

Connecting people and places

Improving portering services within Sodexo

As part of continuous improvement culture, we wanted to understand the differences between the portering task management systems within our current portfolio and those currently on the market.

We evaluated and compared performance of all the systems against criteria which included cost, ease of operation, efficiencies delivered, differentiators and the partnership approach to continually improve and innovate the product to keep up with market demand. Two of the systems were already used in our operations and the 3rd system was new to our organisation and the UK market. As the 3rd system, Traczo, came out as the top performer against all aspects of our review it was imperative to us to be able to pilot the system in one of our existing contracts.

The project was carried out in partnership with our client at Royal Devon & Exeter 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, cancer services, outpatients, and children and young people services.

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

The existing offer prior to the pilot

The portering task management system required all portering requests to be reported to the central helpdesk by phone. There were also several departments that had dedicated porters whose activity was not recorded.

Client profile

Trust

Royal Exeter & 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



Once requested, tasks needed to be **manually allocated** to the next available porter over a 2-way radio, and the dispatcher required significant knowledge of the hospital layout. The times when tasks were marked as started and completed were reliant on when the porter responded to the dispatcher to report their status, an action that was not always recorded accurately.

This resulted in a **high labour cost associated with the management and allocation of portering tasks.**

- A high level of local knowledge of the site was required
- Management data was not always accurate, resulting in less-than-optimal allocation of tasks.

This also had 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 that technology would allow us to deliver a more efficient portering service to NDDH.

Leveraging the right technology

Following our review, the system we wanted to pilot in principle was Traczo.

Traczo 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. Traczo can digitise the whole task management and allocation process, enabling staff to **request a porter electronically** on any Trust computer or tablet, with tasks automatically allocated to the nearest porter using data enabled smart devices.

The devices are tracked in real time around the hospital using a data 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 challenges** to the supervisor/manager if required. The supervisors and managers can view the activity within the portering service in real time on their device while on the move **identifying potential challenges before they arise.**



We agreed a pilot of Traczo and from **December 2020** we began using the system in the hospital.



Piloting Traczo with our teams

We engaged with both Traczo and the Trust in a partnership approach to enable an **efficient and effective mobilisation**, whilst ensuring that Traczo maintained the appropriate data security to handle the sensitive and personal data that would be transmitted over the system. This included hosting the Traczo 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.

In the first week of Traczo's mobilisation, over 450 individual clinical users logged onto the system to request a porter. There was an immediate improvement in the portering team response times.

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



Time taken from request to the start of the task improved by

↑ **14%**

over the trial period.

An improved staff and patient experience

By the end of the pilot, due to the improved task response and completion times, we extended the Traczo solution into the Radiology department. The busy department was at the stage where their demand outweighed portering capacity. 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.

We piloted 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



20%

Increase in porter's productivity



0.33%

Increase in KPI success rate

Making a real difference

Our partners

"The teams from Sodexo, Traczo and NDDH collaborated on a whole hospital digital transformation project to optimise portering services by successfully deploying Traczo. 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. Traczo has been an enabler for change and reconfiguration of portering within Radiology has reduced patient delays previously experienced. "

Dr Rakesh Patel, Traczo'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 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 communicating with the helpdesk to report that they had started or completed a task.

Following the successful pilot of Traczo at NDDH, and the appetite for Traczo to continually to develop and innovate in a partnership approach, they were chosen by our UK Healthcare Exec team to be our preferred system of choice and technology partner for future opportunities. We are currently in dialogue with our existing clients to explore the feasibility of implementing the Traczo system.



After using Traczo 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 love the fact that we could follow the whole process on screen and see the location of each porter.

Jude Roome

Superintendent Radiographer, NDDH

