

At the Heart of Scotland's Newest Hospitals: Improving the Patient Experience



NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) Seeks Innovation, Investment Protection

Glasgow's Queen Elizabeth University Hospital (QEUH), and the adjoining Royal Hospital for Children (RHC), constitute one of the largest acute care hospitals in the United Kingdom. The Queen Elizabeth University Hospital has 14 floors which stand on a site as big as five football pitches offering 7,500 rooms, 30 operating theatres, 34 lifts and the largest emergency department in Scotland. All 1,109 adult general beds are in private ensuite rooms with outside views, as are the general beds in the Royal Hospital for Children.

The new hospital facility opens a window onto a whole new approach to patient care. Planners examined new ways to improve the overall patient experience using state-of-the-art systems, while also leveraging existing investments across the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) network.

A key focus for Karen McSweeney, Telecommunications General Manager, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, was how best to equip staff with business communication tools in a large-scale environment with some 6,000 phone extensions.



Challenges

- Improve the overall patient experience in a new hospital environment
- Focus on innovation while being mindful of ROI and investment protection
- Develop best practices to be applied to the broader NHSGGC environment

“With the size of the hospital,” says McSweeney, “we are very dependent on collaboration and communication tools. Consequently, we’re in a shift from the old view, which was: if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it. Our approach now is: stay at the forefront of technology, and not lag behind.”

Pocket Power

NHSGGC is home to several major specialist services such as renal medicine, transplantation and vascular surgery, staffed with specialists in these areas. Focusing on arming these specialist physicians, or consultants, and other health care professionals with more effective communication tools is a priority.

Due to the size of the site, it is not uncommon for secretaries to be in one building, consultants in another, and wards in yet another. “Previously, to reach a consultant, you had to phone them or page them, then wait for them to find a phone,” McSweeney observed. “Missing calls was not an unlikely possibility.”

“In our new model, consultants ‘carry their extension in their pocket,’” McSweeney says. The hospital relies on Avaya one-number portability for this.

Consultants not only travel on campus, but also across the Board sites, across Scotland and the UK. The NHSGGC vision is to use presence and instant messaging so that secretaries, operators handling public calls, and others can see at a glance the availability of physicians.

NHSGGC has 67 other sites. Approximately 85% of its 30,000 extensions are served by a mix of legacy systems. Working with BT as its principal partner, McSweeney’s strategy is to ultimately have three core Avaya Aura® sites, with survivable gateways at the edge.

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– **Karen McSweeney**, Telecommunications General Manager, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Value Created

- IP-based digital environment supports 6,000 room hospital
- Efficiencies in patient transfer, diagnostic services, and emergency care aided by communication tools
- Converged IP best practices developed that can be applied to other NHSGGC hospitals

“BT developed an elegant, feature-rich solution,” says McSweeney. “We can use our legacy infrastructure and, as we refurbish older buildings, we can simply transition voice services across to the new core Avaya Aura® Platform.”

Agile Nursing

Providing mobility tools for the nursing staff has been a major focus.

“Nurses are no longer tied to fixed stations and allied healthcare professionals are much more mobile on the campus,” remarks McSweeney. “They’re equipped with agile mobile technology enabling them to stay in contact with patients, colleagues and patient information systems throughout their working day.”

Spread out in the facility, nurses are equipped with wireless handsets from Avaya DevConnect Partner Ascom. “The staff love them,” comments McSweeney. “The wireless handsets integrate so well with the Aura® platform.”

“Because of the way Avaya Aura® is engineered, you have choices,” she adds. “You can call a nurse and they can answer from a desk phone or an Ascom handset.”

“The Wi-Fi handset integrates straight into the switch, just like a desk phone,” McSweeney remarks. “It’s one of the best integrations I have seen.”

Promising Future

“Avaya has definitely made the path to a unified IP world relatively easy for us,” says McSweeney. “They are quite innovative in their approach to converged IP communications.”

A sense of shared purpose and teamwork have been important elements in the success to date at NHSGGC. “Avaya has held our hand,” says McSweeney. “They have acted as a part of the project team, with a strong focus on the customer.”

Would she do anything differently? “If I had to do it all over again,” responds McSweeney “I would do it exactly the same way.”

Considering the big picture, McSweeney is pleased with the progress so far, and excited about the direction in which NHSGGC is headed. “Avaya has earned my trust,” she adds. “I am very optimistic about the future.”

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General Manager, NHS
Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Solutions

- Avaya Aura® Platform
- Avaya Aura Messaging
- Avaya Aura® Communications Manager
- Client Enablement Services
- Avaya Aura® Systems Manager
- Avaya 9600 Series IP Deskphones
- Avaya Aura® Session Manager
- 3rd party wireless IP handsets

About NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, located in West Central Scotland, is the largest health board in the United Kingdom, serving 1.2 million people and employing 38,000 staff. It consists of the unitary council areas of the City of Glasgow, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire and together with the towns of Chryston, Moodiesburn, Muirhead and Stepps in North Lanarkshire. It also provides some services to the East Kilbride area in South Lanarkshire.

The Board provides strategic leadership and performance management for the entire local NHS system in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area, with the aim that services are delivered effectively and efficiently.