

CASE STUDY: NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE

ASSURING QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY AND PATIENT CARE

“ We provide a time critical service. For each incident we respond to we have to complete a Patient Report Form. Each day we generate on average 2,000 such forms. The ability for us to rapidly consolidate and analyse this information is key. Utilising the Fusion solution we can now capture and process this data in a timely manner. We are now able to monitor the performance levels of our paramedics, identify areas for skills development and provide overall improvement in our service.

BRIAN MCNEILL, HEAD OF TRAINING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE, NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

Every year paramedics and emergency technicians at the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service complete over 700,000 Patient Report Forms. The information gathered is used to generate reports, which in turn are used to measure the performance of the Ambulance Service. Using Fusion software, the data from these forms is scanned and processed electronically. Prior to this, however, the data had to be keyed manually by office staff. An incredibly time-consuming task, this led to massive backlogs and as a result, any reports generated were out of date and of little value in measuring or improving the service.

” THE NEED

To ensure the latest available information was being used in generating accurate and actionable reports, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service needed to automate its data capture from Patient Report Forms. Processing, reporting, storage and retrieval of these documents could also benefit from automation. Up to date and accurate reporting is critical for measuring clinical skills, the types of treatment and the level of individual crew competence. The information gathered can also play an important role in the need to audit drug usage in compliance with legislative standards.

“ Previously the data recorded on the Patient Report Form was manually input. This arrangement was proving unsatisfactory. Retrieving the information was labour intensive, poor quality and of limited use. In addition too much time was elapsing between the form being completed and when it was processed. It was proving very difficult to generate meaningful and timely reports. Also, as a consequence of the political situation in Northern Ireland, Patient Report Forms are often submitted as evidence in court cases. Our inability to access and retrieve forms easily from earlier incidents was becoming a serious issue.

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THE SOLUTION

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service selected the Fusion suite of software to automate its data capture and processing. They also engaged the Formic Professional Services team to create a customised form using the powerful yet intuitive integrated design module. The result is an easy to complete tickbox form with faster and more accurate information capture. If a Patient Report Form is required for evidence at court or other official purposes, the Formic FormStore module with its comprehensive search capability, combined with an optional disk jukebox, allows for safe, accurate and rapid data archiving and retrieval.

THE RESULT

With the Fusion solution in place, all data is assessed and quality assured to the highest standards. As a result, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service has been able to increase the effectiveness of its reporting to the Trust Board. Additionally, by tracking all clinical activity and using other measures to deliver improvements in patient care, the service also complies with the mandatory requirement to monitor the performance levels of paramedics. The results are then incorporated into the skills profiles to form the basis of a training and development plan.

CUSTOMER DETAILS

Brian McNeill
Head of Training and Quality Assurance, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

FUSION USER SINCE

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MAIN BENEFITS GAINED

- Improved quality and accuracy of information
- Enhanced usage and timeliness of reporting
- More focussed training and development for paramedics
- Elimination of manual data entry
- Improved patient care and overall service
- Ability to comply with various regulatory requirements
- Easy access and retrieval of stored images
- Monitoring of performance levels of paramedics
- Quickly identify variations in service and take remedial action
- Provide input to standards and procedures

“ With the Fusion solution we comply with regulations that govern the monitoring of paramedic skills. This provides a mechanism for identifying areas for their further development and training. In Northern Ireland, we can now take part in national proposals to develop the skill set and expand the range of drugs administered by the ambulance crews. This has had a very positive impact on our staff and the level of service we provide. ”

BRIAN MCNEILL