



## The Road to World Class Commissioning



NHS South of Tyne and Wear

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— *Scott Watson, Acting Head of Information Management and Business Intelligence*

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### Early adoption of PBC software has put NHS South of Tyne and Wear streets ahead of other PCTs in its journey towards commissioning excellence

NHS South of Tyne and Wear isn't modest in its ambitions. Despite challenging demographics and intensive demands on its health services, the regional NHS body excels in the provision of information to practice-based commissioners and aspires to achieve World-Class Commissioning status within the next two years.

It is often said that, if you want something done quickly and well, ask a busy person. The same seems to be true in the NHS. If you want to see real step change, go and talk to an overstretched PCT whose resources are under pressure.

NHS South of Tyne and Wear provides a single management infrastructure serving some 600,000 people across Gateshead and South Tyneside Primary Care Trusts, as well as Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust.

The statistics for Sunderland alone are striking. The 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation ranked Sunderland as the 22nd most deprived district (of 354) in the UK. Sunderland has also been found to be part of the worst 10 areas in England for binge drinking, and 1 in 3 adults and 1 in 5 children aged 10-11 in Sunderland are clinically obese. Meanwhile, an already dominant elderly population is set to double by 2025, with increasing numbers having long-term conditions including serious disabilities. (Almost 1 in 4 adults suffer from a long-term condition in Sunderland, compared to 1 in 10 in England as a whole).

So it is impressive, faced with these not insubstantial challenges, that NHS South of Tyne and Wear is developing an enviable reputation for its approach to information delivery for PBCs.

## From performance management to PBC

NHS South of Tyne and Wear had been in the process of procuring a system for performance management when the Department of Health (DoH) introduced its targets for PBC. It had chosen the Performancesoft suite of business intelligence tools from Actuate, which leads the way in performance management. Its solutions capture and analyse management information from a range of sources, presenting this to stakeholders in a very accessible, visual way via the web.

When the DoH made its move to the Annual Healthcheck in place of the star ratings, NHS South of Tyne and Wear decided that Actuate was ideal for the task, thanks to the depth and clarity of its information reporting. Actuate agreed to lend the Trust management some development time, to hone the software so that it would measure specific criteria across the full range of commission categories, and related budgets.

## Speed to market

The software, first procured in January 2006, went live in April – a full eight months before the DoH's strict deadline for universal PBC coverage. The speed of the roll-out owed a great deal to the application's ease of use, and its web-based configuration. Scott Watson, acting head of information management and business intelligence at the Trust explains, "Prior to the integration of our management structure, the system was deployed in Sunderland only. Our roll-out in Sunderland took place almost overnight, with all 54 GP Practices being able to access Views within a matter of days. Following integration, the strategic decision was made to use Views as the vehicle for the delivery of Practice Based Budgets and associated management information across the NHS South of Tyne and Wear patch. Due to the system's easy to use architecture, we were able to deploy Views to an additional 64

Practices in a fraction of the time it would have taken other products."

Previously, NHS South of Tyne and Wear had a range of disparate systems in place that made it difficult to collate or assess PBC information across the integrated landscape. With the new system, this situation was transformed in a matter of a few weeks. "We are still one of the few PCTs to have a single, centralised system for delivering budgets, rather than multiple e-mailed spreadsheets," notes Scott.

This means that the 117 GP practices in its region now receive fully-costed budgets at healthcare resource group level for all patients. This allows them to get a clearer picture of where resources are being expended, and where areas of pressure are developing, so that these can be addressed efficiently and effectively.

## £1m+ savings

Since deploying the PBC system two years ago, NHS South of Tyne and Wear estimates that it has saved over £1 million, by being able to pinpoint excessive outpatient appointments and 'frequent flyer' patients. The ability to identify and quantify the impact these patients have on local health providers has enabled the PCT to utilise alternative community services... "ultimately ensuring resources are used appropriately, but most importantly, providing better more appropriate care to patients," Scott says.

