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Case Study Wishaw General Hospital

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*Roddy Fraser,
Operations Director,
Summit Healthcare*



Siemens Provides First Managed Equipment Service for a PFI Scheme

Wishaw General Hospital was built under the Government’s Private Finance Initiative after Lanarkshire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust signed a contract in 1998 with the consortium Summit Healthcare.

Summit Healthcare awarded Siemens a 27-year contract, now valued at nearly £47 million, to provide managed equipment services at the new hospital.

Fact file

- It was the first contract of its kind to be won by Siemens and the first for medical equipment in any major PFI hospital build scheme.
- The service includes the provision of all diagnostic imaging equipment together with a picture archiving and communications system which allows digital x-ray images to be viewed on computers throughout the hospital.
- Under its vendor independent agreement, Siemens is supplying and maintaining 44 items of equipment.
- The new £100 million Wishaw General Hospital opened in 2001. It has approximately 700 beds and the second largest maternity unit in Scotland.
- The consortium comprises Sir Robert McAlpine, the British Linen Bank and

Siemens Expertise

Delivering better patient care

Siemens sees its role as helping the Trust to modernise its services and deliver better patient care. One good example is the Picture Archiving and Communications system (PACS), which reduces a patient’s exposure to radiation. Siemens operations manager David Cooper explains: “In the past, a patient might have been x-rayed first at a health centre and then again by a specialist in a hospital. But with a digital system, you just pass x-rays around on a network so that patients only need to be x-rayed once.”

Faster diagnosis

Another benefit of PACS is speedier access to specialist opinion. “Not all of the Trust’s specialist services are available at all three of its hospitals,” explains David, “but with PACS, consultants can call up the information they need wherever they’re working. That’s of huge benefit when an urgent opinion on a patient is required.”

PACS has been extended to operate at Hairmyres and Monklands district hospitals as well as Wishaw. “Looking to the future, we hope to expand the system still further – into health centres, for example – so that the benefits of the technology reach even more people,” says David.

Technology leadership

Having an MES partner with a reputation for innovation and technological excellence is essential. “When new technology and equipment is introduced, clinical staff must have complete confidence in it,” says David.

Roddy Fraser, operations director at Summit Healthcare, confirms the quality of the Siemens equipment is excellent, “as is the knowledge that surrounds it. Siemens people come across as very technically competent.”

Prompt and responsive

Another strength of Siemens, says Roddy, is their prompt and responsive service. “Whenever any equipment issue arises, you know the Siemens team will address it straightaway. They also put a lot of effort into building and developing a positive relationship and that’s critical when you’ve signed up to a 27-year partnership.”

Meeting deadlines

It’s several years since Wishaw General Hospital opened its doors and so some equipment has already been upgraded. “To do that on a fixed timescale and with minimum disruption was a challenge and one Siemens managed very well,” says Roddy. “They’ve met all the deadlines and continue to provide a first class service.”

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Roddy Fraser, Operations Director, Summit Healthcare

The Benefits of a Managed Equipment Service

Reduced risk, latest technology

Siemens is responsible for maintaining and renewing the x-ray, ultrasound and imaging equipment at Wishaw for 27 years. “That means reduced financial, operational and clinical risk for the Trust, plus it ensures they get the very latest technology,” says David Cooper.

Known costs

“In essence, what a managed equipment service does for Trusts is even out their investment and cash flow,” explains David. “In the past, plans for new equipment were often sensitive to the availability of capital finance in the NHS. With an MES contract, Trusts know exactly what they’re paying in and paying out each year.”

Guaranteed uptime

At Wishaw, the Trust has agreed guaranteed equipment uptime with Siemens and there are penalties if those guarantees aren’t met. As David Cooper explains: “That means the Trust can concentrate on providing healthcare services while we worry about managing and maintaining the equipment.”

Added value

The fact that Siemens is at Wishaw for the long-term “means there is the opportunity for them to add more value than would be the case with a traditional relationship and it’s in their interest to do that,” says Roddy Fraser. David agrees: “With a long-term partnership, Trusts gain from greater access to advice and assistance than is the case with a typical customer-supplier relationship.”

Positive feedback

Despite the fact Wishaw was one of the very early PFI contracts and so everyone involved was entering into new territory, Roddy believes the project overall has gone very well. “The feedback from the clinicians has been very positive and that’s one of the most important measures of success.”