

Loading the dirty side at Whiston Hospital



Two PFI contracts - one supplier

While the contracts for endoscope decontamination facilities at both the new St Helens and Whiston Hospitals were awarded over 12 months apart - after full and thorough evaluations of the various tenders - both projects were won by the same supplier.



where decontamination manager Sue Dickinson explained: "The two new hospitals were already part way through their build when we decided the endoscope decontamination should be centralised. We'd originally planned to process endoscopes in the departments where they

Inside Hospitals checked-out the impressive new facilities at the St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust's two state-of-the-art hospitals,

Two centralised endoscope decontamination units with dedicated staff are ensuring patient safety and meeting the demands of expanding services at St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

were used.

"One of the drivers was the decision to go for pass-through and so that we could have a dedicated team of endoscope decontamination technicians specialising in the process,

endoscopy, urology, theatres and ENT - went on a Designated Users Course so they knew what their responsibilities would be and could cascade the training down. The training underlined the importance of the work they

are very high on the agenda," said Sue. "I want people to have that knowledge to do the job well. The Lancer Academy courses are an excellent baseline for the staff. They give a good foundation to work from.

"All the team at St Helens have done the Complete Endoscopy Decontamination course with Lancer, in Runcorn. The Whiston team are going through it over the coming months.

"There are five endoscopy unit technicians per site, some have previous decontamination experience as they were HSDU technicians, so they hit the ground running."

The trust's team for the endoscope decontamination project included Sue Dickinson, who also chairs the decontamination user group, Alan Staniland, purchasing manager, Tony Johnson, project manager and Paul Leonard, engineering manager, and AE(d)



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rather than nursing staff."

There are about 60 scopes per site, all owned by the various user departments. Sue said: "We're now doing around 260 procedures a week at Whiston Hospital, which is the acute site, and over 440 at St Helens, and this will probably increase as St Helens has more outpatients capability and clinics, including evening clinics."

"We realised we needed expertise," explained Sue. "All the unit managers - from

do."

Sue had earlier attended the Lancer Academy course at the company's head office near Cambridge. She arranged for managers to complete the two-and-a-half-day course at the northern office, in nearby Runcorn. Although run by Lancer Academy there's no mention of Lancer during the training course, which is accredited by City & Guilds and JAG.

"Training and competency



Staff nurses in the endoscopy unit remove scopes for the next list



Tom Hall.

Through the OJEU process, and in conjunction with its PFI partner, the trust's team first produced a very detailed tender document for the St Helens scheme. This, together with equipment specification,



required suppliers to advise on five-year running costs, testing, the

cost of chemicals, cost per 1,000 cycles, cross over costs with duplex RO plant, uninterrupted power supplies, transport and other intricacies.

"There was a core list of six suppliers," explained Sue. "When considering the various tenders we looked at other installations and spoke to users. At the time, Lancer was one of



the few with a proper pass-through system. They came well recommended for service.

"We wanted something that would support the very busy workload we have and were looking for the assurance of reliability."

The St Helens contract was awarded to Lancer who handled the project management of the scheme through to its completion on time in December 2008.

The first to be completed of the trust's two JAG accredited facilities, St Helens' endoscope decontamination facility has three, double chamber Lancer Fibro-Cleaner pass-through AERs, and with two trays per chamber, each machine is able to process four scopes at a time in a quick and convenient cycle. There's a further double chamber unit in the urology department.

The easy to use connectors are all colour coded



In the clean room, and at various user department locations around the hospital, are eleven Lancer Fibro Cleaner FD8E drying and storage cabinets that each hold eight scopes for up to 72 hours in aseptic conditions.

RO water is supplied by a duplex system installed by Environmental Water Systems. The duplex facility ensures continuous availability of supply.

"Engineering manager Paul Leonard's attention to detail was phenomenal, he gave a meticulous tender. Although complex to administer it was very clear and helped the trust to get where it is now," explained Lancer's regional sales manager, John Howarth. "Each facility was specified with 30% extra capacity built-in. This also allows for service and validation days.

"The Lancer and EWS engineers worked with the hospital team to ensure there was no disruption to patient services," added John. "At St Helens, Goldsworth Medical did a good job too, acting as the small scale structural contractor for electrical wiring, specialised drainage, and stainless steel fabrication of trims. They also

fitted the Magnahelic gauges which measure the pressure differential for the clean room."