Having gained an early advantage and made good headway with initial PBC target monitoring, NHS South of Tyne and Wear is now working at encompassing broader community metrics into the system. It wants to be able to measure activities and resource consumption among district nurses and health visitors, as well as capturing more primary care data from GP systems (such as attendance and prevalence). "Our aim is to link primary and secondary health care information, to provide an holistic view of the health of our population, and the



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effectiveness of our services," Scott explains. Knowledge, after all, is power.

Scott's ambitions are fuelled by the ease of use of the Actuate Performancesoft suite, which he describes as 'visually very striking'. "It displays information very flexibly using a hierarchical structure and traffic lights, so you can see how everything interconnects and identify immediately where issues are arising," he says. "You can then drill down into more detail to see what's going on."

## Traffic-light alerts

The sophisticated reporting capabilities (provided by the 'Views' component of the product suite) are so accessible that they are used across the board – from executive directors (for performance information) to the staff on the front line (for management and clinical information, to support decision-making). Views provides a 'Briefing Book' feature, for example, which allows organisations to create and deploy customised views of performance to accommodate specific users' needs.

"Previously, we had a number of disparate systems tackling various aspects of performance management, but there was no continuity, and there were many gaps," Scott says. "It was also very resource-intensive trying to update them all. Now, everything is centralised, everyone has it, and it's very accessible.

"The software is very intuitive too, so you don't need IT skills to introduce new elements. If new legislation is introduced concerning additional performance areas that need to be measured, you can build new frameworks very quickly, without having to wait for an external software expert to come in," Scott explains.

## Staff savings, better decisions

The software has provided such a boost to productivity that it has allowed NHS South of Tyne and Wear to free up resources to other more strategic tasks. "But above all, the system lets us push out information and robustly monitor and manage resources," Scott says. "This is its real value – getting practices to look at their budgets and review how they are referring patients to secondary care, so that improvements can be made."

The journey towards World-Class Commissioning status continues, as NHS South of Tyne & Wear works to introduce additional data into Views. "Thanks to the Actuate system, we now have a very good feel of where we are with this. We're now using Performancesoft for all aspects of performance management and health commission frameworks, so we have a clear roadmap on which to chart our progress."



NHS South of Tyne and Wear

### About NHS South of Tyne and Wear

NHS South of Tyne and Wear covers Gateshead Primary Care Trust (PCT), South Tyneside Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT) and is the name given to the integrated management arrangements which exist across the three PCTs. This means that, whilst each PCT remains a statutory organisation in its own right, the day-to-day management of the PCTs has been brought together under a single management team.

NHS South of Tyne and Wear covers the same area as Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland Local Authorities and is responsible for spearheading improvements to the health of local people. To do this we must understand the health needs of our local communities and use our resources to fund, improve and develop easily accessible healthcare services in line with these needs. This means working closely with local hospitals, GP practices, pharmacies, dental practitioners and optometrists, as well as our social care partners to ensure the best possible range of services are available

### About Actuate

Actuate Corporation is dedicated to increasing the richness, interactivity and effectiveness of enterprise data, for everyone, everywhere. Actuate delivers the next generation RIA-ready information platform for both customer and employee-facing applications. The Actuate platform boasts unmatched scalability, high-performance, reliability and security. Its proven RIA capabilities and highly collaborative development architecture are backed by the world's largest open source information application developer community, grounded in BIRT, the Eclipse Foundation's only top level Business

Intelligence and reporting project.

Global 9000 organizations use Actuate to roll out RIA-enabled customer loyalty and Performance Management applications that improve customer satisfaction and employee productivity. The company has over 4,400 customers globally in a diverse range of business areas including financial services and the public sector, many of which have a long history of deploying Actuate-based solutions for dozens, or even hundreds of their mission-critical applications. Founded in 1993, Actuate has headquarters in San Mateo, California, with offices worldwide. Actuate is listed on NASDAQ under the symbol ACTU. For more information on Actuate, visit the company's web site at [www.actuate.com](http://www.actuate.com).