



CASE STUDY

Early provision of **KEY PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION AND GP DETAILS** for newly committed prisoners, to help contribute to their well-being on their first days in custody

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Overview

Sopra Steria's solution to sharing information between the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and the Healthcare Trust working with prisoners in custody, to ensure inmates receive their prescription medication requirements in a timely manner and contribute to their health and well-being while in custody.



Northern Ireland Prison Service

The Northern Ireland Prison Service works across three differing operational environments: high-security, medium-security and specialist Young Offenders' Provision. The ultimate aim of the service is to improve public safety by reducing the risk of reoffending through the management and rehabilitation of offenders in custody.



Challenge

Those in prison often have lower levels of physical and mental health than the general public: *the health profile of prisoners, the high levels of mental ill-health, personality disorder, learning difficulty, drug and alcohol addiction, the proportion of prisoners on medication, and in numerous cases a combination of these factors, together with other vulnerability factors, all created a concentration of need within the prison establishments¹.*

Typically there is a delay of several days in provision of a new prisoner's prescription medication requirements being made known to Healthcare within a prisoner environment.

This often leads to a new prisoner going without any prescription medication and can lead to a stressful situation for the prisoner and prison officers managing the prisoner.

In some situations the lack of prescription medication can lead to instances of self-harm, and the prisoner behaving in an irrational manner.

The current process can result in lengthy delays before new committals receive their prescribed medication. This can affect the prisoner's mental and/or physical well-being and can potentially lead to conflict between them, nursing and prison staff.



¹ THE SAFETY OF PRISONERS HELD BY THE NORTHERN IRELAND PRISON SERVICE A JOINT INSPECTION BY CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTION NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE REGULATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY November 2019

Solution

Sopra Steria worked closely with the **Prisoner Escort and Court Custody Service (PECCS)** staff to develop a solution, incorporating a tablet application, to provide for the capture of medical and health information, such as Opioid Substitution Therapy, Mental Health Service attendance, disability equipment required and GP details for detainees and those newly committed to custody. This information facilitates Healthcare within an establishment to find medical history details for the individual using NHS Healthcare/GP systems.

The solution allows PECCS staff to record medical/health information, along with personal and GP details for those in their custody in the courthouse, prior to their transfer to an NI Prison establishment where they will be held in custody as specified by the court.

Use of a tablet device facilitates the digitisation of a number of forms that PECCS staff use to record this information, in situ within the court custody area while in discussion with an individual rather than on paper, allowing the prisoner to sign that the information has been provided, and once recorded the information is uploaded to Prisoner case management system (PRISM).

Provision of a Business Intelligence Report to the Healthcare Trust, as an alert so they can then check their IT systems for details of medication currently prescribed to the individual by their community. This then enables the individual to receive necessary medication much earlier in their time in custody, providing continuity of medical treatment, reducing stress and conflict at the beginning of a sentence for both offender and prison staff.

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Sopra Steria engaged with the business to identify, define, agree and implement a solution for the sharing of information between the NI Prison Service and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. To do so required close working in a collaborative manner, across organisational margins, within a short timeline and in an Agile fashion. The solution also needed to take account of requirements to manage sensitive information transfer between organisations.

The solution evolved upon review to meet the needs of all parties, and Sopra Steria leveraged their expertise to support NIPS as the main clients in the design process. As the Sponsor of the project I am really pleased with the work undertaken by the Sopra Steria team, and their attention to detail to provide an innovative, easy to use tablet and PRISM application at pace.

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- GAVIN GREENLEES
*Head of Operational Support
Northern Ireland Prison Service*

Key outcomes and benefits

- Improved the exchange of information between NIPS and Healthcare Trust for new committals who are on prescribed medication prior to being remanded/sentenced into NIPS custody.
- Upon receipt of the BO report containing the individual's details and GP name etc., Healthcare can search their IT systems to confirm the prescribed medication he or she is currently taking. This will speed up the issue of the medication to the prisoner as the current process of gathering this information following a committal assessment by the nurse can result in a delay of up to a few days before the details regarding the prescribed medication can be confirmed.
- Contributes to the prisoner's mental and physical well-being in custody.
- Enhances the medical/health information history for an individual in custody.



More Information

At Sopra Steria we provide a bespoke range of Consulting, IT and Business Process Outsourcing services to Public and Private Sector organisations across the UK.

For more information on the services we provide to organisations in the Justice sector please contact Clare O'Sullivan at the details below:

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We look forward to working with you.

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