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PRESS RELEASE

South Tyneside optimises workflow with a long-awaited Radiology application from Soliton IT

Hemel Hempstead, 1st June 2018. South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust provides hospital services in South Tyneside and community services in Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The Trust has one main hospital site – South Tyneside District Hospital and looks after thousands of patients in the community with over a million contacts every year.

As one of the largest departments in the hospital, the Radiology department offers a diagnostic and interventional imaging service. These services are supported by varying IT systems - PACS (Picture Archiving and Communication System) for routing clinical images around the hospital and a PAS (Patient Administration System) to provide patient information accordingly. Although these systems were the backbone of the department for over a decade, the workflow element of the system was in need of a refresh; the Trust did not use a dedicated RIS (Radiology Information System) and instead used a custom-built radiology module within their Silverlink PAS to manage workflow.

Installed in 1996, South Tyneside's PAS held some limitations for the modern Radiology department, mainly due to it being customised to adopt Radiology functions. This brought functional issues due to its lack of digital autonomy, and staff could not work via worklists, import and attach Electronic Request data to the attendance, scan hand-written requests into the attendance or import a patient's clinical history, which in turn impacted productivity within the department. **Bronia Fleet, Business Manager - Clinical Support Services** for the Trust, comments:

"We found our previous processes very manual and time-consuming, mainly due to the additional steps we had to put in place to reduce risk. The Trust ultimately wants to work paperless, enable staff to do things once rather than several times, and consequently reduce risk without additional precautionary safe-guarding steps."

PACS Manager Claire Weston adds:

"With the previous Radiology module, we couldn't identify priority to a request or vet - the system was not able to accommodate this and had little intuition in the specialist discipline to which we work."

The Trust was aware that more defined RIS systems had entered the market and this opportunity, along with the feedback from a new radiology-dedicated reporting system used within a neighbouring hospital, supported Bronia and the Radiology team in creating a business case for a new RIS and PACS system which prompted a significant investment into their Radiology IT framework.

The Trust's initial objective was to implement a PACS upgrade, provided by GE, along with a new fully-fledged RIS deployment to support and manage the clinical image system. Bronia comments:

“We knew that we would not get real benefits realisation of the new PACS if we didn’t have an effective RIS in place. Our Radiologists needed to be using platforms that were fit for purpose in this digital age and we needed to be sure of increased efficiency”.

Bronia, Claire and the assigned Project Team identified criteria for the new system. It had to provide a safe, low risk environment to allow South Tyneside to work to RCR (Royal College of Radiologists) recommendations, to record exactly what was needed considering the various extensive data outputs and have outside connectivity to provide clinical information externally. Practically, the system had to be user-friendly and provide visibility on arrival and vetting worklists - all clearly defined and configurable for each respective modality – and instil confidence to the Trust’s large group of Radiology staff that all clinical data was available on the system.

The Trust reviewed two RIS vendors for compliance with the **GE PACS integration and RIS efficiencies**. Soliton IT, a UK RIS developer, was recommended by the neighbouring hospital, as a nationally-leading vendor with a host of Radiology IT software solutions. After a demonstration of their RIS, Radiology+, the Trust opted for a site visit to a newly deployed Radiology+ site, Mid Cheshire NHS Trust, to see the system in use.

After several onsite demonstrations, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust chose Radiology+ RIS from Soliton IT. Claire explains:

“We liked everything about Radiology+ and could immediately see that it was simple to use and navigate. At this early stage, we could visualise the screens, how we could use it and even explain it to other people within the team. Mid Cheshire had a similar organisational set-up to us and could demonstrate the transition in terms that we could relate to.”

Radiology+ is a nationally renowned RIS in use by nearly 12,000 clinical personnel across the UK and Ireland. Designed, developed and supported in-house by Soliton IT from their Hemel Hempstead offices, this application has proven integration with UK PACS and offers both intuitive workflow logic and excellent standards of voice recognition (VR) support.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust went live with their **GE PACS upgrade** in February 2017 followed by **Radiology+ RIS** in January 2018, and the Trust quickly saw improvements. The new application provided the Trust with a concise view of radiology tasks, structured by simple and responsive worklist interfaces and driven by its secure automation of processes. Radiographers noted that the format of each screen was straightforward with all clinical information being to hand when needed. Users particularly liked the Messaging function which allowed quick, in-built communication between staff, and clerical burdens were eased when Radiology+ allowed signatures to be embedded into reports – making reporting output quicker and improving workflow around the department.

Bronia elaborates:

“Soliton IT is a company who is very knowledgeable of the Radiology discipline and our own system requirements. Here we have a company who lives and breathes radiology – and we knew we could trust our RIS with them. This was a refreshing change from some standard corporate vendors - we had one-to-one communication with the directors during deployment which made us feel listened to during times of pressure.”

Combined with the additional vetting functionality and statistical analysis options, the Radiology team at South Tyneside reaped the benefits of an applied, radiology-dedicated platform. The Trust has now renewed all workstations with full Desktop Integration and boasts two hundred-users of Radiology+. To further enhance the system, Bronia and the Radiology team are looking towards future developments into paperless working with the Radiology+ Mobile application and Self-Check in Kiosk.

A former Radiographer herself, Bronia comments on the Go-Live:

“I was amazed when the Trust performed the first ultrasound with the new RIS. From my many years as a Radiographer I was delighted to see that Radiology+ displayed everything that a Radiographer would want to see to support the patient pathway on one screen. It was such a positive experience to see staff engaging so quickly with the new Soliton RIS.”

Claire reflects on the deployment:

“This has been such a positive experience. The consultants are now working very effectively, and despite the fact that deploying a RIS was a huge task, at no point did I think that it wasn’t going to be fantastic.”

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About Soliton IT

Soliton IT is a healthcare-targeted solutions company based in UK and Australia. Established in 2004, we have designed, supplied and installed Radiology Information Systems (RIS) into UK NHS Trusts, clinics, teaching centres and private hospitals; incorporating elements of speech recognition, document production, workflow management and reporting applications. With particular expertise in multi-user/inter-site environments and system integration, Soliton IT is committed to providing healthcare sites with efficient, customisable and measurable solutions and is proud to be appointed as an approved supplier on the National Framework.

About Radiology+

Soliton IT has invested their application experience and sector knowledge to develop the leading solution – Radiology+ - the workflow based Radiology Information System (RIS). Designed specifically for managing busy Radiology departments, the solution is process –oriented; hosting a strong user interface, speech processing, patient messaging and self-check-ins, innovative functional features and management reporting - including activity reports and statistics dashboards. Radiology+ is fully compatible with all leading PACS, PAS and EPR.

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