



## NHS Tayside keeps its IT systems in good health with Track-It!

Rodger Murphy, IT Help Desk Service Manager at NHS Tayside, looks back on a huge and complex project seeking to centralise IT support systems across the area and standardise on Track-It! software from Intuit Information Technology Solutions. The project continues as new geographies and systems are supported, and new functionality added.

The introduction of the area wide IM & T Strategy was the catalyst to enable the re-organisation of IM & T support services to the two NHS trusts, Health Board and General Practice within NHS Tayside. Rodger Murphy takes up the story: "With this complex structure came an assortment of different support systems and help desks, some using packaged software and others relying on a mixture of homegrown software and spreadsheets; the system was obviously ripe for major improvements."

One of the largest sites, Ninewells Hospital, had been using Track-It! and after due consideration it was decided to centralise all help desk services on Track-It!. The new system needed to be scalable, robust and fast enough to accommodate the support requirements of a large and very demanding 7,000 users including GP surgeries, admin staff, nurses and clinicians. It was agreed that Track-It! was the best choice for the job and Murphy's assessment is that it is already performing very well.

**"Our overriding objective in establishing a single, centralised system across the whole region, was to improve service and deliver cost savings," explains Murphy.**

"The key to this lies in better management information and streamlined systems enabling us to resolve issues faster, allocate tasks efficiently and plan effectively. Track-It! promises to deliver all of these benefits and more."

During the first six months, Murphy and his colleagues put the software through a series of simulations and test runs designed to discover its strengths and weaknesses. Murphy explains: "We found both; some areas did require modification to meet our demands but these were resolved quickly and efficiently with consultancy from Intuit IT Solutions who worked closely with us."

By the end of the project's first year, all 72 of Tayside's GP practices have been brought into the centralised system, as has the PCT (Primary Care Trust) for the Dundee area and the Health Board itself.

The next phase of the project for Murphy and his team is to concentrate on bringing the acute hospitals into the fold starting with Dundee, then Perth and finally the Angus region.

Murphy agrees that so far the implementation process has been surprisingly trouble-free. "The Help Desk staff, who had never worked with a similar system, adapted remarkably well, which obviously says a lot about the software. We worked hard with the technicians, of which there are around 70, to ensure they had an easy and structured path to using the software."

One of the capabilities of Track-It! that interests Murphy and his team greatly, is inventory management. "Our knowledge of the Trust's assets is currently pretty sketchy and although several attempts have been made to establish a comprehensive asset register, the information quickly becomes out of date and worthless. We've purchased 7,000 Track-It! inventory licenses which will mean we can regularly update our inventory and manage our assets in a logical fashion and with a minimum of pain. In time we hope that users will help us keep these records up to date themselves by using services available on the NHS Tayside Portal."

Reviewing progress so far Murphy is pleased with early results and feels that the potential for accessing and using management information yielded by Track-It! will be of great future value. "Without a doubt, we're already beginning to discover surprising usage patterns and are taking steps that will mean the Help Desk can manage intelligently rather than just 'react' to requests.

