Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust

Delivers effective reporting and a culture of patient safety and risk awareness with Datix

Datix®
Software for Patient Safety

The promotion of safety and risk awareness was a high priority for Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust when it made the decision to purchase Datix.

With over 3,300 people working at its three hospitals, Gateshead Health provides locally-based community, mental health and acute hospital services for the 200,000 people who live in Gateshead, as well as specialist services for people who live in neighbouring areas.

The requirement

The Trust had decided that the existing incident reporting software no longer met the level of sophistication required. The decision was made to purchase a new patient safety and risk management software application that would support the Trust in its drive to promote a culture of safety and risk awareness.

Angela O'Brien, Head of Corporate Risk at the Trust said, "We needed a sophisticated level of integration and a system that contained all patient and staff incidents from multiple data sources. It had to enable us to analyse a wide range of data and produce meaningful reports. After a competitive tender process we opted for Datix as it met all our requirements for a sophisticated integrated reporting system."

The Trust already used Datix's PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) and Complaints modules. Angela O'Brien said, "Importantly for us Datix incident reporting integrates with the PALS and Complaints modules and there are plans to add further modules from Datix, including Safety Alerts early in 2008.

Project objectives - data capture

Gateshead Health was keen to implement a mechanism that allowed incidents to be followed up and feedback provided to staff. The procurement of a Trust-wide Datix system was seen as a way to achieve this, improving communication and encouraging local ownership of risk by Trust staff.

Dawn Moffitt, Risk System Administrator at Gateshead Health said: "We wanted to make it easy to capture data and to simplify reporting while making the whole process highly effective. For some staff this meant devising another paper form, even though we were moving away from a paper-based system. This is because not everyone has easy access to a PC, for example porters, domestics, catering and laundry staff."

These 'feeder systems' needed to gather sufficient information to allow the line manager to enter the incident onto Datix without having to refer back to the reporter of the incident. A new paper form was designed and condensed onto one A4 page.

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Angela O'Brien
Head of Corporate Risk
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust

Short forms were also designed for repetitive high volume incidents in certain areas, including day nursery, health records and pathology.

Dawn Moffitt explained, "We wanted to adopt a consistent approach for staff who did not have access to computers so we looked at the system to see what the most relevant information was and then produced a short paper form for staff to fill in. They then take the form to their line manager who puts it into the PC. This system is working well because the signed form is scanned into Datix so there is a permanent record."

Training of the Trust's staff was key to the success of the new system. Training for all those who input into Datix took place over six months tailored to specific needs. Computer-based training was also used and this worked well for all staff.

Datix system benefits - flexibility

"One of the major benefits of Datix is its flexibility in terms of configuration," said Angela O'Brien, "We have a coding system that covers everything from minor to major incidents and the system can deal with that. We are also continuously updating codes."

Angela continued, "The system is constantly evolving because it is so dynamic, we can configure it to our needs as we develop. We are able to make 95% of the changes ourselves, using features within the software. We don't have to ring up to make a request for a change and then wait for a response. This saves time and is one of the main things we like about Datix."

Timeliness

One of the most important factors to the Trust is the time it takes from when incident reports are submitted to when they are received by an investigator. This determines how quickly an incident can be investigated.

With Datix, reports are immediately made available to the person tasked with the investigation. "Once the report goes into Datix, the investigator can deal with it straight away as it will appear in their email within seconds," said Dawn Moffitt.

Dawn concluded, "For example we have targeted our patient falls team and they have focussed on hotspots in the Trust as a result of reports from Datix. This has enabled us to put practices into place to reduce the number of falls and we can already see a difference."

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The implementation of Datix has already shown results at Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust. It is helping to promote a culture of safety and risk awareness. Patients will benefit by measures being put in place to avoid accidents and risks, staff are motivated to report incidents as they can be quickly investigated and mitigated, and managers have access to more meaningful and comprehensive reports. Angela O'Brien, Head of Corporate Risk at the Trust concluded, "Datix met our requirements through the selection process and we look forward to continuing to develop and expand the use of the system to improve patient safety and risk management across the Trust."

Other benefits have included:

- Quick response times, due to rapid reporting; for example, the Violence and Aggression Officer can go to the ward while the patient is still present. If paper forms were still being used by the time the Violence and Aggression Officer had received them, the patient would have gone and no action could have been taken.

- The ability to spot trends; evaluating what has prompted an incident and what can be changed to prevent it happening again.

- Empowerment of managers to produce their own reports; this was not possible before, as information would come to a central office via a paper incident reporting form and input onto a central system. Reports were then produced from one central location. Today, with the press of a button, managers can see how many incidents have been reported and analyse them as required.

- Increased reporting of incidents; while the project team initially expected a drop in incident reporting because of the shift from paper to electronic reporting, the reverse has in fact happened.

- The ability to mitigate risks, putting preventative practices into place, so that incidents are avoided in the first place. "The staff at Gateshead find that the system is quicker and they are motivated by this because they see things happening more rapidly," said Dawn Moffitt.

- Greater clinical effectiveness, through the ability to analyse a greater number of incidents and near misses, informed decision making processes.

- Ability to meet mandatory reporting requirements, with improved administrative efficiency and information for NRLS, NHSLA etc available via data collected rather than manual business processes.

- Improved safety for Gateshead patients and staff.

About Gatehead NHS Trust

Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust provides locally based community, mental health and acute hospital services for the 200,000 people who live in Gateshead, as well as some specialist services for people who live in neighbouring areas. The Trust employs over 3,300 people. It provides services from its three hospitals: Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Bensham Hospital, Dunston Hill Hospital.

Fast Facts

- Datix selected for effective reporting and to promote a culture of patient safety and risk awareness

- 3,000 people and 3 hospitals

- Results included:
  Quick response times
  Ability to spot trends
  Increased reporting of incidents
  Specific managers' reports
  Greater clinical effectiveness
  Better safety for patients and staff

About Datix

Datix is a global supplier of software for patient safety, risk management, incident and adverse event reporting. Our mission is to provide the world's leading software, skills and knowledge for the healthcare industry, enabling the industry to achieve optimum levels of patient safety.

We aim to help healthcare organisations build a culture and practice 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 healthcare organisations across the world.

Today, there are over 400 Datix customers. This includes more than 70% of the National Health Service in the UK, major health authorities in Canada and some of the world's leading private healthcare providers.