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Accelerating productivity and performance at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

NHS
Calderdale and Huddersfield
NHS Foundation Trust

CHALLENGE:

— Improve patient care, by driving efficiency improvements

— Decrease pathology report turnaround times, by reducing typing bottlenecks

— Meet report turnaround times for all diagnostic cases (target: seven-days)

SOLUTION:

— Dragon Medical

RESULTS:

— The RCPath KPI target for all diagnostic cases to be reported in seven days has been achieved at 95%

— Highly positive response to Dragon Medical from the users

— Improvements to patient care through increased efficiency

Success at a glance

Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust manages two main hospitals – Huddersfield Royal Infirmary and Calderdale Royal Hospital, in West Yorkshire. The Trust provides healthcare for more than 435,000 people across Calderdale and Kirklees, and is recognised as being among the top performing Trusts in the country.

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>
> — Richard Knights, Consultant Histopathologist and Clinical Director for Pathology

With seven consultants and 24,000 surgical cases per year, the pathology directorate provides comprehensive laboratory services in support of diagnosis, monitoring and treatment for patients within the Trust's hospitals and clinics, and for family practitioners within the local primary care trusts (PCTs).

As with many Trusts across the UK, it identified the need to improve efficiency and decrease turnaround times in order to further improve patient care. The hospital Trust looked to speech recognition as a key technology that would enable it to achieve its efficiency and patient care goals. To meet its objectives, it has deployed Dragon Medical, Nuance's popular, real-time, desktop speech recognition software. It is used by doctors and surgeries globally for the faster, more efficient and cost effective creation of clinical documentation.

Developed to enable doctors to conveniently and efficiently generate clinical letters and navigate clinical systems, Dragon Medical maximises healthcare professionals' productivity and performance, enabling them to do more with less, to save time, reduce costs, improve information accuracy and raise the quality of service and care delivered to patients. With Dragon Medical, clinical letters can be dictated directly, up to three times faster than typing, which helps to meet targets to get discharge letters to patients within 24 hours. With accurate reporting central to delivering optimised patient care, Dragon Medical's accuracy rates of 99% out-of-the-box, ensure clear, accurate, and timely clinical letters. To ensure consistent accuracy, Dragon Medical has been optimised for non-native speakers too, while new medical vocabularies cover almost 80 specialities and sub-specialities.

99%

Dragon Medical delivers
99 percent accuracy
out-of-the-box

VoicePower
The Speech Recognition People

Preventing RCPath Bottlenecks

Richard Knights, Consultant Histopathologist and Clinical Director for Pathology at the Trust, explains: "Our lean management department looked at workflows throughout the department. There were flow bottlenecks at two main areas: 'waiting to be reported by the pathologist' and a 'waiting to be typed and authorised' delay. There were further pressures to meet turnaround reporting times given new Key Performance Indicators from the RCPath." With pressure to remove these flow bottlenecks, the Trust considered options open to it – including speech recognition – as a viable solution to alleviating the problem.

Actioning a Speech-Based Solution

Following the lean management assessment, Sonja Brown from VoicePower Ltd visited the hospital to deliver a demonstration of the speech recognition solutions available, including Dragon Medical. Following the demonstration, the department put together a business case to justify the need for speech recognition, detailing the workflow bottlenecks it would be able resolve. It was decided that the optimal solution for the Trust would provide self correcting, front-end speech recognition installed on local machines. To facilitate server integration and extensive automation of workflow, Dragon Medical was integrated with Talking Point. "Once we got the all clear to proceed, VoicePower project manager Jonathan Gallucci and VoicePower's consultant went through what we needed from the service, and a briefing paper with appropriate system specifications was drafted," stated Richard. "Jonathan then came to the department to do the initial set up and run through with me. Next, we put together a staggered training process of two consultants at a time with a follow-up two weeks later." While interested in the technology, the Trust's consultants were initially very sceptical about whether there would be a genuine improvement in turnaround times, but, "this concern was dispelled when they started using the system," added Richard.

Talking Targets

According to Richard the investment has paid dividends with respect to the efficiency gains the Trust was striving for and has achieved to date.

"There has been a significant improvement in turn-around times for urgent cases and our customer service has improved dramatically"

Richard claimed, while pointing to another productivity boost that has resulted from the deployment: "We are now getting fewer phone enquiries as patient's reports are available sooner." The greatest achievements have been with the RCPath: "The RCPath KPI target was for all diagnostic cases to be reported in seven days. This has been achieved at 95%, which is largely due to the efficiency offered by the speech recognition system. While the system required some patience at first, now everyone is used to using it, and everyone is very positive."

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Not only has it accelerated turnaround times and played a key role in reaching RCPath KPIs, but – importantly – it is leading to the most important result of all; improvements in patient care.

Perfect Partners

Of course, technology implementations only succeed when an experienced partner supports the set up, deployment and training. To that end, Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust has nothing but praise for the effort VoicePower invested to ensure the success of the deployment. Jeremy Hyde, consultant pathologist, said: "The training was excellent. Jonathan was very approachable, very patient and extremely helpful. VoicePower provided clear and relevant instructions, and the printed documentation is good and clear. Meanwhile, excellent observations made during the second training session, meant that we could pinpoint areas of difficulty and work with VoicePower to adjust settings to enable a more streamlined process to suit the users." Post deployment, Dragon Medical has been well-received and adopted enthusiastically by Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust's consultants. Not only has it accelerated turnaround times and played a key role in reaching RCPath KPIs, but – importantly – it is leading to the most important result of all; improvements in patient care.

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About Nuance Communications, Inc.

Nuance Communications (Nuance) is a technology pioneer with market leadership in conversational AI and ambient intelligence. A full-service partner trusted by 77 percent of U.S. hospitals and 85 percent of the Fortune 100 companies worldwide, Nuance creates intuitive solutions that amplify people's ability to help others.