



East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust: continually assessing system quality for CPA accreditation

When the Department of Clinical Laboratory Medicine within ELH NHS Trust required a centralised, customisable software system that could support them in maintaining and improving their quality management programme, they chose Q-Pulse from Gael Ltd.

With demand for services continuing to rise steeply and budgets remaining tight, laboratories in the NHS and internationally are implementing compliance management solutions like Q-Pulse to support their quality management systems (QMS) in continually assessing the quality of systems and their processes.

Serving the local populations of Blackburn and Burnley, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust provides high quality healthcare services for more than half a million people across East Lancashire and the surrounding area.

When the Department of Clinical Laboratory Medicine within the Trust required a centralised, customisable software system that could support them in maintaining and improving their quality management programme, they chose Q-Pulse from Gael Ltd.

For healthcare organisations like East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, Q-Pulse provides a fully integrated compliance management solution that supports quality management activities such as Auditing, Document Control and CA/PA Management.

Q-Pulse helps healthcare organisations to establish, maintain and improve compliance with European and international standards including ISO 15189 and ISO 17025, by enabling staff both to continually assess the quality of service that they provide and to identify opportunities for continual improvement.



The Trust offers care across three hospital sites using state-of-the-art facilities, and treats almost three quarters of a million patients a year, from planned operations and procedures to the most serious of emergencies.

The Trust's Department of Clinical Laboratory Medicine performs more than 60,000 pathology tests every week. And with demand rising steeply, the Department had to make sure that they could improve process efficiency and cost-effectiveness in order to continue to provide high-quality, patient-focused services.

In researching available solutions, senior laboratory managers had identified 3 key requirements that had to be met:

- enhance process efficiency within the Department by replacing difficult-to-manage paper-based systems
- increase systems effectiveness as well as the efficiency of the Trust's QMS by providing direct access to quality management system (QMS) information at the point-of-need
- develop the quality ethos within the Trust by motivating staff to commit to and participate in the QMS

In England, the Department of Health requires that all pathology and laboratory medicine services should be registered with an approved laboratory accreditation body. The majority of NHS laboratories are registered with, and accredited by, Clinical Pathology Accreditation (UK) Ltd.

In addition to being accredited by CPA, the Department of Clinical Laboratory Medicine is regulated and licensed by the Human Tissues Authority (HTA), as well as being assessed by the National Health Service Litigation Authority (NHSLA) under NHSLA Risk Management Standards for Acute Trusts.

'The work of the laboratories has increased from simple test results to include a more detailed involvement in diagnosis and treatment,' says Kevin Watson, Quality & Safety Manager at the Department of Clinical Laboratory Medicine. 'I have found Q-Pulse to be an excellent and versatile product for the support of the Department's QMS. Customer personalisation is crucial and Q-Pulse is perfectly placed to allow optimisation of the product.'

Prior to Q-Pulse's selection, staff had used paper-based systems that were difficult to manage effectively, and which were impacting the efficiency of processes. The subsequent introduction of a standalone database system to store QMS information increased the centralisation of documentation and records.

However, without direct access to the standalone system, departmental staff were unable to get information at the point of need, which restricted the effectiveness of the system and reduced the efficiency of the whole QMS.

'With Q-Pulse in place, we've been able to manage all of our documentation electronically, including our COSHH data,' says Kevin. 'As well as managing all error logging with Q-Pulse, we're also scheduling and managing all of our audits through the system.'

'We've now recorded all assets in the system and we're also in the process of revising our customer and supplier databases. In addition, all meetings are logged electronically and the Analysis and Workload data allows monthly Quality reporting to the senior management team.'

'We have recently been inspected by the CPA, HTA and NHSLA, and in each case Q-Pulse was invaluable in enabling us to immediately respond to their requests for information.'

'Within the Department of Clinical Laboratory Medicine, our current emphasis is very much on training: we are managing all training events electronically as well as developing the KSF and competence-based areas of the system. The challenge now for us is to get all staff on board with the Quality ethos and to give them ownership of the system.'



“ Q-Pulse is helping us to meet current challenges by giving staff point of need access not only to QMS information, but also rapid access to their activities and actions within the QMS. ”

Kevin Watson
Quality & Safety Manager
Department of Clinical Laboratory Medicine

'With more than 240 Q-Pulse users within our laboratories, our current project involves considering the upgrade to the Enterprise Edition of Q-Pulse, which would enable us to roll the QMS out to other Trust areas outwith Clinical Laboratory Medicine.'

'Initially we have approached Radiology and Pharmacy departments, where we are able to draw on our experience from more than 4 years' Q-Pulse use to demonstrate the obvious benefits that we have gained from using such a system.'

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Conclusion

With an estimated 70 to 80 per cent of all healthcare decisions dependent on laboratory medicine results, laboratory medicine services are at the heart of the healthcare services provided to patients.

In the UK, a quarter of a million people on average rely on the laboratory services of each and every NHS hospital. Recent government reports such as the Carter Review recommend that laboratories continually improve systems and processes to ensure that services continue to meet patients' needs.

With demand for services continuing to rise steeply and budgets remaining tight, laboratories in the NHS and internationally are implementing compliance management solutions like Q-Pulse to support their quality management systems (QMS) in continually assessing the quality of their systems and processes.

Q-Pulse from Gael Ltd provides healthcare organisations in the NHS and internationally with a fully integrated compliance management solution. By supporting the management of quality management processes such as Auditing, Document Control and CA/PA Management, Q-Pulse helps organisations to comply with European and international standards including ISO 15189 and ISO 17025.

By enabling the continual assessment of system quality with Q-Pulse, laboratories can ensure that their processes are built on the capabilities and competencies of all available resources, and assure patients and accreditation bodies, such as CPA (UK) and UKAS, of the high quality of services that they provide.

Contact us now on **+44 1355 593 400** or at laboratory@gaelquality.com to find out how Q-Pulse can help you to reduce time and effort, reduce the duplication of effort and reduce resource expenditure.

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