

Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

Civica SmartMail transforms breast screening appointments.

The Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust carries out thousands of breast screening appointments each year. Nationally, around 20% of screening appointments are missed – with each missed appointment costing the NHS money in terms of time and resources being wasted.

Civica SmartMail is now helping the trust to send and track communications more easily and effectively, with the goal of improving attendance and the service it provides to patients.

The Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (RFL) is one of the biggest providers of cancer care in the UK. The London Breast Screening Programme Administration Hub, hosted by RFL, supports six breast screening services, which serve over 1.3 million people across London and Hertfordshire.

Across the NHS, missed appointments lead to more than £290M of wasted costs. But even more importantly, good attendance at screening appointments

leads to better outcomes for patients. It increases the number of cancers diagnoses and decreases health inequalities in the communities served.

One of the reasons clients miss appointments is poor communication from their healthcare provider. When thousands of letters are sent every day, there is a lot that can go wrong.

New solutions

Sending around half a million breast cancer screening appointment letters each year, the RFL wanted to improve its screening communication process and reduce the chance of a missed appointment. However, the limitations of the previous system were making progress difficult.

Lack of full integration with Breast Screening's patient administration systems (NBSS) meant there was always a risk of error and duplication. The process to confirm postage of communication was clunky and required

going through the support team and without an integrated SMS/email solution, messages were more likely to be input incorrectly and miss their target. Finally, it was both costly and time-consuming for RFL's staff to edit and change letters themselves.

Problem solved "out of the box"

Following a competitive procurement process, RFL selected Civica's fully digital, cloud-based SmartMail solution to manage its breast cancer screening communications. As well as providing all the functionality, the trust needed some "out of the box" thinking; SmartMail's extra features have enabled RFL to build a more advanced strategy for improving attendance.

Implementation of SmartMail took just four weeks from start to finish, including bespoke onsite training for users and managers.

Key outcomes



Easier, accurate and flexible letter creation



Instant changes possible via user-friendly web portal



Accurate tracking of letter delivery



SmartMail's Key advantages for RFL

- Integration with NBSS. This reduces manual effort and the risk of error when sending communications and means letters can be sent in a NBSS proprietary document format. Addresses are validated on a continuing basis.
- Flexible communication. SmartMail gives the Trust a wide range of options for communication, including e-delivery, accessible formats and the ability to send individual letters as well as batches.
- Easier for trust staff to use. Using SmartMail's web portal, RFL staff can easily amend letter templates without having to go back to their provider. Users can also preview exactly what will be sent to each client.
- Proof and visibility of communication. SmartMail includes end-to-end letter tracking so RFL staff know whether communications have been delivered, this offers bespoke reporting and makes it easy for staff to view queued and archived communications. Staff can even see which recipients have read electronically delivered letters.

Available through NHS SBS – Direct Award

As well as being fast and easy to implement, Civica SmartMail is straightforward to procure, as it is available via NHS SBS, under "Patient/Citizen Communications & Engagement Sols (SBS10175)". To learn more about Civica SmartMail or arrange a demonstration, please contact.

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