

Case study: Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Trust implement Digital Dictation to improve turnaround times and reduce costs



Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust save £21k and reduce transcription turnaround times from 15 days to 3 in the first year with BigHand

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust is a major acute trust serving over 200,000 people in Wiltshire, Dorset and Hampshire. Every year they take care of over 40,000 A&E cases, 20,000 day surgery cases and 30,000 inpatient admissions. Their specialist services, such as burns, plastic surgery, cleft lip and palate, genetics and rehabilitation, extend to a much wider population of more than three million people. The Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre at Salisbury District Hospital covers most of southern England with a population of approximately 11 million people. The Trust's staff provide outpatient clinics in other locations in Dorset and Hampshire. Specialist staff hold outreach clinics in hospitals within the Wessex area and, in total; the Trust employed 4,116 staff in March 2010. This includes full and part-time staff.

Currently the Trust has over 300 users of BigHand's Digital Dictation software, with over 180 Authors and 80 Secretaries, covering 22 clinical departments including Urology, Plastics and Oral Surgery and Paediatrics. During the month of May 2011, this equated to the completion of over 12,000 Dictations.

The solution

BigHand Correspond is a customised Digital Dictation, Speech Recognition and clinical correspondence solution designed by the NHS for the NHS to replace tape and paper-based systems.

With BigHand, Clinicians, Medical Secretaries and Service Level Managers are provided with an intuitive, easy to use interface enabling them to easily create, track, transcribe and manage workloads, as well as allowing them to leverage additional options such as Speech Recognition, Outsourcing or smartphone-based Dictation.

The Trust completed an initial pilot in Orthopaedics and General Medicine between November 2008 and January 2009 to establish whether Digital Dictation and Speech Recognition could provide an easy to use and reliable solution to improving efficiency and saving costs within the Trust. The Trust elected to go to competitive tender in order to get a better understanding of the Digital Dictation suppliers in the healthcare market. In February 2010, they selected BigHand to roll-out Digital Dictation across the Trust.

Laurence Arnold, Director of Corporate Development

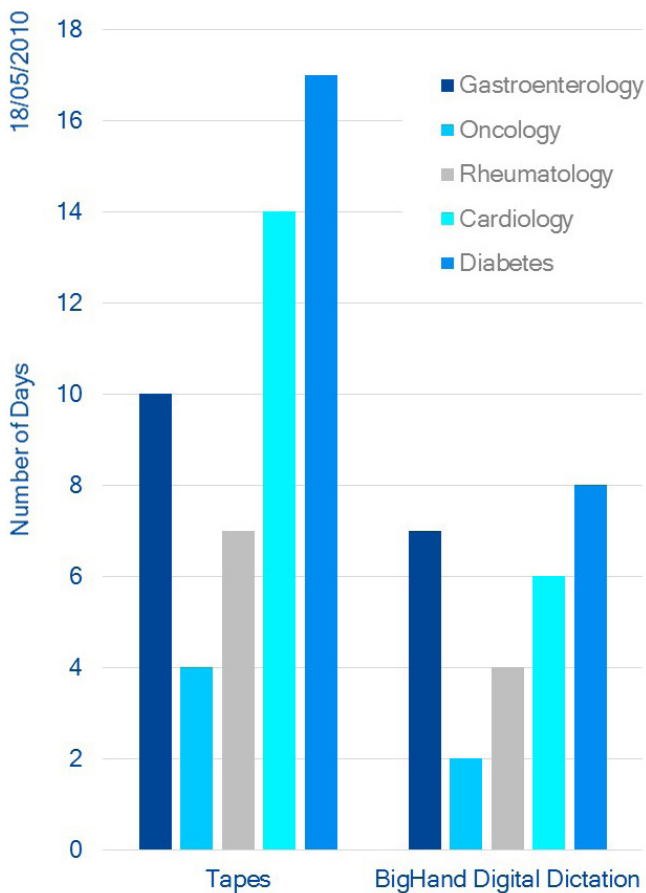
"The introduction of BigHand across the Trust has not only been an important component in our drive to become more cost effective, but has improved efficiency through the reduction in turnaround times."

