CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACES

IMPROVING PORTERING SERVICES AT NORTH DEVON DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Part of the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, North Devon District Hospital (NDDH) is located in Barnstaple, Devon and provides a full range of acute services, including an emergency department, critical care, end of life care, general medicine, maternity, cancerservices, outpatients, and children and young people services.

Sodexo has provided soft services to North Devon District Hospital since 1997, during which time a strong relationship has developed.

As the demands on the portering service and patient needs changed over the years, we decided to respond by updating our portering management system with the latest technology and solutions available.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES

The current portering management system required all portering requests to be reported to the central helpdesk by phone.There were also several departments that had dedicated porters whoreported their own tasks to the helpdesk when they started them. This ran the risk of tasks not being reported during peak periods of activity.

Once reported, tasks needed to be **manually allocated** to the next available porter over a 2-way radio, and required significant knowledge of the hospital layout. The times when tasks were marked as started and completed were reliant on when the porter radioed the helpdesk to report their status, an action that did not always occur when it should.

CLIENT PROFILE

TRUST
Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

OPENED
23 November 1979

HOSPITAL TYPE
District General

BEDS
300 Inpatient Beds

EMPLOYEES
3392 Trust Employees
350 Sodexo Employees

FIRST PARTNERED WITH SODEXO
April 1997

SERVICES PROVIDED
- Catering
- Cleaning
- Portering
- Helpdesk
- Reception
- Security
- Courier Services

IDENTIFYING THE OPPORTUNITIES

The result of all the above was a high labour cost associated with the **management and allocation of portering tasks.** A high level of local knowledge of the site was required, and management data was not always accurate, resulting in **less-than-optimal allocation of tasks.** This also has an impact on the patient experience, as any delays or problems with the service can cause concern to people at a potentially difficult time. We knew there had to be a better way of delivering Portering services at NDDH.

LEVERAGING THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

We decided to introduce new technology to help us improve our Portering service, and after careful review, we chose Portzo by Icegen Computing.

Portzo is an innovative portering management solution that uses a Wi-Fi based, real time location system to improve the efficiency of the portering service and **provide robust performance data** for service optimisation. Portzo can digitise the whole process, enabling staff to **request a porter electronically** on any Trust computer or tablet, with tasks automatically allocated to the nearest porter using Wi-Fi enabled tags.

The tags are tracked in real time around the hospital using a Wi-Fi network connection which enables the person requesting the task to receive an estimated time of arrival for the porter. The solution also allows for the reporter to **electronically escalate any portering issues** to the portering supervisor/manager if required. The supervisors and managers can review the current position of the porter on a map of the hospital in real time, **enabling them to quickly locate a porter in an emergency.**

We agreed a **three-month trial** of Portzo with our Portering Pool, and from **December 2020** we began using the system in the hospital.

TRIALLING PORTZO WITH OUR TEAMS

We engaged with both Portzo and the Trust in a partnership approach to enable an **efficient and effective mobilisation**, whilst ensuring that Portzo maintained the appropriate data security to **handle the sensitive and personal data** that would be transmitted over the system. This included hosting the Portzo system in a UK data centre to **ensure that data is secured to the highest standards,** accessible by all users through a secure VPN connection.

The system went live on 08 December 2020, and in the first week alone of using the Portzo system, **over 450 individual users logged into the system to request a porter.** There was an immediate improvement in the Portering Pool response times.

Some of the increase in tasks were tasks that we have historically always completed, but were not logged, which **helped to demonstrate and evidence the value our portering service brings.**

Time taken from when the task was requested to performance when the task was started, improved by

↑ **14%**

over the trial period.

AN IMPROVED STAFF AND PATIENT EXPERIENCE

By the end of the three-month trial, due to the quicker task response and completion times, our pool team **saw an increase to their opportunity time** (the time when they are available for a task to be assigned to them), **of up to 66%.**

As a result, **we agreed to implement the Portzo solution permanently for our Portering Pool.**

We extended the Portzo solution into the Radiology department in March 2021. The busy department was at the stage where their demand outweighed Portering capacity. So much so, that by 2pm every afternoon they were always running at least one hour behind. This was putting a huge strain on the porters and meant that staff were always having to stay late as their clinics were over running and some patient's procedures were **cancelled due to unavailable resource.**

We trialled the **removal of the dedicated porters** from the department and instead operating them through the pool. After the first day it was evident that this was a far more efficient way of working. **All patients arrived on time and the team managed to finish all their lists without delays.**

SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY

26.1%
Increase in completed tasks against the previous year

14%
Improvement in task response time

9%
Increase in average completed tasks per hour

66%
Increase in porter's productivity

0.33%
Increase in KPI success rate

MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE

OUR PARTNERS

"The teams from Sodexo, Icegen and NDDH collaborated on a whole Hospital digital transformation project to optimise portering services by successfully deploying Portzo. The solution has greatly improved the efficiency of the portering service resulting in a 26.1% increase in the number of tasks handled by the Sodexo team. Portzo has been an enabler for change, reconfiguration of portering within Radiology has reduced patient delays previously experienced. "

Dr Rakesh Patel, **Portzo's Director of UK Operations**
Consultant Vascular & Interventional Radiologist for London North West
University Healthcare NHS Trust & The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

OUR PEOPLE

Our porters also reported an improvement with the service, with 91% of the porters stating that with the new system allocates tasks more fairly. They also reported that the new system allowed them to focus more on the patient as they did not need to spend time radioing the helpdesk to report that they had started or completed a task.

FIND OUT MORE

uk.sodexo.com

> "
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> After using Portzo for a number of months, I can't think of going back to our old system. It has increased our workflow and has enabled us to use the porters more effectively and efficiently. It has made such a vast improvement not just for the department but also our patients. We loved the fact that we could follow the whole process on screen and see the location of each porter."
>
> **Jude Roome**
> Superintendent Radiographer, NDDH