The second, equally exhaustive tender, for Whiston Hospital was placed April 2009, with Lancer ultimately successful in winning the contract. Once again there are four, double chamber, pass through AERs and eleven drying and storage cabinets.

Sue added: "Both Lancer and EWS were very supportive



throughout both contracts, working weekends if required to help us maintain our service to patients. And with the ongoing service their engineers have really become part of the family here, in particular Lancer's lead engineer, Chris Hill, who has done a superb job on both sites."

John Howarth said: "Within the tender the first 12 months service and weekly, quarterly and annual testing is all delivered, so the engineers are there on a weekly basis and have built up a good rapport with the staff."



EWS's duplex RO system at Whiston Hospital

Describing the two facilities, the trust's AE(d), Tom Hall, said: "Fundamentally, once the contracts were awarded the whole operation of the projects was taken over by Lancer who ensured the smooth installation, and running through to completion.

"Both Lancer and EWS bent over backwards to achieve the satisfactory end result. There's total segregation between clean and dirty, and compliant equipment in-line with all requirements. Independent monitoring of the drying cabinets allows for total quality assured release of the endoscopes."

So how do the staff feel about their dedicated roles and working with the equipment?

Carol Wignall and Jacquinta Hegarty, staff nurses in the endoscopy unit, said: "It's like we've gone to heaven. Now we don't have to clean the scopes there's more time for direct patient care."

Already referred to by hospital staff as 'The Laundrette', Whiston Hospitals' endoscope decontamination facility has been in operation for just two months. On duty there were endoscopy technicians Irene Williams, Julie Wiggins and Glen Whittigham.

"We've worked in sterile services before so we know we've got to respect the equipment," explained Irene. "Being a dedicated team we have ownership of the equipment. We've adapted very well, we're a team already, and we get on well with the engineers, there's a good rapport.

Sue agreed and added: "Because the technicians are dedicated they appreciate the need to keep the equipment sweet and maintain standards."

At Whiston, the Lancer equipment came into its own a little earlier than anticipated. Just after the new machines had completed their commissioning, they had to go live two weeks earlier than scheduled when the old equipment they were replacing could not be used due



The AERs use Lancer chemicals

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to a TVC problem.

Sue recalls: "At the time patients were still being treated in the old hospital, next door, and we had to run over with the clean scopes to the old departments - but there was still no disruption to the lists."

Explaining Lancer's role, John Howarth said: "As for these two schemes, we're now increasingly being asked to give total solutions for the new breed of centralised decontamination units, delivering a project managed solution of AERs, drying cabinets, chemicals, ongoing service and RO system.

"There's a 15-minute UPS back-up covering the AERs, drying cabinets and RO unit. This maintains a stable supply during any outages before the generator kicks-in and covers



Ready for use at St Helens Hospital

for the monthly generator switch-over test."

While there's tracking and traceability with independent monitors of the AERs and associated drying cabinets, the trust will be installing an electronic system in the coming months. And while the Lancer machines at Whiston have data outputs ready to be connected to the new system, those at St Helens will be adapted accordingly.

The trust is also now reviewing the possibility of

extending the period that scopes can safely remain in the drying cabinets to seven days. This follows validation tests carried out by respected French company Biotech Germande.

"I've been incredibly well supported by my colleagues and the staff throughout these two contracts," said Sue. "And the service and relationship with Lancer has been superb. They've not let us down and the machines really do get worked hard. The equipment supports the increasing workload of the

staff and I can't praise the technicians enough. The whole team has a good working relationship with Lancer and EWS.

"With the units being centralised, my job is to have a decontaminated scope at the point-of-use without delaying the list," concluded Sue. "It's all about patient safety. You can't take risks. You have to be 100% sure. In fact, I had a colonoscopy myself recently and I had every confidence - in the equipment and the staff."

For further information, call Lancer UK on 01223 861 665, e-mail sales@lancer.co.uk or visit www.lancer.co.uk



The clean side at St Helens Hospital



Sue Dickinson and Lancer's John Howarth

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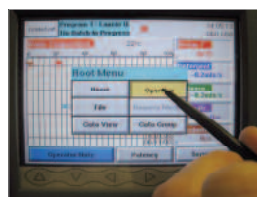
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