

HCP



Background

HCP is one of the UK's largest healthcare PFI project management and services companies. Providing support, operations management and integrated services at every stage of the PFI process, its portfolio currently includes 16 hospital projects, two court projects and one school project.

Challenge

While each PFI project requires the provision of a comprehensive range of hard and soft FM services, from construction through to the ongoing management and delivery of site-specific services and asset management, no two projects are identical. But every service stipulated by a PFI contract is subject to a rigorous performance management regime, making delivery and management across multiple projects an exacting task for organisations such as HCP.

Not surprisingly, this means that CAFM systems have become central to the PFI process, with their theoretical ability to provide project managers and service providers with a comprehensive range of reporting and process management tools. But finding a system that can truly support the subtle but often complex variations between different projects, and bridge the traditional divide between hard and soft services, is a major challenge.

Solution

HCP has been using FSI's Concept™ system in a substantial number of its PFI projects since 2001, either as a single platform across hard and soft service delivery or as part of a mixed environment.

"The need for performance management means that we have to use a CAFM-type of help desk to log calls and manage and monitor our service portfolio," says HCP Business Support Director Peter Garner.

"All of the projects involve the construction of buildings, and Concept™ is often used by the hard FM service manager to define assets which can then be linked through to room numbers and into soft services. We tend to look at hard FM, buildings maintenance and soft FM as a holistic service offered by the PFI Project Company."

In the early days of PFI, explains Peter, the decision about which help desk to use was often made by the service providers directly responsible for service delivery: for example, the builder who would typically be responsible for providing post-construction hard FM maintenance.

But as its contract portfolio expanded, and the contracts themselves evolved with service delivery based on outputs and performance – and the accompanying need to respond as contractually defined to all requests – HCP became increasingly involved in specifying the CAFM platform. Its preference is now for Concept™ wherever possible, says Peter.

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“The key thing is that it’s probably the best all rounder for hard and soft FM services,” he says. “A lot of systems are good at buildings maintenance but not so good on the soft side: in hospitals, for example, the cleaning, catering and portering. Concept™ is the most integrated system that covers all the services we’re involved in.

“We don’t use it in all our projects. A lot still depends on the contractors we’re working with but our preference is for a single solution as, for example, at Walsgrave Hospital in Coventry, where we used Concept™ from day one. Sometimes the contractor has a loyalty or preference for another product but if they want to use a different system, we would expect them to justify it.”

Benefits

Where the system is adopted, the Concept™ Help Desk module is the starting point at every site. The service providers use a full range of modules covering hard FM maintenance – asset management, buildings management and room numbers – and soft services including domestic portering, catering, car park management and security. Increasingly, they also deploy the hospitality module.

“We know the system is robust,” says Peter. “It does what we need it to and crucially, it is tailorable for each PFI project. And because it uses Crystal, we know we can create a flexible reporting structure with it. That is one of the main business benefits: the generation of reports on performance which helps us to manage multiple contracts and the performance of service providers more effectively.”

One of Concept’s™ main attractions for end-users is that it can link with their own NHS Trust Intranet, giving them front end access to ordering requests. This flexibility creates extra efficiencies for the help desk, increasing automation and reducing the emphasis on phone-based helpdesk transactions.

“That’s what makes it popular with individual trusts,” says Peter. “The biggest challenge we have is responding to changes in the ways we need to provide services. It’s a constant evolutionary process. We have to be more flexible in how we manage service requests and we’re always looking for clever ways of tracking calls that don’t necessarily follow the conventional route.

“We’d really like to see a greater take-up by end-users of non-phone help desk solutions and more users sending alerts from their workstations and PDAs to generate automated job requests. But some things are difficult to track.

“For example, conventionally a request might be triggered by a nurse logging a call for a porter at the help desk. The porter is then despatched, completes the task and the job is closed off. But increasingly, you find that the nurse will deal directly with a porter in their area. So we need to find ways of tracking that and coming up with agreed systems without forcing everyone to sit down at a keyboard!”

Peter says that moving forward, flexibility and even tighter integration between service modules will be a prerequisite for CAFM systems in the PFI sector, driven by the need for everyone to access the same data pool.

“FSI has always responded well when we’ve had problems or specific requests,” he says. “We have great confidence in both Concept™ as a product and its supplier.

“FSI has demonstrated an awareness of the specific challenges of PFI projects during the reasonably short time that they’ve existed. As a supplier, it has quickly developed an understanding of the idiosyncrasies of some of these projects and tailored its product accordingly. And we know they’ve worked very closely with many of our service providers to develop bespoke solutions in this area which continue to raise the bar in terms of PFI service delivery.”

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