



NHS

HOW WE LOVE SURVEYS HELPED THE NHS
PRODUCE A TIME-SAVING SOLUTION FOR
CONTROLLED DRUG AUDITS

CASE STUDY:

NHS



The NHS has a goal to be paperless by 2020. That is quite a challenge but, with the help of We Love Surveys, that aim has taken a huge step closer thanks to digitising their Controlled Drug audits.

And, crucially, this innovative solution has saved an abundance of time, time that can now be better served in clinical attention and by focusing on the nurses, wards and patients.

We talked it through and there were a lot of technical aspects we had to develop, or make work on the web, so they could use it.

WHAT IS THE LONDON NORTH WEST HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST?

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWH) is one of the largest integrated care trusts in the country, bringing together hospital and community services across Brent, Ealing and Harrow.



Established in 2014, they employ more than 10,000 staff, serving a diverse population of approximately 850,000 at Central Middlesex, Ealing, Northwick Park and St Mark's Hospitals.

The principal pharmacist for the NHS, and the person behind this exciting partnership with We Love Surveys, is Sunil Dabasia, who since taking over the role eight years ago has been desperately seeking a solution to the way Controlled Drug (CD) audits are completed.

WHY LONDON NORTH WEST HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST TEAMED UP WITH WE LOVE SURVEYS

We Love Surveys has been carrying out patient feedback for LNWH for many years and we have a very good relationship together.

LNWH like our products and how they are developed, and it was Sunil who approached us, in 2017, asking if we could do something with their Controlled Drug audits.

Sunil's view was that an audit was no different to a survey, but they didn't know if we could do it, if we had the tools to configure an app or web-based solution to this long-standing, laborious problem.



Working together, we managed to look at new ways of doing these things and, essentially, it changed their pace of process and provided the granularity, the automation and the robustness that other electronic solutions didn't.

WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE FACED WITH CD AUDITS?

A CD audit is carried out four times a year, or every three months, and is required by the Department of Health. It is a statutory audit and it has to be done.

But it is time-consuming on a massive scale, even for LNWH who are considered a smaller trust with just 30 locations compared to larger trusts with 70-80 locations.

Even so, one person inputting 30 forms in a system and then analysing them, producing results and feeding back is a lot of work.

Workloads were being duplicated, but any hope of bringing them all together were impeded because all the audits were different – different standards and different quality.

When the CD quality was brought together, there was a chance to bring the audit together, but when they looked at doing 150 audits every quarter, it was too big a number for one person, so they wanted to find a way to spend less time doing administration tasks, inputting and analysing data, and that's what led them to look at possible solutions.



The key was that the solution had to be different to normal surveys, because you're looking at introducing things like signatures, prompts and other new sophisticated apps that hadn't been seen or developed before.

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One of the big issues they were facing were paper copies – imagine 150 forms of paper, they need to be stored somewhere, for two years, which is a problem for environmental and storage issues.

On top of that, the forms are handwritten, there may be some answers missing, which would mean the person who filled it out would have to be contacted to supply the answer. Sometimes there were comments that were ineligible, because it may have been written in a particular way in a rush, or it's smudged.



As Sunil says: "You have a standard that asks 'Are all the drugs that are meant to be in the cupboard in the cupboard?' The answer should always be yes.

"If it says you should have 28 morphine and you don't, then that's an issue. So we'd have to report it, and investigate it. You have to contact the person who filled out the form, so you're almost educating them post-audit to do actions they should have done at the time.

"Another issue is the constant chasing of people. If you have 150 audits and 84 had come back, how do you know which area hasn't been done? Who do you chase?"



"You can send an email but many people ignore them. So it's hard to know who to chase. And that goes on and on, you're chasing your tail.

"Drugs like this are abused and are also a risk, because we're talking high-strength morphine and if it's not used appropriately, it can be quite dangerous."

WHAT WAS THE SOLUTION?

Now, thanks to the digital survey solution developed by We Love Surveys, all these issues have been addressed and administration time has been severely reduced, allowing people to focus on their jobs.

There are now mandatory fields on the forms so you can't miss a standard, you can't go from question one to three, so incomplete forms are a thing of the past.

If there's information that Sunil needs, there are mandatory comment boxes which appear to tell whoever is filling in the form exactly what they need to do, as opposed to them being told afterwards. They have to write it down, there are no excuses now.



And paper copies no longer have to be stored because it's all online. As soon as an audit has been completed, it is uploaded to the server and it produces a digital copy.

In an era where smartphones and tablets on wards are a normal way of practice, you can log in and print off the audit directly to multiple people. It can be fed back straight away, so now they are dealing with more timely responses, which is hugely time-efficient.



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That's where We Love Surveys have met the issues we were facing. The reporting is fantastic, and some of the tools on there are great.

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Sunil says: "We can maintain the legislative requirements of the process, for example capturing a signature, because it's a legal document.

