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**Siemens - providing vendor independence
in the widest ranging PFI agreement**

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Case Study Barnet Hospital

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Steve Bagot, operations director, Metier Healthcare



Siemens is providing Vendor Independence in the Widest Ranging PFI Agreement

In 1999, Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust awarded a £64 million PFI contract to the Metier Healthcare consortium – led by Siemens, Bouygues and Ecovert – to build and run the new Barnet Hospital.

Siemens has a 33-year contract now worth £128 million to install, maintain and replace the hospital’s medical equipment. The company is also responsible for the hospital’s telecommunications facilities and its MRI scanning service.

Fact file

- The deal had the widest scope of any PFI agreement then signed. Siemens’ part of the contract covers everything from syringe pumps through to state-of-the-art MRI and CT scanners and is completely vendor independent.
- Siemens had to maintain services throughout the three-year demolition and rebuild, which was right in the heart of the existing hospital complex.
- The new 458-bed hospital, which replaced a collection of Victorian and pre-fabricated buildings on the same site, was formally opened in 2003.
- Under its vendor independent contract, Siemens is responsible for supplying and maintaining over 2500 pieces of equipment.

Siemens Expertise

Flexible and responsive

Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust expect a five star service from Siemens, day in day out. They are also looking for flexibility and innovative solutions.

“For a managed equipment service to be a success, you need your partners to be creative thinkers and willing to go the extra mile, and that’s what we’ve seen at an operational level with Siemens,” says Steve Bagot, operations director for Metier Healthcare. “That’s why the relationship is strong.”

An aptitude for problem solving is also much valued by the NHS. “Whether we need a phone connecting or a CT scanner replacing, we want a team who we know will get on and sort it,” says Steve. “Siemens is very good at that. When you ask them to do something, they do it.”

Expert advice

Dr Andy Nicol is clinical director of surgery and anaesthetics at the Trust. He also chairs its Investment Committee, which regularly reviews the rolling equipment replacement programme.

“We look at the recommendations of our various user groups and rely on Siemens for expert equipment advice,” he says. “There has to be trust between us: there isn’t the time to market test every decision that’s made.”

Efficient and dependable

With the Trust under huge pressure to achieve its waiting list targets, minimising equipment downtime is an obvious priority. “Moving out an old machine and installing a new one should be as seamless as possible and with Siemens it generally is,” says Danny West from the Trust’s planning and estates team.

“There will nearly always be some downtime, but keeping it to a minimum is key. Some suppliers will promise you equipment in four days and it ends up being two or three times that, but Siemens don’t make false promises. If there’s a problem, they’ll tell you up front. That honesty is very important to us.”

Professionalism

The biggest strength of Siemens, says Steve Bagot, is the professionalism of its people. “It’s consistent throughout the organisation. You know what to expect when it comes to behaviour, standards and outcomes. That consistency of response is very attractive and makes them an easier company to work with.”

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Dr Andy Nicol, Clinical Director of Surgery and Anaesthetics

The Benefits of a Managed Equipment Service

Guaranteed funding

According to Dr Andy Nicol, one major dividend of an MES is that there is no longer an internal competition for capital funding. “We’ve effectively ring-fenced the money that we need to invest annually in medical equipment and we have a rolling programme for replacing machines at predetermined intervals, which means we’re very well-equipped,” he says.

Improved maintenance

Another bonus of an MES is that machines are no longer used well past their sell-by date. “And there’s the reassurance of knowing that they are being much more actively managed and maintained than before,” adds Dr Nichol.

Reliability and responsiveness

Steve Bagot is clear about what he wants most of all from the service providers at Barnet: reliability and responsiveness.

“The Trust certainly expect Siemens to keep them at the forefront of technology, but more than anything else they want reliable equipment and a team that rapidly responds to any issues that may arise.” He cites one example of how the Trust is benefiting from the long-term relationship it has with Siemens.

“After a water pipe burst and flooded the A&E department below, wrecking the CT scanner, Siemens did the impossible and had a replacement in service within 16 hours. I doubt if anyone could beat that. It wasn’t just a case of great teamwork but of being able to draw on Siemens’ resources.”

United team with a common goal

All PFI contracts depend on effective team work between the service providers believes Steve Bagot. “It’s irrelevant who does what: every company must work together seamlessly to achieve the best outcome for the patient. That’s always been our approach at Barnet and it’s certainly the way Siemens works”.