



Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust Case Study

Project:

To implement a centralized IWMS application to rapidly co-ordinate and control maintenance services and provide a single point of contact via the facilities helpdesk.

Objectives:

To support expansion of services over a wide geographic area, enabling the effective control of maintenance and improving communications with remote staff and customers.

Results:

Enhanced standards of patient care, through comprehensive workflow, task and lifecycle management and the centralization of business critical information, allowing the Trust to deliver optimum value to the community

Leveraging Technology to Support Foundation Trust Status

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust provides specialist mental health and learning disability services for people of all ages across Hampshire and its surrounding area. The Trust was established in 2001 and since that date has more than doubled in size, and now operates across 89 sites

Foundation Trust status offers a greater level of financial independence than previous healthcare models, allowing Trusts to take control and ownership over the provision and development of their services. They are able to develop contractual partnerships with third party organizations to provide a range of community-focused, readily accessible services.



Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust not only provides mental health services across the whole of Hampshire, but also delivers services to other NHS trusts in the South West of England.

The Trust's Works Department is responsible for ensuring the timely delivery of facilities and maintenance services to the Trust's 140 properties, as well as to the third party NHS institutions that they work with. Services are delivered by both in-house and third party contractors, covering a wide geographic region, often in remote areas. Many staff are field based, hence reliable communication and workforce tracking is key to delivering high quality facilities management services.

A Future-Proof IWMS for a Modern Healthcare Model

As the scope and geographic coverage of their services grew, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust required a centralized system that could rapidly co-ordinate and control maintenance to ensure the ongoing provision of high quality health services. The Trust had used a Unix-based system for over 20 years, which was no longer aligned with their current needs. Brian Ward, Senior Operations Manager explains: "We had been using our previous IWMS application since 1986, and it was no longer relevant to the needs of a Foundation Trust or our customers. Because of the diversity of our estate, and the requirements of the NHS Trusts we serve, we needed a system that could manage different types of workflow in a professional way. In addition, our previous system was a character based, menu driven system that had become somewhat unwieldy to use."

Prior to implementing QFM, maintenance requests and facilities staff were managed on a region-by-region basis. As an expanding organization, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust wanted to centralize the management of maintenance services by providing a single point of contact via a facilities helpdesk, as well as improve communications with remote engineers and their customer base. As Brian Ward states, "The new system needed to be flexible, expansive and have the ability to grow with the demands of the Trust and the services we provide."

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust had already invested significantly in the infrastructure for their helpdesk, including the installation of a new phone system. Ward comments:

“The transition to a centralised helpdesk marked a significant business change for us. It was critical we selected right software partner. We wanted to invest in a long term partnership.”

Following a tendering process, for which a dedicated system selection committee was established, QFM was shortlisted along with several other IWMS solutions. Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust undertook reference site visits with several of Service Works Global's clients, which as Brian Ward says "effectively demonstrated QFM's capacity to manage both internal staff & contractors. We were impressed with QFM's ability to support a busy helpdesk with a high volume of calls, and with the system's extensive reporting capabilities. QFM was one of the most customer focused systems that we saw, and we were confident it would allow us to manage our customers' expectations."



QFM was selected in late 2007; and went live the following spring, in conjunction with the launch of a new centralized helpdesk service, which included an electronic voice over IP telephone system and a single contact number. A phased approach was taken to the roll-out of QFM, with the system initially being used to manage service events only. During the first week alone, QFM enabled the Trust's helpdesk to successfully log and manage 250 service calls.

Efficiencies Achieved via Centralization

QFM now manages all reactive and planned maintenance events, from the smallest minor improvements to the largest capital projects. Preventative maintenance tasks and the management of resources are also controlled through QFM, ensuring that the Trust's Estates Department has full visibility and control of costs, performance and service delivery via one integrated system. All of Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust's facilities and estates performance reporting is driven from QFM's suite of over 200 reports. Since project launch, almost 20,000 jobs have been managed using QFM.

Alan Johnstone, Head of Estates and Capital at the Trust comments: "QFM allows us to effectively manage events from inception to completion, rather than simply tracking staff resources as we did previously. It has allowed us to dramatically improve our reaction time and speed of service. Our customer base is able to talk to someone and know that their issue will be dealt with promptly. To date, QFM has allowed us to successfully manage almost 20,000 facilities and maintenance jobs."

In addition, QFM's comprehensive event costing capabilities allows the Trust's Works Department to fully manage the cost elements associated with each event, as Alan Johnstone explains:

“QFM has transformed the speed in which we can invoice for services. We can be far more proactive in providing accurate information to our Finance department, who, in turn, is able to deliver more timely invoices to customers and drive revenue”

New Technologies

In February 2009, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust extended their use of QFM by deploying the system to their team of 40 field-based staff via mobile technology. QFM Mobile software allows the Trust's helpdesk to dispatch work to orders to their engineers and contractors, from QFM to a handheld device in real time. Field-based operatives are able to update details of the job on their mobile device, from notification through to completion, reducing the administrative load on the helpdesk. Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust will further take advantage of the latest technology, as they plan to roll out the Web-based version of QFM. This will enable hospital staff and customers to log maintenance requests through a simple, secure web interface at any time day or night. They are also investigating the possibility of integrating QFM with a number of third party applications, in order to deliver a complete solution to support facilities, space and document management.



QFM is an Integral Part of the Trust's Success

As NHS Trusts across the UK continue to consolidate, Estates Departments are under increasing pressures to rationalize processes, centralize information and save money. The collaboration between Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust and Service Works Group demonstrates how technology can be leveraged to streamline facilities and estates operations, enhancing the standard of patient care and delivering optimum value to the community. Alan Johnstone concludes: "As a Foundation Trust, we are dedicated to delivering optimum mental health services to the people of Hampshire. We pride ourselves in being a customer focused organization and QFM is a critical part of our business operations. The system has dramatically improved communications between the Estates Department and our hospitals and clinics across the region. It drives revenue and, more importantly, ensures the ongoing provision of high quality health services to which we are committed."

