New wristband system reduces IT calls by 15% at NHS Trust

A safe, reliable printing solution that saves time and trouble

In any hospital, identification wristbands are critical in ensuring that every patient receives the right care, particularly when a patient may be consulting with a string of healthcare professionals during a single visit.

For Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, which provides local general hospital and community services to around 260,000 patients each year from some 60 sites, an aging wristband printing system was making the process unreliable and inefficient, costing the Trust valuable time and money. To remedy the situation, the Trust turned to Brother to deliver a more efficient solution staff can rely on.

Less wastage and more efficient

Walsall Healthcare Trust was operating with an aged printer fleet that led to costly, high failure rates. This was largely due to the media for the printers being supplied in cartridges that were prone to jamming. With the printers regularly failing, nursing staff were losing essential time logging IT calls and reprinting labels.

With each IT call, the Trust's engineers were also spending significant amounts of time dismantling the printer, replacing cartridges and then returning them to the wards. On top of this, the jammed cartridges were regularly thrown away, increasing costs.

The system for printing wristbands was also complicated. The Trust had to use separate cartridges and media for each type of wristband – infants, children, adults and alerts (required for special medical conditions such as allergies).

This meant extensive management of stock levels right across the Trust to ensure the right media was always available.

> "With our previous system we were paying for something we weren't even using. Nine times out of ten when the cartridge jammed, we were throwing it away. On top of the inconvenience, it was costly and inefficient for the Trust."

Craig Cox, Service Desk and End User Computer Manager Walsall IT Services Informatics Directorate at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

Overview

The challenge

- To replace an inefficient and costly patient-identification wristband solution that was prone to high failure rates at Walsall NHS Healthcare Trust

The solution

- To design and implement a new robust wristband solution that delivers the Trust considerable cost-savings, alongside flexibility and reliability to ease the time pressures on staff

The results

- IT calls reduced by 15% since implementation
- Future-proofed wristband solution that is GS1 compliant
- Wristband media is simple and easier for staff to use

A flexible, easy-to-use label printer

The Brother TD-2130N label printer is flexible and easy to use, with crisp and accurately imaged wristbands and labels helping protect patients, while providing peace of mind and efficiency to healthcare professionals.

Its advanced labelling capability saves users time by allowing them to easily create, load, and register custom media and calibrate to print both wristbands and labels without special set up tools.

Brother has partnered with a healthcare solutions partner to create wristband media designed to work seamlessly with the TD-2130N for stress-free printing.

The printers offer the full range of connectivity, with options for USB, serial interface and ethernet ports, as well as WiFi and Bluetooth interfaces, allowing them to work almost anywhere, delivering ultimate flexibility.

A simplified, efficient approach

To resolve the challenges, Brother worked closely with the Trust, along with a solutions partner, to design and implement a robust, future-proofed wristband solution specifying a fleet of its TD-2130N printers.

The new solution delivers flexibility and improved efficiency for staff across the Trust. Not only is each printer able to print all the necessary patient wristbands, there are no cartridges required, which eliminates the previous issues with jamming and wastage. As a result, IT calls have reduced by 15% since the solution was implemented.

Brother also worked closely with the Trust's IT team to ensure the solution is GS1 compliant in line with a mandate from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) designed to improve patient safety, enhance clinical effectiveness and drive operation efficiencies. Set to come into force in 2019/20, GS1 compliance is a vital part of future-proofing the solution.

"The support we had with implementing the system was faultless. Brother readily provided training and were on site during the set-up phase to quickly solve any queries.

"The new system is easy to use and has given us considerable cost and time savings. Across the Trust our staff can now focus on treating patients without worrying about IT."

Natasha Khan Technical Project Implementation Specialist Digital Technical Services