



Scottish Ambulance Service

Selects Datix Patient Safety and Risk Management software



The Scottish Ambulance Service serves at the front line of the NHS in Scotland and covers the largest geographic area of any ambulance service in the UK. It is a Special Health Board funded directly by the Health Department of the Scottish Government.

The Service provides Accident & Emergency and non-Emergency services to the people of Scotland from a total of 152 locations. It also operates a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service from two dedicated Air Bases in central Glasgow and at Inverness Airport. The Service also has three full time and five on call special operation response teams based throughout Scotland responding to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) type incidents.

In the last year alone, the service responded to 584,108 accident and emergency incidents, carried out over 1.5 million non-emergency journeys and flew 3,274 Air Ambulance missions.

Managing risks efficiently

For the Scottish Ambulance Service, patient care and employee welfare are top priorities. The organisation recently invested in Datix patient safety and risk management software to record incidents and manage the risks associated with providing an ambulance service. Risks cover a wide range including assaults, manual handling when moving patients, and falls, trips and slips.

According to Paul Gowens, Head of Risk at the Scottish Ambulance Service, “An ambulance is really just like a mobile hospital, so the types of risk that we manage are the same as for any NHS Board. When we decided that we needed a new system to collate and report on incidents, we selected Datix because it is widely used in the NHS and that has enabled us to benchmark our reports against other NHS Boards.”

Proven credentials

The Scottish Ambulance Service selected Datix following the evaluation of three others systems. Prior to implementing Datix, the Risk and Resilience Department had been collating data using spreadsheets, a labour intensive and time consuming task. While the data could be input into a spreadsheet, it was not an effective tool for analysing such a large amount of data. “There was a limit to what we could achieve using a spreadsheet,” explained Paul Gowens. “In contrast, Datix does so much for you. We simply set the search criteria and click a few buttons and the report is done. It is much faster and has really cut down the amount of work required to produce better reports. It is also much easier to check the quality of the data.”

“The Datix team has been helpful and responsive to any queries and particularly good at training and follow up.”

Paul Gowens

Head of Risk

Scottish Ambulance Service



Secure and thorough system

Prior to using Datix, the system relied on a paper trail of incident data. Using Datix means the web-based forms provide much tighter control on data entry and the process of managing incidents. Staff members can report any incident or near misses directly via the web, which is routed to the risk management team.

An automatic alert has been built in to highlight when an incident has been reported but has not yet been investigated by the manager. This ensures that incidents are still acted upon even when a manager is away.

“Our reports are standardised, meaning we can produce them to schedule and in less time. We have also used the reports to monitor trends and look for patterns. This in turn allows us to identify the controls we need to put in place to mitigate the risks. This helps us to ensure that incidents are not repeated.” continued Paul Gowens.

The Datix incident reporting module is a key part of the software and a major advantage of Datix is that it is a fully integrated system, thereby making the organisation work more efficiently and improving safety all round.

The Risk Register module is fully implemented within the Service, however the Scottish Ambulance Service is in the process of implementing the web-based version of this. Paul Gowens believes that this will also be very important for the risk department. The Risk Register module will enable the team to continue to prioritise the risks to the organisation and put in place action plans for improvement.

The Service also fully utilises the Complaints module to be able to automatically generate responses to patients by the appropriate deadlines and monitor performance.

Training and development

The team has implemented an e-learning training package developed for staff and managers and accessible on the Intranet. The Datix User Group and Forums have also been useful for sharing best practice with other Scottish Health Boards, as well as NHS Trusts in the rest of the UK.

According to Paul Gowens, “The Datix team has been helpful and responsive to any queries and particularly good at training and follow up.”

Future plans

The team plans to implement the Datix Safety Alerts module, to broadcast all information about medical devices and other safety issues within the Service. The Claims module is also being implemented and will enable the team to manage all aspects of legal claims, including finance, correspondence and timescales.

Paul Gowens concluded, “Datix has helped us to monitor and manage the risk process and the people at Datix have helped us to tailor the system to fit our needs. We look forward to continuing to reap the benefits of using the software further.”

About the Scottish Ambulance Service

The Scottish Ambulance Service serves all of Scotland and is a Special Health Board funded directly by the Health Department of the Scottish Government. It is the frontline of the NHS in Scotland and covers the largest geographic area of any Ambulance service in the UK.

The Scottish Ambulance Service provides Accident & Emergency and Non-Emergency services to the people of Scotland from a total of 152 locations. These locations are a mix of Ambulance Stations and home based operating points. It also operates a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service from two dedicated Air Bases; one in central Glasgow and one at Inverness Airport.

There are five geographic operating divisions within the Scottish Ambulance Service, each headed by a General Manager and managed by a Divisional Management Team. In the last year the service responded to 584,108 accident and emergency incidents, carried out 1,691,971 non-emergency patient journeys and flew 3,274 Air Ambulance missions.

The Service employs 3,950 staff.

For more information, please visit: www.scottishambulance.com

About Datix

Datix is a global supplier of software for patient safety, risk management, incident and adverse event reporting. We aim to help healthcare organisations build a culture that drives excellence in patient safety, based on market-leading software, skills and healthcare knowledge.

Set up specifically to meet the governance and risk management requirements of the healthcare industry, Datix is working as a partner to leading healthcare organisations across the world.

Today, Datix customers include more than 70% of the National Health Service in the UK, the United States Department of Defense, a number of provinces in Canada and some of the world's leading private healthcare providers.

Fast Facts

- Web-based forms make it easier for staff to report incidents
- Standardised incident reports are produced faster and reduce workload for the risk management team
- Reports enable trend analysis on recorded incidents to proactively put controls in place and reduce risk
- Using a generic system enables the risk management team to benchmark against other NHS boards
- Risk Register and Assurance Framework enables the team to prioritise risks to the organisation's objectives