

Improving value-based patient outcomes



Stockport NHS Foundation Trust



Stockport NHS Foundation Trust is geared for change. By standardizing on a connected, cloud-based Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform, the trust is putting finance at the center of strategic decision-making, freeing resources to focus on innovation, increasing productivity, and improving value-based patient outcomes.

Working in close collaboration with Unit4 Professional Services, the trust upgraded from an on-premise Unit4 ERP implementation to Microsoft Azure Cloud in just one weekend – seamlessly and transparently to the end user community.

Key benefits include:

- Connected and automated critical healthcare finance and procurement processes using a unified, agile, and adaptive Unit4 cloud solution
- Transformed financial planning and analysis, accelerated the financial close, and improved decision-making
- Improved employee engagement and productivity with intuitive and adaptive finance platform
- Freed resources to concentrate on strategic issues, such as managing personal and protective equipment (PPE) inventory during the Covid-19 pandemic

Finance is a strategic partner to the NHS Trust

“Unit4 gives finance a seat at the top table.” That is how Andy Large, Associate Director of Finance, describes the impact of Unit4 at Stockport NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Stepping Hill Hospital as well as other community and specialist services in Stockport.

That table is where the trust’s Board of Directors meets to make decisions on everything from service delivery and operational performance, to strategic healthcare direction. Using the unified financial insights and connected data powered by Unit4, the trust’s executives have the intelligent finance data at their fingertips to make those informed decisions faster and drive healthcare

Industry

Healthcare

Location

Stockport, UK

Size

5,000 staff; £300m annual budget

Product

Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Challenges

Manage the health needs of an ageing population, in the face of rising expectations. Reimagine healthcare by innovating and delivering high-quality patient care, while simultaneously reducing costs.

Key metrics



Operational Efficiency

Performance above national average



Migrated transparently to cloud ERP in one weekend

“With Unit4, we can stay in front of the change, manage the trust’s £300 million annual budget more effectively, and improve the health of the population.”

Andy Large

Associate Director of Finance, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

innovation, while staying focused on patient-centric, value-based care.

This connected, intelligent finance data is important in today’s challenging healthcare climate. Coping with complex health needs, managing rising patient expectations, dealing with budget pressures and, of course, the Covid-19 pandemic are all placing significant pressure on the trust’s resources. Moreover, the trust operates an ageing property estate, so every maintenance investment needs to be judged wisely and monitored closely.

“We need a complete view of the trust’s financial position and results in order to respond faster to an ever-changing healthcare environment,” says Andy. “With Unit4, we can stay in front of change, manage the trust’s £300 million annual budget more effectively, and improve the health of the local population.”

A common view of data

At the heart of the trust’s Unit4 ERP platform sits Unit4 Financials. Comprising everything from a modern accounting hub, reporting, and payables, to revenue management, receivables, and expense management, this connected system enables the finance team to share – and act upon – one common view of data.

“Unit4 Financials is transformational on so many levels,” Andy explains. “First, it automates many of our routine finance processes, empowering the finance team to

devote more time to strategy and becoming a partner to the strategic direction of the trust. By freeing up time and simultaneously introducing more visibility and control, the solution is also creating a rewarding and engaging finance function. It’s a great place for our people to work.”

The people are similarly empowered to streamline procurement. Seamlessly integrated Unit4 Procurement functionality gives the team the tools to link direct to approved suppliers, understand spending patterns, and manage authorizations – all using powerful automated workflow. “The procurement process is so much easier with Unit4. The intuitive user experience and pre-built analytics enable the trust to maximize control over spending and minimize waste – ultimately ensuring as much investment as possible is channelled into helping clinicians and improving patient outcomes.”

In time, the trust aims to move to an end-to-end ‘procure-to-pay’ system, geared to providing complete visibility over the entire lifecycle of a transaction, including full insight into cash-flow and financial commitments.

Cloud: the direction of travel

This forward-thinking healthcare ERP system is all managed in a flexible and secure cloud environment. “Cloud is the direction of travel for Stockport NHS Foundation Trust,” says Andy. “Previously, we were using an on-premise Unit4 operating model, but the cloud offers a compelling mix of adaptability, responsiveness, and efficiency.

We upgraded the functionality from on-premise to Microsoft Azure Cloud on a like-for-like basis.”

He continues, “This upgrade was completed in one weekend. It was planned in close partnership with Unit4 Professional Services during the pandemic lockdown, and the Unit4 Account Manager was reassuring throughout. As Unit4 promised, the deployment was seamless and transparent to our end users.”

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a critical period for Stockport Trust, as it has been for health care providers globally. Unit4 ERP has helped meet the challenges of the past year, and will continue to be an important tool going forward.

With Unit4, the trust is able to analyze every aspect of its financial performance, using data as the evidence for decisions. Two years ago, for example, the trust reported a £30 million deficit, equivalent to 10 percent of its income. However, during the same period, the trust’s average cost of care benchmarked very favorably against other NHS Trusts – to the extent that Stockport NHS Trust was operating up to two percent more efficiently than the national average. “Unit4 gives us the insights and intelligence to interpret our financial situation, and make the necessary decisions needed to operate efficiently in support of patient care. It’s always there for us.”