Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust

Selects DatixWeb Incident and Risk Management Patient Software

Datix®
Software for Patient Safety

Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust was granted Foundation Trust status in May 2008. The Trust provides healthcare services to around 370,000 people from Colchester and the surrounding area of North East Essex. In addition, it provides radiotherapy and oncology services to a wider population of about 670,000 across north and mid-Essex.

The Trust employs approximately 3,500 staff. There are two main sites which provide patient care, Colchester General Hospital and Essex County Hospital, also within Colchester, with further care provided through community hospitals and community services.

Improving efficiencies

Patient care and employee welfare are top priorities for Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust uses Datix patient safety and risk management software to record incidents and manage risks associated with providing an acute health care service. The Trust moved to DatixWeb in 2007, and the system has improved efficiencies in incident reporting even further.

Prior to implementing Datix software, the Trust had used a standalone database for risk management that had been developed in-house. With changes to the organisation, the database development team was no longer able to support the system and so the Trust looked for an alternative solution.

Following the successful use of Datix for Claims, Complaints and Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) since 2000, the Trust reviewed the other Datix modules available for risk and incident management. After a review of competitive products and consultation with other Trusts, in 2004 the Trust implemented Datix for managing incidents reported on paper forms. A later review of how incident forms were completed was the catalyst for a move to the web-based electronic DatixWeb version in 2007.

According to Jennifer Bell, Datix System Manager in the ICT Department of the Trust; "Datix is widely used in other NHS organisations, which allows us to benchmark our data. We already had a positive experience of using the Datix system for claims and complaints and of the level of support given by the company."

From the initial decision to purchase, DatixWeb Incident reporting was rolled out in just six months. "Since rolling out the system, it has been very well received. We now have the right people investigating incidents using the electronic forms. Incidents are accessible by the individual managers in each area and are dealt with far more promptly," said Mrs Bell.

Reducing administration

The move to the electronic capture of incidents has significantly reduced time spent on administrative tasks. Previously an incident form was sent directly to the Risk Management »

" There is now ownership of incidents within wards and departments so appropriate staff are aware and investigating incidents. The reports are invaluable."

Jennifer Bell
Datix System Manager
Colchester Hospital University
NHS Foundation Trust

department, which could have been photocopied up to 45 times prior to its arrival at Risk Management to ensure that the right people received a copy. By providing immediate online access to incident forms in each area, the Risk Management team is now able to focus on monitoring and trend analysis.

The Datix Project team consisted of Ms Cox, who was Project Manager for the implementation and is now responsible for the Datix system and Mrs Bell. This team successfully trained nearly 450 incident investigators and completed train the trainer sessions with others who then trained all staff in the different areas that would be reporting incidents.

"The system is used by all wards and departments and by staff at all levels, including Consultants," explained Mrs Bell. "Anyone in the Trust can now report an incident. Initially we had some resistance as people felt there was more work involved but now that they have useful reports from the system and can see the benefits for themselves, resistance is disappearing."

Further benefits

The Trust has noted an increase in rates of incident reporting since capturing data electronically. This is not due to an increase in the number of incidents, but the improved recording of them. A secondary benefit of implementing the new system has been an opportunity to remind staff of the importance of recording incidents to improve standards of patient care and employee welfare.

Tailored to fit

Ms Cox and Mrs Bell configured Datix to accommodate specific requirements for patient falls, anaesthetics and radiation safety. Additional information that was previously captured manually on hard copies is now incorporated into the incident report form. RIDDOR incidents can be reported directly to the Health and Safety Executive electronically via a link in the incident form.

Identifying trends

As well as the streamlined, efficient administration and working practices that the new system brings, the Trust has been able to gain further benefits from the analysis and reporting features of Datix. Capturing the data and being able to report on it has enabled the departments to identify trends and make appropriate changes to improve overall patient care.

Investigators have been trained to draw reports from Datix. Monthly reports are also sent to the Service Areas and Associate Directors. Each Service Area holds monthly governance meetings where the Datix reports on incidents and risks are discussed.

Wards and departments have immediate access to incidents for those who need to investigate and plan remedial action. "In the past, it could take weeks as the internal mail was used to allow each person to action their appropriate section on the incident form," said Mrs Bell. "Ward and Department Managers can run and review their own reports to facilitate continuing business change processes and learning. There is ownership of incidents within wards and departments so appropriate staff are aware and investigating incidents. The reports are invaluable."

The Trust is also working to provide more sophisticated trend analysis using the reporting functionality across all the modules. Ms Cox and Mrs Bell have developed a good working relationship with Datix and are impressed with the high quality technical communications provided for upgrades. "Our technical expert who carries out upgrades claims that it is the best system that he works with, because the notes are so self explanatory," said Mrs Bell.

Future plans

As a result of the Trust's adoption and use of Datix, it has become a reference site, testing future versions and hosting visits from other Trusts evaluating the product. This also provides opportunities to share best practice.

The Trust has deployed part of the web version of the Risk Register which matches the Trust's current requirements. The Risk Register has already enabled risk management to be centralised, replacing the spreadsheets held previously by each department. It is hoped in the future to increase the functionality offered within the risk register in accordance with the changing needs of the organisation.

"The main thing is that we now have the right people investigating incidents more quickly to improve patient care thanks to DatixWeb," concluded Mrs Bell.

About Datix

Datix is a global supplier of software for patient safety, risk management, incident and adverse event reporting.

We aim to help healthcare organisations build a culture that drives excellence in patient safety, based on market-leading software, skills and healthcare knowledge.

Set up specifically to meet the governance and risk management requirements of the healthcare industry, Datix is working as a partner to leading healthcare organisations across the world.

Today, Datix customers include more than 70% of the National Health Service in the UK, the United States Department of Defense, a number of provinces in Canada and some of the world's leading private healthcare providers.

Fast Facts

- Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust was granted Foundation Trust status in May 2008 and employs approximately 3,500 staff

- Datix Claims, Complaints and Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS) in use since 2000

- DatixWeb Incident Reporting implemented in 2007

- Anyone in the Trust can now report an incident

- RIDDOR incidents can be reported directly to the Health and Safety Executive