

Automation streamlines outpatient updates and e-prescribing at WSFT



West Suffolk
NHS Foundation Trust

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust faced a number of integration challenges, particularly with its iExpress Patient Administration System. It has now selected SX, NDL's RPA Platform, to overcome these. The first project used SX to enable automatic updates between new outpatient check-in kiosks and iExpress. The Trust then used the platform to integrate its Aria chemotherapy e-prescribing system with the Somerset Cancer Register, enabling it to meet the latest stringent government requirements for data submission. West Suffolk now plans to use SX to support more integration and mobile working projects.

The Challenge

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, based in Bury St Edmunds, is a 460-bed hospital serving a population of 275,000. It prides itself on being in the vanguard of technology: in particular, it has carried out a wide programme of integration between central and departmental systems. It did however face challenges over integrating with some of its older technology, including its iExpress Patient Administration System.

One area where this was a problem was when checking in outpatients and verifying their personal details. This was being carried out by receptionists and was taking up too much of their time: in particular, they had to manually update the PAS. West Suffolk wanted to develop its own self-service kiosk system and it needed this to integrate seamlessly with the PAS.

The Trust looked at conventional integration solutions but was unable to find anything which would link the new kiosks to the PAS. It therefore had to take a different approach.

Key Benefits

- Efficient patient check-in
- Streamlined updating of oncology databases
- More consistent patient data
- Lower administrative overhead
- Saves clinician time

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**Once again SX
just seemed to fill
the gap**



Liam McLaughlin, IT Systems & Development Manager, WSFT

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The Solution

SX

Product
Robotic Process Automation

West Suffolk found the solution in SX NDL's RPA Platform. This is a cost-effective, flexible and versatile alternative for integration which avoids the need to use individual vendor APIs or adaptors. It links to and from the front office or joins back-office applications together, dramatically improving business processes and workflows.

NDL developed a proof of concept for West Suffolk which showed very quickly that SX would meet West Suffolk's exact requirements. It therefore decided to use the tool to integrate the new kiosks with the PAS.

Now, when patients arrive for an appointment, they enter their day and month of birth in one of the kiosks in the outpatients department. Once the patient has checked in, they are asked to verify their personal details. SX then automatically updates the PAS with the check-in and with any changes to the details. Approximately 500 appointments go through the system each day.

The Benefits

As a result of implementing the check-in kiosks and integrating them with the PAS, **receptionists no longer have to carry out this distracting task**, nor do the time-consuming process of checking and updating personal details. There have been other unforeseen benefits: one example is in the physiotherapy clinic. Previously clinicians would have to come out to the waiting room to check whether patients had arrived.

Now this information is automatically transferred from the kiosks and displayed on a large screen so they can see the patient's arrival instantly. The department wrote unprompted to the IT Systems team to say what a difference this had made to them, saving a considerable amount of time.

Following the success of the check-in integration, the IT Systems team identified another area which would benefit from integration using SX. The Trust had already implemented Aria, Varian's complex oncology information system which manages the prescribing and administration of chemotherapy drugs. The Trust is also required to update the Somerset Cancer Register, which covers every aspect of cancer treatment including site, data set, regimen, treatment cycles and drug administration. This data is then used for various national audits of cancer treatment.

Updating data between Aria and Somerset was being carried out manually, which took up significant clerical time: while there are not huge volumes of patients, the complexities of treatment are considerable. This task was likely to become even more time-consuming as, from April 2014, the Trust would be required to provide large amounts of additional data to meet new Government requirements.

West Suffolk wanted to avoid having to invest in extra resource for this. It therefore needed to find a way to automate the very complex transfer of data between these two systems. Based on the experience of the check-in kiosks, it realised that SX would support this second integration and has now used it to enable the sharing of data between Aria and Somerset.

What's Next?

Now that the Trust has experienced the benefits of SX, it is moving on to other projects. Its next integration is likely to be streamlining internal patient referrals by consolidating GP letters and Choose & Book appointment requests. Currently this is carried out through a variety of paper-based and electronic processes. It is now intending to use SX to manage the capture and automatic transfer of all referrals into its internal Kanos electronic document management system.

The Trust is also now looking at using MX, NDL's Mobile Application Platform. This allows users to design, deploy and manage multiple bespoke and secure mobile applications across different types of devices. Using these applications, mobile workers can operate on- or offline, taking information from back-office systems with them and updating it remotely.

Plastic surgery consultants had previously asked if they could use iPads to take photographs of patients before, during and after treatment. This would enable them to explain more clearly to the patient exactly what they should expect and how they are progressing. This was not possible previously because of security concerns. Using MX however would overcome this: data is held securely on an encrypted database which meets stringent government security stipulations. According to Liam McLaughlin, "MX seems the ideal solution".

Liam McLaughlin believes the NDL Digital Transformation Suite is the solution to a number of issues they didn't think they could solve.

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I would describe it as a bit of magic. We were well placed on integration but we knew there were some gaps which we didn't think we could fill. SX has given us the ability to overcome this in a very easy way. It's a really useful tool in our integration toolkit which will now go further than just filling these gaps. We can see all sorts of other uses for it, in particular taking us into the mobile arena which we didn't think we'd be able to do. It's going to be incredibly valuable to us



Liam McLaughlin
IT Systems & Development Manager, WSFT

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For more information about NDL's Digital Transformation Suite;

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