

State-of-the-art treatment centre uses latest technology to improve the patient experience

The Mount Vernon Treatment Centre is a prime example of a state-of-the-art NHS facility. At the heart of their innovative approach is an integrated touch screen system, designed to simplify check in, manage complex clinical pathways and make the lives of reception staff, nurses, clinicians and patients much easier. From day one, the results have been positive from all perspectives.

The client

Opened in February 2009, Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust's purpose built Treatment Centre at Mount Vernon Hospital comprises an outpatients department, day care unit, four theatres, plus wards for minor injuries, radiology and in-patients.



Replacing the previous two floor building (with its multiple reception desks) the new facility was designed with just one reception and waiting area from which to manage multiple clinical pathways. An electronic check in and reception appointment management system was a pre-requisite in order to ensure the most efficient patient experience and maximise the effectiveness of nurses, reception staff and clinicians.

Today the Mount Vernon Treatment Centre is justifiably seen as a trailblazer, promoting huge demand from other Hospitals and Trusts to see the results in action. Conceived from the outset as a pioneering facility, Mount Vernon Treatment centre is living up to its billing.

Client quotes

"Savience clearly ticked all the boxes, both with regard to operational complexity as well as for interface with our patients. They pulled out all the stops to do what was required of them."

**Karen Blackbond,
General Manager**

The problem

Moving from multiple receptions to one central area was always going to be difficult. Project Manager Janice Proctor was tasked with assessing how the outpatients departments used to work – and identifying what would need to change to provide the same or an improved level of service in a new environment.

Clearly a new approach was called for. Practical issues: lengthening queues, pressure on reception staff, and even the distances involved for nurses and clinicians to physically come and call patients to clinic were uppermost. But there was a desire for improved patient care too – and simplifying the patient journey goes a long way to enhancing the patient experience.

Staffing issues were also a key consideration. On the one hand, Janice knew that there wasn't any option to increase cover at Reception. On the other, any change in familiar systems and processes had to be carefully considered for impact on the existing staff complement. The Mount Vernon team were not looking to lose staff; just to use them more efficiently.

Finding the right provider with the right system was at the heart of the problem as a trial pre-installation would not be possible. That put an incredible onus on the initial testing and selection process.

The solution

In fact, despite the tight timescales, finding the right provider proved straightforward. Savience were the only company to correctly interpret Mount Vernon's test scenario requirements straight away. Within just 48 hours they produced a live demonstration incorporating their Clarity product set which met the initial check in and reception information requirements laid out by the project team.

Fast forward two months and Mount Vernon were delighted to have the system up and running. Some tweaks were requested – and Savience undertook some same day augmentations to customise the systems for an even closer fit with Mount Vernon's needs. Clarity is also flexible enough to accommodate the 25% of appointments not held within the PAS system via a simple manual intervention. The installation caused no operational problems at all.

Clarity incorporates touch screen patient check in kiosks feeding real time data directly into the reception management system (Savience Clarity). Savience Call-Out ensures patients are summoned in a timely and unobtrusive way as soon as the clinician is ready.

This integrated solution works smoothly and effectively from all perspectives. Reception staff can instantly see who has arrived and who hasn't, make changes to appointments (or set follow-ups) and track patient progress. Clinicians can view their day's appointments, see when a patient is ready and call them at the touch of a button. Sending patients onto new treatment pathways can also be done simply and easily. And with less time consumed by various admin duties, nursing staff can concentrate more fully on patient care.

Client quotes

"We knew we needed an electronic system to help manage the pressure on the Reception team. But we didn't have much time – literally only a few months before we were due to go live."

Janice Proctor,
Project Manager

Understandably, change can cause uncertainty. Nurse Manager, Christine Palmer recalls that there was "some apprehension" particularly among clinicians. In hindsight, the swift installation and resulting period of adaptation proved a positive. Janice Proctor believes that *seeing* the difference (rather than being 'sold' a concept) won greater acceptance as everyone could judge for themselves the benefits achieved.

From the patients' perspective too, the transition has been very smooth. With so many of them already accustomed to using similar check in facilities at their GP surgeries, there was minimal resistance. Within days, patients of all ages were clearly comfortable with using Savience Check-In (including many in their 80s).

Mount Vernon is delighted with the response they've received. Initial take up was estimated at around 50% and is increasing as staff continue to promote Check-In to outpatients. And to reassure any first time users, there are plenty of helpful volunteers to talk them through the process.



Results achieved*

- Over 16,000 successful check ins since implementation
- Less than 1% of appointments are not found
- Age distribution comparison demonstrates age is not a barrier (400 10-19 yr olds versus 2057 80+ yr olds)
- Most popular alternative language: Spanish

*Statistics for the period of March to July 2009

As usage of Check-In steadily increases, so queues have been dramatically (and visibly) cut. The path from checking in to consultation has been simplified, patient progress is easily tracked and as a consequence the demands on Mount Vernon's staff have been reduced. Previously five receptionists were required; now Reception functions smoothly with only one. Other staff members are stationed at various points along the clinical pathways to give patients any assistance they require.

Client quotes

"I think there really was an acute need for an automated system. Once the Savience products were on stream, the difference was startling."

**Janice Proctor,
Project Manager**

Next steps

Savience Clarity is already seen as a vital part of Mount Vernon's new ethos. Karen Blackbond believes: "We've got a complete system that really represents what we're doing."

Crucially, it is not seen as a static implementation. Savience have already customised the way the products work so that they fit perfectly with Mount Vernon's requirements. (That even extends to modulating the automated voice of Savience Call-Out to a tone and cadence that is deemed appropriate.) But developments aren't going to stop there...

There are also plans to further enhance the patient waiting room experience by incorporating educational and entertainment add-ons (such as Sky News). From an internal systems perspective, the Mount Vernon team will shortly implement an output data feed from check in to update PAS in real time. This will reduce the Trust's administrative burden still further, and continue to make more efficient use of staff resources.

Clearly this is much more than a supplier / customer relationship. Both parties see it as an evolving partnership; one that is benefitting patients most of all.

Client quotes

"The implementation of touch screen patient check-in and a patient call system has completely changed the reception and waiting room atmosphere. Queues are significantly reduced; patients and staff feel calmer; nurses concentrate on care instead of 'couriering' patients and notes from room to room. There's been a huge impact on the workloads. Even consultants are now asking if it can be implemented elsewhere. Quite honestly, I couldn't live without it now."

**Christine Palmer,
Nurse Manager**