

Case Study

Healthcare Courier – East Suffolk and North Essex
NHS Foundation Trust



ERS Medical provides healthcare courier services for the East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust covering 3 hospitals and 194 GP surgeries. ERS Medical is responsible for the collection and distribution of samples, consumables, post, pharmaceuticals, CSSD and medical records across East Suffolk and North Essex.

“The expertise that ERS Medical offers in developing creative logistics solutions together with us is invaluable and has helped us to provide a better service to the majority of our primary care users, alongside managing the workflow in the laboratories, so that we are able to make effective use of our resources too.

Shelley Garrey
Business Development Manager
North East Essex & Suffolk Pathology Service,
East Suffolk and North Essex
NHS Foundation Trust

Our integrated track and trace software provides real time information to pathology labs and collection points such as surgeries, pharmacies and health centres we ensure collections are timely and accurate.

The initial contract began in August 2017 when ERS Medical mobilised a contract to provide 10 dedicated courier runs for Colchester Hospital. This contract soon grew and a further 3 courier runs were added onto the service to increase collections.

More recently, during the challenging weather conditions of ‘Beast from the East’ in March 2018, ERS Medical seamlessly completed a short turnaround mobilisation for 9 courier runs in Ipswich for the Trust. Followed by a further 5 courier runs mobilised in July 2018 for West Suffolk.

As with all contract mobilisations, prior to ‘Go Live’, ERS Medical created an engagement plan to create awareness to ensure all service users were clear about the new provider for their scheduled collections and what they could expect following commencement of the service.

Working in partnership

Establishing a combined partnership approach to the contract was key and allowed the service delivery to be redesigned to improve frequency of collections at surgeries depending on volumes of samples throughout the day. ERS Medical also developed strong working relationships with the laboratories in the area to ensure a more consistent and better spread of samples coming in through multiple drop offs throughout the day. This has resulted in a better work flow in the pathology laboratories for testing of samples and created efficiencies, improving the service to the patient and reducing cost.

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“We’ve achieved this by nurturing a working relationship founded on open communication and transparency. ERS have learnt about our business as much as we have learnt about theirs in order for us to arrive at the right solutions together. Having a strong patient focused ethos has supported our resilience planning. As we have strengthened the service with our collaborative rapport, we have made significant reduction in samples that cannot be analysed due to delayed collection/delivery issues. These ‘old’ samples that cannot be analysed have been reduced from 2.78% to 0.3%.”

Shelley Garrey
Business Development Manager
North East Essex & Suffolk Pathology Service,
East Suffolk and North Essex
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By working closely together and tailoring the service specifically to the requirement of East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust, ERS Medical is able to deliver the following key metrics:

- Samples are picked up within 15 minutes of their collection time
- The time from blood samples being taken from patients to testing the sample in the laboratory is carefully managed through ensuring they are delivered to the lab within four hours
- Complaints are recorded and managed timely
- Communications are frequent and clear to all service users
- Full track and trace of samples through our bespoke Computer Aided Dispatch software where at each surgery we scan in all bags collected which are identified by type of sample and scan out all items at the pathology lab
- Full visibility on vehicle location and driver behaviour through Crystal Ball software
- Reduction in spoilt samples resulting in having to recall a patient for further samples to be tested from 2.78% to 0.3%
- Have detailed performance reporting analysing collection times and drop off times achieved versus target, time on vehicle, number of ad hoc pick up requirements, items collected, collections made.

WE VISIT 3 LABS EVERY DAY TO COLLECT:

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Bloods: | Micro: |
| 475 bags | 319 bags |
| Urgent: | Histology: |
| 104 bags | 181 bags |

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Gary Brown with Shelley Garrey.

The right people, vehicles and systems

ERS Medical has a diverse fleet including regular courier vehicles, temperature-controlled vehicles, refrigerated vehicles and larger vehicles to accommodate instruments and other services such as linen to be moved. Crews are trained appropriately to handle any medical courier including ADR training where required.

Sophisticated business management systems and software to ensure compliance of staff, vehicles and service throughout the life of any contract.

“With NEESPS Pathology Partnership we have developed a truly integral service component to their service offering which is getting patients their test results back in a timely and efficient manner. Workflow management has been key from clinics taking samples through to the transport and ultimately testing for results in the laboratories. We have made significant improvements through investment in transport capabilities to gain efficiencies around workflow of laboratory testing and improve the customer service for surgeries.

“We have implemented a hub and spoke model where regular collections are centralised around shuttle hubs at Colchester and Ipswich with a regular shuttle running continuously to between laboratories for testing. This has resulted in better utilisation of high value capital equipment in which laboratory units have invested, better information flow between surgeries and labs, reductions in spoilt samples and better organisation of time critical testing for patients.”

Gary Brown
Operations Manager, ERS Medical

“ERS Medical staff are professional, responsive and solution-focussed. This is a key strength in delivering services across our primary care geography as practice staff have come to develop strong working relationships with the drivers, feedback is acted upon where possible, and issues are raised to us in a timely and proactive manner.”

Shelley Garrey
Business Development Manager
North East Essex & Suffolk Pathology Service,
East Suffolk and North Essex NHS
Foundation Trust

FACTS N STATS

23

Dedicated vehicles on
continued regular routes

194

Individual surgeries/practices
receiving daily collections

3,200

Miles covered a day on average

2.48%

Reduction in samples that cannot
be used from 2.78% to 0.3%

Driven by Patient Care

To find out more about our
services please contact us

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