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Northern Care Alliance NHS Group partners with Hitachi on UK's first fully integrated hospital-wide digital transformation

1ST OCTOBER 2019, 12:00pm (noon) GMT: The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group and Hitachi Consulting today announced a partnership to deliver the UK's first fully integrated digital transformation of care processes. Known as the Digital Control Centre, the 10-year project will be deployed across Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust, part of the Northern Care Alliance, and revolutionise the organisation of care across its acute and integrated services. It will build on Salford's existing digital excellence to utilise advanced analytics and the Internet of Things to support staff in making the best of their talents and the resources they have.

The result will be an intelligent system that helps provide for the needs of patients & service users and releases more time for staff to care and deploy their clinical expertise.

The new approach will use digitisation and automation to provide staff with the information they need in a reliable and timely manner to optimise patient & service user care. Staff will be able to better match patient & service user individual needs to available resources so that waste and waiting is minimised.

The benefits will be significant, with the experience becoming more personal and timelier. Staff satisfaction will markedly increase as their daily frustrations with a lack of information, chasing data and filling forms will be minimised by automated processes and visualisation of information in a manner that suits them and at a time when they need it. This will enable staff to optimise the use of beds, operating theatres and equipment.

The programme, which has been overseen by Northern Care Alliance Chief Executive Raj Jain in close collaboration with clinical and non-clinical staff, is a major change in the way that healthcare is run today.

Raj Jain, Chief Executive of the Northern Care Alliance, said: "The change will impact on staff right across the organisation. Supporting staff to determine and deliver these improvements is what is key. The technology is the innovation that enables staff to transform, but it is the staff that will deliver the benefits. Committed and consistent clinical and managerial leadership is key. In Salford we are able to build on the existing outstanding leadership (CQC Well Led assessment) to make the best out of 21st century technology."

The first phase is focused in the hospital. In this first phase, the Digital Control Centre has been designed to solve the problems staff currently experience that prevent them from optimising the patient's journey and experience from admission.

Some of the developments in the first phase will focus on urgent care. This system is under tremendous pressure, so to improve the timeliness of the service provided to patients, the project will introduce patient insights and flow management tools to provide staff in the emergency village with near real time information relating to attendance & admission history, key clinical indicators from patient history, admission risk and standard patient scores that can be used to assign them to the correct care pathways. Demand management tools will improve real-time decision making; for example, by showing where bed capacity is and providing semi-automatic bed planning.

Excitingly, the partnership will also allow the development of a digital replica of the organisation. This allows clinicians and operational managers to model potential changes in the organisation of care. Through this simulation we will be able to adapt evidenced changes that are much more likely to deliver the desired benefit.

The programme will initially focus on Salford Royal with a longer-term plan to develop into the Northern Care Alliance's other sites.

Raj Jain, Chief Executive of the Northern Care Alliance, added: "We always strive to deliver the right care, in the right place, at the right time and this venture will absolutely allow us to do this. For staff, I am sure it can feel like a daily fire-fighting exercise to ensure our patients are admitted appropriately, that they get to see the right healthcare professionals, have the treatment they need and then are discharged appropriately. We believe this programme will revolutionise the system, enhancing the care and experience we offer to our patients."

Paul Watson, Healthcare, Vice President EMEA at Hitachi Consulting, said "The Control Centre shows just how much power there is when you leverage digital tools to transform hospital operations. Working with the fantastic team at the Northern Care Alliance we will unlock more resources, enable faster access to actionable information, improve ways of working for staff and improve access to care, meaning local people will ultimately benefit from faster, more targeted care."

The Digital Control Centre will deliver capabilities across three core areas:

1. Operational Intelligence, Strategic Planning and Simulation: the development of digital replica of the organisation to make accurate predictions about demand and determine how best to respond.
2. Demand & Capacity Planning / Management and Smart Scheduling: developing real-time insights about issues like resource constraints, bed availability and discharge planning.
3. Patient Insights and Patient Flow: optimising the patient's experience through the hospital by enabling better decision making and improving information flow across the integrated care organisation to reduce delays in their journey.

The Northern Care Alliance and Hitachi Consulting are combining their leading healthcare, operational and technology expertise with wider partners to enable this transformation. KPMG, ExtraMed, Microsoft and CenTrak are all providing their capabilities to shape the programme.

Additional comment:

Raj Jain, Chief Executive of the Northern Care Alliance NHS Group, added:

“Our approach is always to ensure our clinicians are crucial to the design and creation of programmes of work and this programme is absolutely no different. I’ve worked side by side with clinicians as this piece of work has developed and will continue to do so as we implement this across Salford Royal and, in time, more widely across the Northern Care Alliance to benefit an even wider population of patients.”

David Brindle, Senior Vice President & EMEA General Manager at Hitachi Consulting, added: “Hitachi is very proud to be the Northern Care Alliance’s partner for this groundbreaking and innovative programme, which we believe will establish a repeatable blueprint for improvement and deliver significant benefit for society. This programme will bring forward Hitachi’s global healthcare expertise and digital capabilities from across our Social Innovation Business.”

About the Northern Care Alliance NHS Group

Salford Royal is part of the Northern Care Alliance NHS Group along with Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. The Group brings together over 19,000 staff and a range of hospital and community services across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and North Manchester. Salford Royal is an integrated provider of hospital, community, primary and social care services and holds an Outstanding rating. Salford Royal was the first Trust in the North of England to achieve the highest rating given by the Care Quality Commission. The organisation is home to a number of specialist services, including trauma, neurosciences and intestinal failure and is the lead provider of Salford’s Integrated Care Organisation. Salford Royal is also regarded as one of the most digitally mature Trusts in the NHS.

About Hitachi Consulting

Hitachi Consulting is the digital solutions and professional services organization within Hitachi, Ltd., a global technology and social innovation leader. Hitachi Consulting is a catalyst for positive business change, propelling organizations to drive disruptive innovation and to accelerate digital transformation. We help organizations leverage data as a strategic asset to innovate faster, develop new revenue streams, and respond to global dynamics with insight and agility. We collaborate with clients to create solutions that help maximize operational efficiency and deliver measurable, sustainable business results. Visit us at www.hitachiconsulting.com.

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