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## East Lancashire NHS Trust

### CHALLENGE

- To overhaul the patient referral process
- To reduce lost documentation
- To boost productivity and provide an audit trail

### STRATEGY

- Nuance® eCopy® ShareScan®

### THE BENEFITS OF THE ECOPY SOLUTION

- Reliable electronic delivery of referral notes, secure access to patient information
- Patient referral notes are no longer lost or missing
- Less time spent looking for lost notes means lowers costs, and improved service

### NUANCE ECOPY SOLUTIONS PROVIDE A GUARANTEED DELIVERY OF PATIENT NOTES AT EAST LANCASHIRE HOSPITALS NHS TRUST

East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust provides healthcare through six hospital sites in east Lancashire. The Trust uses state-of-the-art facilities to deliver high quality treatment and patient care. Employing 6,000 staff - some of whom are internationally renowned and have won awards for their work - the Trust's medical professionals treat 152,000 new patients a year. Approximately 130,000 of these appointments to treat the patients are arranged through the Trust's Booking Centre, which is based at Burnley General Hospital. To help process the bookings, the busy Booking Centre employs 30 staff.

Previously, once a patient referral had been made, the Booking Centre scanned the patient's referral letters, using two aging scanners that were failing to keep up with the volume of work. The process that followed the scanning was subject to the inefficiencies of the postal service; the referral notes were placed into blue bags and posted via the internal mail to the relevant Trust medical site to which the patient had been referred.

### NEW SOLUTIONS FOR NEW TIMES

Outdated and flawed, the former process was not in keeping with modern practices designed to optimise patient care. Lost referrals became the norm, while the lack of an electronic paper trail or audit, made it difficult to adhere to compliance and patient confidentiality requirements.

With greater pressure to overhaul the process, the Trust had to introduce a solution that would replace the paper-based referrals system with an electronic one. The Trust decided to review the consultation process to assess alternative solutions. After researching different options that would provide the Trust with a secure and audited electronic paper trail, it opted for an integrated solution from Ricoh and Nuance eCopy. The solution deployed comprised a Ricoh multifunctional product with integral scanner and Nuance eCopy ShareScan.

Referrals are now scanned and emailed directly to the consultants and secretaries for triage. Predominantly used for referral documents, the solution is safe and secure, and benefits from a shared drive that can be accessed by departments within the Trust. Administration clerks at the Trust's Booking Centre now use the solution to scan patient case note requests and referrals, while some of the Trust's managers use it to create and safely secure access policy documents.

The Trust is impressed with the increased efficiency and security delivered by the solution. "We now have a comprehensive solution that addresses the challenges we faced. It is secure, efficient, easy to use, and provides an effective audit trail. The shared drive has made accessing referrals and patient notes far easier for medical staff authorised to access the information," explains Michelle Montague, the Trust's Outpatient Booking Manager.

## AN ASSURED DELIVERY

The advantages delivered by the solution have rippled through the Trust. Referrals no longer go missing, because there is no need for them to be posted in the mail. The reliable electronic arrival of the notes has had a positive impact on productivity, as far less time is spent searching for missing documents or requesting copies from referring organisations.

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**Michelle Montague**
*Trust's Outpatient Booking Manager*

Michelle explains the other advantages that the solution has delivered. "The Booking Centre receives 7,000 calls per month. Since the deployment, 93% of calls are now answered, compared to 75%. Additionally, up to 53 man hours a week have been saved, while there has been no need for us to replace headcount lost through natural wastage. A further cost saving has been realised though the centre's photocopier. As the centre is now less dependent on the copier, it is consuming less toner."

Michelle is enthusiastic about the deployment: "The new solution is excellent. It's secure, the users can be centrally managed and it allows easy access to the Ricoh MFP and the Nuance eCopy solution. We have enjoyed tangible benefits since deployment, from optimised workflow processes, increased productivity, efficiency at the Booking Centre, and reduced costs. There's simply no way that we would go back to the old system."

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