"We don't have to chase people because the system knows how many audits have been done, how many are pending, and it creates a report any time of day, minute by minute, whenever you want. It's ridiculously good!"

The solution is also in the process of being converted into an app, which is the ultimate solution to the problem.

The advantages of having a CD app are that all the answers will be filled in on the app, which also stores all the information and then automatically transfers it to the server.

Sunil adds: "Now we're electronic, we can look over the year and see which standard hasn't done well. We can analyse trends. People who are involved in CD audits will appreciate this more than the users who do the audit. The user who does the audit only has to do one audit, whether it's on a piece of paper or on their phone.

"The people who really appreciate it are the ones at the back end, the ones who make sure the audit gets done, who input, produce and analyse all the data.

"And in every organisation there is always one very senior member who has to be in charge of this, because it's just as an important part of the organisation."

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HOW CAN WE TAKE THIS EVEN FURTHER?

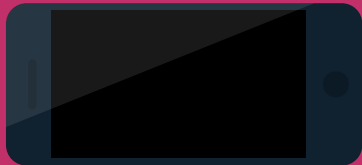
This solution can be implemented in other NHS trusts around the country.

Each trust would have to configure the app to their needs, because the audits, the questions on them, are specific to LNWH's CD policies, but the framework would already be similar, so some tweaks and changes would be required.

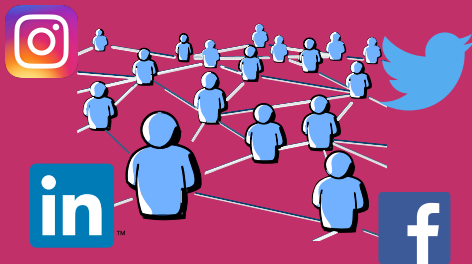
Sunil says: "Where this would really work as a national initiative is that we've already put in a standard CD audit that would then be built in and everyone could buy a ready-made product."

WHAT RESULTS HAVE WE SEEN FROM THIS SOLUTION?

The app digitalises a significant amount of work, increasing efficiency and improving how much clinical activity LNWH provide and freeing up a lot of time so staff are available for patients.



There has been plenty of PR and social media activity showcasing what LNWH have achieved, while the project was also presented to NHS England and the Controlled Drug Committee, who came back with some really positive feedback and said they felt this is a product that will really benefit a lot of organisations and other trusts who encounter similar problems.



LNWH have given consent to share their standards, so anyone who is interested in purchasing the app now have a place to start and an idea of how it would work, which hopefully will help them to re-evaluate their audit and see how they can improve the process.

In January 2019, when LNWH will have completed four audits, they will look at annual reports which they can submit to their commissioners.



Sunil says: "That will show them we've got a really good handle on our controlled drugs, that we've got a great audit system here and we have a good way of analysing where we've gone wrong. They don't need to worry about us."

"I've never been able to do it before, just because of the amount of data there is. But now, with We Love Surveys' help, we can, and it will be great to do."

"This has allowed us to focus on clinical activity, our time has been freed up to do more ward and clinical commitments, which is the whole idea of saving time, and it also allows us to look at our controlled drugs practise in ways we've never been able to before, for example across sites, and also looking at trends."

"We've been able to look at new measures we can put in place that we didn't think we needed to. For example, every time there was a missing drug, not everybody would know that you needed an incident."

"So what we're now seeing is that a lot more incidents are being reported because people know. It's not that more or missing, it's that more incidents are being reported, so it has improved our culture of reporting, which is really important, and it's allowing us to focus more on clinical governance, patient safety and general patient outcomes."



Everyone has an account login and can see any CD audit at any time, rather than have to go digging out files, which was very time-consuming. To have that transparency was something NHS England were particularly excited about.

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CONCLUSION

We Love Surveys has enjoyed a long relationship with London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust, a journey which started with the installation of a patient survey machine in their outpatients department.

Now LNWH are experiencing a great deal of success with their Controlled Drug audits, while their clinical pharmacy team are also developing a Medication Safety audit app with We Love Surveys.

Sunil says: "That shows how pleased we are with some of the outcomes we've had, and we're more than happy to continue working with them. And we will continue to promote the CD audit product to any potential clients who are interested.

"We're really passionate about it, it's a great product with some major benefits. It's one of those things that you know you should do, but you just don't do it. That was me for eight years. I know these CD audits are a pain, and I know I've got to do them, but I know there's a solution out there.

"You do it, it lasts about two or three weeks, every three months, it's a huge headache, but then it goes away and you forget about it. That's the problem with it and why nobody does anything about it. And when it comes back, it's like, "Ah, I should have got the app..". It's a cycle."



"We had to come up with a solution. I hope this will be the start of more trusts looking at how they do things, and it will be great if they can work with We Love Surveys and improve the product, so we're all helping to improve it."



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