Case Study

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board improves operations with Bidetime Business Intelligence

Overview

Challenge

Managers and clinicians wanted faster and simpler access to information, to help reduce waiting times and improve efficiency.

Why Bidetime?

Bidetime specialises in providing data warehouse, business intelligence and performance management solutions to the NHS.

As a certified IBM Cognos Solutions Provider it combines a deep understanding of the needs of healthcare organizations with world-class software.

With ready-made solutions for healthcare providers, implementations are quick, tailored to fit an organisation's needs and significantly less expensive than other providers.

Bidetime's solutions also provide a cost-effective pathway to the future as the needs of NHS Trusts evolve over time.

Solution

Bidetime's Intelligent Warehouse, to ensure data accuracy, was delivered with IBM Cognos together with a suite of Starter-Pack reports, dashboards and other solutions that allow the Trust to be up and running very quickly.

Benefits

Transformed waiting list management and helped meet Government targets.

Significantly reduced administration within the Information Department.

Provided faster access to information across the Health Board.

Improved access to performance data through dashboards.

"The technology has transformed the way we manage waiting times, not only creating organisational efficiencies but, much more importantly, improving the services and care we offer our patients."

Alan Roderick
Head of Performance & Information
Cardiff & Vale University Health Board

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board provides health services for over 445,000 people living in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan as well as serving a wider population across South and Mid Wales for specialties such as paediatric intensive care, specialist children's services, renal services, cardiac services, neurology, bone marrow transplantation and medical genetics.

The Trust manages nine hospitals and 17 health centres, and also provides services in health centres run by NHS partner organizations in Cardiff and Vale and beyond. It also delivers primary care services, including GPs, community pharmacists, dentists and optometrists.

Challenges faced

At a time when the NHS is under more pressure than ever to meet government targets, keeping costs under control, having ready access to information and improving organisational efficiency are critical.

The Information Department is tasked with supplying patient information and organisational data to senior managers and clinicians - from referral time data, waiting time lists and treatment information to ad-hoc requests, for example, for analysis of department or consultant performance.

The Information Department was becoming swamped with requests and a bottle neck of reports was building up.

"Managers and clinicians were clamouring for faster and simpler access to information but the admin-intensive nature of preparing such reports meant we simply couldn't deliver analysis as fast as we would have liked," explained Kerry Ashmore, Information and Modernisation Manager at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

"We also felt that the number of different tools we were using in the department was adding to the problem by creating inefficiencies and could be vastly improved with a more centralised approach," she added.

Strategy followed

Firstly a project board to oversee the development of a new approach was established. People from across the Health Board, with both technical and clinical expertise, were consulted.

A number of specialist technology providers were invited for site visits and asked to present their recommendations to improve the reporting processes. The one that stood out was IBM's Business Partner, Bidetime which has specialised in delivering information systems to healthcare organizations for over 17 years.

One of the first steps was to implement Bidetime's Intelligence Warehouse. This is a central repository that holds data from multiple systems across the Health Board. This included patient information and management data, along with information on pathology, radiology, pharmacy, prosthetics, care pathways, inpatients and outpatients, diagnostics, therapy plans and mental health. Crucially this meant that there was one source of 'trusted data'.

IBM Cognos Business Intelligence software was then implemented – on top of the warehouse. This gave the Health Board the tools to turn reporting into a self service system. Managers and clinicians across the organisation, with only limited IT skills, can now access automatically generated routine reports at the touch of a button.

In addition, Bidetime's solution helps the more technically able staff, such as those within the Information Department, to perform faster manipulation of data for ad-hoc analysis and helping them to respond to more complex enquiries.

Benefits realised

One of the most immediate benefits, and one that impacts directly on patient care, has been to cut waiting times across the Health Board.

"The technology has transformed the way we manage waiting times, not only creating organisational efficiencies, but much more importantly, improving the services and care we offer our patients," said Roderick.

Middle and senior managers now have almost real-time access to the latest data. Waiting list data for a particular day's position is available by 10 a.m. the following morning.

"The system has been designed so that users are no longer reliant on the Information Department to run reports for them… and can view analysis and make the necessary decisions more quickly than before," explained Ashmore.

The technology is also helping behind the scenes. It's enabling the Health Board to prepare performance dashboards and scorecards for further efficiencies.

Another example, analysis of outpatient information such as follow-up rates and 'Did Not Attend' (DNA) rates… allowing divisional directorates as well as specialty-level managers to see the right information.

Within the Information Department there has been a huge reduction in administration effort, as the volume of basic number crunching has been significantly reduced.

"My team has been able to change its focus to provide much more added value to information than before. Self service means staff across the Health Board can undertake basic requests for analysis themselves, leaving us free to focus on supporting users and undertaking the more complex analyses that are sometimes required," said Ashmore. "We're finding the IBM Cognos Software technology very intuitive to use so we're able to better understand subtleties in the information and ensure it is interpreted correctly."

Future

Because of the positive effect that Bidetime's implementation of IBM Cognos has had on meeting waiting time targets, the Health Board is planning to incorporate all Accident and Emergency data into the system within six months.

In addition, patient-level costing is an area of focus of the entire NHS.

"We believe that the system will help us evaluate the true cost of treating a patient by building up an image of the number of tests required, the diagnosis process, operations, admission and discharge as well as drugs information for specific complaints," explained Ashmore.

Notes

The main part of this report was commissioned by IBM.

IBM Business Analytics solutions deliver world-leading planning, consolidation and BI software, support and services.

Bidetime has over 20 years experience delivering advanced performance management solutions in the healthcare sector.

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