Switching to digital

The main reason for converting to a digital platform was to be able to deliver a cost and efficiency saving by replacing analogue tape-based systems through the introduction of Digital Dictation. The aim was to improve the workflow of Dictations to enable quicker transcription of clinic letters.

Challenges before Digital Dictation

- Lost and damaged tapes
- The cost of using bank staff during periods of sickness absence, annual leave and peaks in dictation creation
- Typing backlogs
- Amount of workload never understood by secretaries – hidden volumes of work
- With the use of analogue tapes – no ability to performance monitor (dictations can now be tracked and progress plotted from start to finish)



The chart above shows how BigHand has improved the turnaround times. In Diabetes, for example when using tapes the turn around time from a clinic letter being typed, signed and actually posted was 17 days. Using BigHand this has significantly reduced to 8 days turn around time. We have seen similar improvements in Orthopaedic where it is now possible for secretaries are able to type Dictations as they are being Dictated in clinic.

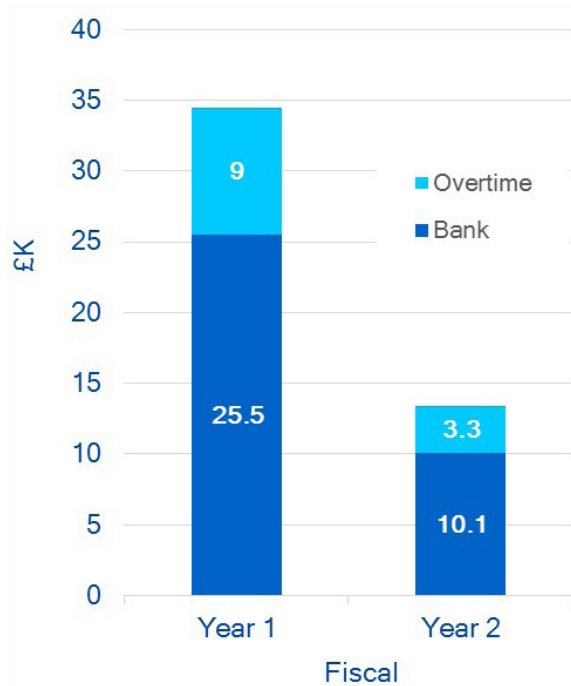
Efficiency benefits

as reported by secretarial staff



- Urgent letters can be easily identified and prioritised. This is essential for RTT/ cancer targets so that onward referrals can be made within 24 hours
- Dictations are available in real-time
- Dictations can be accessed from different locations
- For visiting Clinicians who run clinics at the Trust once/twice a week, letters can be typed and signed the same day (previously waited to the following week for signature and dispatch to GP)
- The sound quality is excellent
- Single letters can be done at any time without the need to find a letter on a tape
- When patients/GP's ring with queries, it is much easier to identify an individual dictation and find relevant information
- Where secretaries job share, it's much easier to see who has done what
- Clinic rooms/offices are set up with BigHand appliances so no need to take Dictation machine and tape to clinic/office.
- Frees up space on secretaries' desks as no need for transcription machines.
- Confidential Dictations can be sent to secretary only and not available for anyone else to view

Cost savings



The cost and efficiency savings achieved through the implementation of BigHand has contributed to the overall Trust cost saving plans, as well as assisting directorates in structuring secretarial support more efficiently.



"Since the implementation of BigHand we have been able to save £21k over year one in overtime/bank payments in our medicine directorate. In addition the transcription turnaround time decreased from 10-15 days prior to BigHand to 3-5 days (routine) with BigHand and allowing for 24 hours for all urgent letters."

Wendy Young, Medical Secretary

Benefits



As reported by consultant staff

- Dictations can be made in different locations across the Trust
- The ability to see progress of work
- It is less prone to failures
- Improved voice quality / higher clarity for audio-typists
- The ability to direct specific letters to specific people
- Confidence that letters will be typed and not lost (tapes)

As reported by Administration Managers

- Much better idea of volumes of work coming through and can flex the service much more effectively
- Having the BigHand reports enables the effective monitoring of turnaround times
- Cross cover for typing is more efficient during sickness or annual leave, reducing need for bank staff

