Nottingham University Hospitals automate £850m income process

Civica's ProAuto saves over 2 days processing time per month

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust is a large acute teaching hospital servicing a population of around 2.5 million people and supplying specialist services to 4 million people in the wider region. The hospital's income is over £850 million a year, managed and processed using Civica SLAM.

Nottingham have been a Civica customer for a number of years and although content with the SLAM system and its processing capability, due to an increase in data volume they began struggling with the management and importing of data. With growing requirements for more detailed and frequent information across the NHS, they looked to ProAuto to improve the efficiency of their income processing and reporting.

Informed decision making based on timely information

The Trust use Civica SLAM to process their income information twice monthly with a team of just a couple of people. They had used a combination of in-house resources and 3rd party applications to support the process of loading data into SLAM. As national tariff becomes increasingly complex, the requirement for greater income awareness and better income management continues to grow. To address this, Nottingham turned to Civica to help improve the efficiency of their income process.

The Trust were aware of the ProAuto module and how it had been implemented elsewhere. The intention of the implementation was to reduce the manual burden of loading SLAM which includes 19 individual MEDWAY PAS feeds alone.

This would result in releasing the income experts at Nottingham to spend more time understanding, analysing and engaging the organisation about their income position. Unlike many other sites, Nottingham had two challenges; the first being that they were a very large acute and the second being the requirement for the income team to remain the owners of this process.

Automation – releasing time from processing to add value

In order to combat these challenges, Nottingham decided to implement the ProAuto module. Utilising Civica's unique expertise, not only in the technical software solution but also in NHS National Tariff, ensured that the process was efficient, visible and auditable. As a result, Nottingham have now automated the loading, calculation and reporting processes of SLAM.

The Trust are particularly exceptional in that despite being a very large site, they achieved this within the finance team without onerous involvement from informatics, ahead of schedule and within budget.

The twice monthly loading process that previously took over 20 hours per month, has now been reduced to between 2 and 3 hours per reporting cycle, releasing time for income experts to analyse and report income information. As processing "jobs", are now scheduled to run overnight, further time efficiencies are gained resulting in 'more hours in the day' to work with the information.

This process has enabled half of a whole time equivalent Band 5 post from the Commissioning Team to be flexed into the Costing Team in response to increasing demands.

> "Whilst the process had been refined, it was still reliant on individual knowledge. We needed a solution which would enable reporting to be produced consistently, quickly and accurately and without depending on specific team members. The solution would also seek to improve the transparency of the process to assist with the analysis of the data by Trust colleagues."
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> **Carol Webster,
> Commissioning Information Officer
> Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust**

The benefits

- Faster turnaround of data
- Improved operational understanding
- Transparent twice monthly information
- Quality of monthly variance analysis improved
- Freeing up valuable staff time

- Reduction in loading time (up to 10 hours per reporting cycle saved)
- Greater process resilience
- Capitalising on enterprise reporting functionality
- Increased capacity within the working day

"We needed to move from data to information, supported by operational understanding and validation.

As the data is now produced earlier in the process, we can use this additional time to work with business partners, service managers and clinicians to understand and explain what is going on with our income position.

Civica have been open and transparent with the Trust during the process. They have delivered the project quicker than anticipated and under budget, which has allowed us to further strengthen our reporting and validation process. We have hosted visits from other Trusts to share what we have done as it is seen as best practice."

Paul Antunes Goncalves, Assistant Director of Finance
Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

"This project has been driven by the need to have a grip on the organisation's financial position; traditionally the NHS manages costs through cost centre allocations, at NUH we wanted to manage both income and cost with a strong focus on margin. To do this we required in-month income earlier in the month end process. Normally there is a trade-off between timeliness and accuracy, ProAuto offered a solution that addressed the timeliness and ensured the accuracy. As a result, this has given us a greater understanding of our income position and the impact this has on our cost base.

NUH has been selected as the preferred provider for Sherwood Forest Hospitals. Our next step is to integrate the two teams and produce accurate and robust data. ProAuto will support this and ensure that speed of reporting is maintained.

Further afield we are exploring the use of weekly income reporting that will give us a clearer picture on where our monthly income is likely to perform."

Duncan Orme,
Deputy Director of Finance
& Procurement