clinical Engineer and Equipment Library Team Leader at the Trust, said: "We had a lot of kit on site and didn't always know where it was – something that was raised in our latest Care Quality Commission inspection. The Idox technology has fundamentally changed how we manage our equipment, making it so much easier to locate items and for our engineers to perform planned preventative maintenance."

The ability to pinpoint equipment quickly is also proving particularly useful during the COVID-19 pandemic. "We've expanded our use of the RFID system to help with equipment distribution, including patient monitors, electrocardiogram recorders and defibrillators", explained Stuart.

"Due to extra areas being commissioned around the Trust, certain items had to be relocated to meet the clinical needs of those departments. They were tagged, meaning we can keep track and move them back to their original locations when needed, while ensuring thorough infection control processes are in place."

Outcome:

360-degree view of assets and better patient care

By implementing the iFit solution, the Trust have gained tighter control over equipment, have been able to streamline patient care and improve patient experience whilst saving a significant amount of time and money, leading to a more efficient service.

"With our old system, you could be walking around the wards for the best part of a day looking for equipment. Now we can find something in a matter of minutes, explains Stuart, it's made a huge difference with our equipment library too – staff can remotely access what we have and then retrieve it, rather than wasting their time walking somewhere only to find what they need isn't there."

The technology has been instrumental in helping the Trust avoid cross-contamination when treating COVID-19 patients. The team know with pinpoint accuracy the equipment being used on those wards and can ensure the right infection control procedures are in place, should they need to be relocated.

Stuart concluded: "The top benefits it delivers for us daily are time savings, better critical maintenance processes and more importantly, improved patient care – which remains at the heart of everything we do."

Call us now on 0333 011 1200 or email marketing@idoxgroup.com to find out how Idox is helping NHS Trusts gain better visibility of their assets.

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