

# Worthing & Southlands Hospitals NHS Trust



## Background

With a history that dates back more than 175 years, Worthing and Southlands Hospitals NHS Trust, which united the two hospitals when it was created in 1992, has seen at first hand the changes and revolutions that have defined the evolution of healthcare in the UK.

Between them, they treat 61,000 inpatients and 63,000 accident and emergency patients every year, with 500 beds available at Worthing and 160 at Southlands. Acute hospital services are provided for a constituency of 300,000 people, with 600,000 people benefiting from the trust's diverse range of specialist services, including screening and eye treatment. More than 2,000 babies are delivered annually at the two main hospital premises, which are six miles apart.

Like every hospital in the country, Worthing and Southlands has faced some major challenges in responding to government health sector initiatives and funding policy. And with these changes ongoing, building and asset management has become a major element of the trust's drive to achieve even greater levels of efficiency and patient care. For more than a decade, FSI's Concept™ Computer Aided Facilities Management (CAFM) system has underpinned the trust's buildings management strategy.

"We originally used a database developed within the NHS – WIMS (Works Information Management System) – but by 1996, it was clear that we couldn't use it for everything that we required," says estates services manager Tony Baker. "We needed to move with the times and we spent 18 months looking at different alternative systems that would support our Programme for Preventative Maintenance (PPM). We carried out several hospital site visits because we wanted to compare like for like, and we finally chose Concept™."

## Challenge

The range of Concept's capabilities presented Tony and his department with their greatest challenge and opportunity. Many of the system's functions and facilities were new to them when they switched over to Concept SQL towards the end of 1997.

"We were one of the first hospitals to use the SQL version. The sheer flexibility of the database was one of the deciding factors," he says.

"The fact that we could extract various reports, using Crystal Reports – which was new to us – was particularly valuable to us on the PPM side of things. The Help Desk was also new. In fact we were all fairly new to that way of doing things.

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“But FSI were very accommodating. They made several changes at the beginning especially for us. For example, we requested a change to the moveable PPM dates and they provided it immediately. We were able to grow with the system. We didn’t have to change our working practices to fit in with it.”

Worthing and Southlands uses the core functionality of the base system for its asset and planned task registers, and planned preventative maintenance. It also makes full use of Concept’s call logging and task control functions, and other modules including the Order Module, eSQL and Eclipse Room Booking, CAD Connect™ (for space and infrastructure cost management) and Asbestos.

“In fact we were the forerunners for the Asbestos Module,” says Tony. “We went to FSI before the revised regulations governing asbestos management came out, and asked them what they were going to do about it! We gave them as much information as possible about our situation, and we worked as partners to get the module up and running. It’s proved a very useful tool.”

FSI has been a proactive supplier, according to Tony, always responsive to specific and urgent requests he and his team have made over the years.

“We have a 20-seat licence,” he says. “Our users range from Help Desk operators who just use the system for call logging, to others who use the order and invoicing functions. On the maintenance side, it is accessed by people with expertise in planning. But it varies across the board. It’s up to us to decide who are the system managers in each area.

“We’ve generally kept up to date with the various releases. Concept™ is easy to use and keep up with without assistance, apart from the occasional phone call. We have two managers who oversee updates as they are rolled out. It is usually a painless process – bearing in mind that things don’t always go so well in the IT world!”

## Benefits

Tony says the most valuable benefit of Concept™ to the trust is that it enables the works department to maintain the most up-to-date information possible about the hospitals’ assets and their history. As well as the buildings, the department is responsible for all the engineering plant and medical equipment.

“That means some major engineering plant assets and all patient-connected medical equipment,” he explains. “We have to keep strict records of repairs and events in the history of every single piece of equipment for several years.

“Concept™ has also helped us to address the complication of running two main sites at Worthing and Southlands. Each hospital has its own maintenance contract and in that sense, they work independently of each other and with separate maintenance groups. From a management perspective, Concept™ allows us to see everything that’s going on in both sites.”

Tony says objectives in the near future include bringing Concept™ completely up to date with the very latest version. Whilst the evolving face of the NHS in the early 21st century has presented Worthing and Southlands Hospitals with some big challenges, the system has actually allowed Tony and his department to meet some of them head on.

“The NHS has certainly been going through some challenging times, and addressing them has taken precedence over upgrades. But at any stage, whichever version of Concept™ we’ve been using at the time has always met our needs,” he says. “Most recently, the trust’s Turnaround strategy [an initiative designed to identify and streamline cost-savings and improved efficiencies] has subjected our department to scrutiny, and we’ve been able to produce detailed reports to demonstrate the efficiency of our performance.”

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