

Q-Pulse Case Study

Company: East Lancashire Pathology Directorate

Industry Sector: Healthcare

Contact: Stephen Beckett

Email: Stephen.Beckett@elht.nhs.uk

Summary

As the product of a merger of Burnley Health Care and Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley NHS Trusts, East Lancashire Pathology Directorate (ELPD) needed to manage integration across the newly formed Directorate, as well as to enhance the efficiency of their Quality Management System (QMS) to meet the demands of the revised CPA standards.

At ELPD, Q-Pulse has reduced time, effort and cost, both in implementing their QMS and in managing the smooth integration of disciplines throughout the newly merged Trusts. In addition, Q-Pulse has helped to create a proper document system that is of particular benefit during CPA audits, and that is easily accessible across the Directorate.

Background

East Lancashire Pathology Directorate is part of the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, which was formed in 2003 following the merger of Burnley Health Care and Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley NHS Trusts.

Prior to Q-Pulse's introduction, staff at Blackburn and Burnley were using paper-based systems that were difficult to manage effectively, and which reduced the efficiency of processes within both Pathology departments.

Following the appointment of Stephen Beckett as Quality Manager in March 2003 and the Trusts' merger in April, senior staff introduced a standalone MS Access-based system to enhance the efficiency of their quality management system (QMS).

However, staff at both Pathology departments were unable to access information directly from the standalone system, which restricted the system's effectiveness and reduced the efficiency of the Directorate's QMS.

The Challenge

To meet the demands of the revised CPA standards and to manage integration across the newly formed Directorate, senior staff required a networked system to enable more efficient access to information at both departments, as well as to improve quality through more effective document control, incident reporting and internal auditing.

With more than 250 pathology departments throughout the UK and Ireland using Q-Pulse, the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) made senior staff at the Directorate aware of Q-Pulse's use in other directorates.

Stephen Beckett, Quality Manager:

"Q-Pulse was seen as the most cost effective system that wasn't simply a document control tool, but which also included all the other vital constituents of quality management that other systems lacked, such as incident reporting, internal audit and training."

The Solution

At East Lancashire Pathology Directorate, senior staff recommended Q-Pulse to management as a solution that would reduce time, effort and cost, both in implementing their QMS and in managing the smooth integration of disciplines throughout the newly merged Trusts.

Q-Pulse Case Study

Gael Quality recommended the wide area network (WAN) version of Q-Pulse, Q-Pulse TCS, to enable access to information from Blackburn and Burnley, as well as to facilitate the integration of systems between the two Pathology departments.

Within the Directorate, Q-Pulse is used to:

- approve, distribute and review documents
- record and analyse incidents
- perform internal quality and health and safety audits
- record external CPA audits
- record training and remind of training due
- establish completed and overdue workloads
- maintain equipment and supplier details

“We found Q-Pulse to be extremely flexible in meeting the requirements of the Directorate; for instance, it was simple and straightforward to migrate our existing documents into the system. Unlike some other quality system packages, Q-Pulse is a fully integrated Quality Management solution and has helped to demonstrate the quality management system in a tangible way that the old systems never could.”

Conclusion

At East Lancashire Pathology Directorate, Q-Pulse has helped staff to create, for the first time, a proper document control system that is easily accessible, as well as an appreciation of a Quality Management System's objectives at the touch of a button. Q-Pulse has been of particular benefit during CPA audits, where all the required information has been available in one central location.

In addition, Q-Pulse has helped enormously in preparing for monthly meetings, in which data is presented to inform staff of progress and current status with regard to quality – audits, incidents et cetera. Data collation, which used to take a full half-day, now only takes a few minutes.

“As a customer-driven company, I’ve found Gael Quality to be a pleasure to work with. Q-Pulse is a powerful tool for demonstrating the benefits of a modern quality management system in improving efficiencies. The system’s flexibility, as well as the ease with which it can be reconfigured, has removed the need to rework structures, amongst other things.”

“The benefits of Q-Pulse will be fully appreciated once all training has taken place and we’d like to see Q-Pulse being adopted by the whole Trust, not just Pathology. Senior pathology staff always promote the need for an integrated Trust quality management system and Q-Pulse is a realistic option.”

Stephen Beckett, East Lancashire Pathology Directorate