

FLOWSTUDY

Fit-For-Purpose Processes Give Big Boost To Hospitals

FlowForma Process Automation has been seamlessly adopted into the complex ecosystem of a UK hospital group and transformed a wide range of administrative processes.

The Challenge

The Blackpool Teaching Hospitals (BTH) NHS Foundation Trust provides a range of acute and community health services in North of England towns across Lancashire and South Cumbria. A combination of highly distributed departments and multiple processes pose a huge administrative challenge for the 8,000 NHS employees involved in administration.

Many departments have bespoke processes that relied on paper trails, email or telephone calls, resulting in frequent delays, particularly when new staff had to familiarize themselves with a mixture of daily and monthly tasks.

"Evidence showed us that staff would often forget how to complete the various processes, which would dramatically increase resolution times and staff frustration," said Martyn McKechnie, Head of Digital Identity and System Administration at BTH.

The decision was taken to move their business processes online with a no code, process automation solution. As an approved vendor for workflow automation on the NHS's shared tenancy N365 platform, FlowForma Process Automation was the ideal solution to fit BTH's requirements.



Blackpool Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Flowstudy Summary

70+ Processes Automated...

- Accommodation requests
- Raising concerns
- HR processes
- Assignment change
- Requests for agency spend
- Clinical safety checks

Pain Points

- Bespoke processes dependent on email and paper trails
- Hard to resolve delays and hold-ups
- Incomplete workflows lead to frustrated staff
- New staff struggle with manual processes

Benefits

- Saves time, improves accuracy
- Simplicity around user permissions
- Easier adherence to information governance rules
- Advances NHS transformation

Next Steps

The plan is to migrate more processes to FlowForma Process Automation and delegate their ownership directly to the departments that use them. Governance is an area where new workflows will be targeted.

The Solution

What the team at BTH quickly learned to like about FlowForma Process Automation is its ability to handle all kinds of processes.

Despite already investing in RPA software, it was clear BTH required a Digital Process Automation solution to work in tandem with their existing investment. *"Whilst offering simple functions out of the box, it also caters for more complex requirements, but delivered in an easy format,"* said Martyn McKechnie.

Ease of use and adaptability have led to widespread adoption across the hospitals. **To date, 70+ processes have been automated with plans to automate more in the future.** At one end are forms with simple requirements that were created and deployed in a matter of hours, such as Accommodation Requests and a Raising Concerns form. At the other, more complex flows were developed, like the ESR (Electronic Staff Record) Assignment Change form that passes through five departments.

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Mark Greenwood,
Senior Developer,
Blackpool Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

"We have used FlowForma Process Automation for a number of years. We have always had excellent support from the team. We have made many paper-based processes much simpler for our staff and reduced turnaround times for requests to be actioned. FlowForma Process Automation is much more than just an eForms solution: it follows the process through from start to finish, and ties into SharePoint for managing forms both on a user level and as an admin."

Paul Fearnley
Senior RAID Developer
Blackpool Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



The BTH HR department is a big FlowForma Process Automation user. It has developed a New Starter form and a Requests for Agency Spend process, which has a permissions process that escalates to senior management. *“Another huge benefit of FlowForma Process Automation is the simplicity around user permissions,”* said Martyn McKechnie. *“We can be confident that we are adhering to information governance rules that make sure only appropriate users can access certain sets of data.”*

FlowForma Process Automation has also proved to be a valuable tool in helping with compliance. Other forms include Clinical Safety Checks and an audit tool that was put in place following a visit by the Care Quality Commission.

The Outcome

Martyn McKechnie recommends FlowForma Process Automation to other hospitals, praising the tool for giving BTH a consistency in approach that saves time, improves accuracy, and reduces the administrative and clinical burden. *“It has also prompted departments to review their processes and ensure they are fit for purpose. Lastly, it reduced the burden on our in-house development team who now have the time to concentrate on more critical Trust projects,”* he said.

His advice for other hospitals looking to use FlowForma Process Automation is to start small and get a clear understanding of a process before they start the build. *“Try not to overcomplicate, keep the department engaged when building and ensure they retain ownership once it’s finished. Identify key contacts in the department and make sure they are well trained so that development can be handed over to them to maintain the process,”* he said.



Mark Greenwood, Senior Developer at BTH, expanded on the point. *"The speed of development and the opportunity to involve process owners in creating their own forms and workflows is a game-changer,"* he said. *"A process automation solution that can be procured easily for NHS Trusts like ours is key to assisting wider transformation across the entire NHS ecosystem. We hope we can act as a successful business case for others to follow in the future."*

FlowForma Process Automation's cloud-native approach to process building and its synergy with N365 was important to BTH strategically, according to Shaun Bucknill, Acting Deputy CIO. *"For us, it was about leveraging the national tenant to gain further efficiencies and adopting an internet-first approach to cyber security,"* he said. *"The ability to create workflows quickly with governance from IT, without being reliant on them, is critical as we seek to further automate in other areas."*

About FlowForma

FlowForma is globally recognized as the leading no code Digital Process Automation provider. The company is committed to empowering businesspeople to rapidly digitalize a wide range of processes in-house, without writing any software code.

FlowForma customers are live with digital processes, empowered and self-sufficient within 4 weeks of onboarding, and secure a return on investment within 6 weeks.

Headquartered in Ireland with offices in Dublin, London, New York and Boston. FlowForma serves 300,000 global users. A Microsoft Gold partner, its multinational customers include Bouygues, Aon, Grant Thornton and the NHS.

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