

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust live with Better's ePMA, OPENeP

Trust advances its open IT strategy with a go-live of the Better e-prescribing and medications management solution in its surgical services

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust has gone live with its e-prescribing and medications management solution from Better.

The trust, which was formed on 1 April 2020 when the Somerset Partnership and Taunton and Somerset NHS foundation trusts merged, is using OPENeP across its surgical services.

The move is a significant milestone for the trust's IT strategy, which is to integrate key systems using the Better openEHR platform and to add clinical functionality by using the Better Form Builder, vendors committed to an open ethos, and rapid in-house digital development with clinicians.

It has also supported the trust's COVID-19 response and laid the foundations for a roll-out across the Trust's medicine directorate later this summer.

Andrew Forrest, the trust's chief information officer, explained: "We decided to pursue an open platform and portal based approach to developing an electronic patient record.

"This offered several advantages, such as allowing us to create a central record and clinical data repository that we can use to feed the best of suite clinical systems that we are adding according to our needs and resources.

"OPENeP is an important part of the mix, and it is great to see that the system is now live and delivering the benefits of closed loop electronic prescribing and medication management to our staff."

The former Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust chose to pursue e-prescribing with OPENeP in 2018 as part of its global digital exemplar programme.

It launched a trial of the system on its Eliot Ward, an elderly care ward, the following September. It planned to follow the pilot by introducing it across medical areas and wards at Musgrove Park Hospital, but attention switched to its surgical directorate just before Christmas.

Clinicians in the trust's surgical directorate were fully engaged with the project, which went live at the start of March – just before the trust started to care for COVID-19 patients.

Deputy chief clinical information officer and digital safety lead David Chalkley said it would have been easy for the trust to revert to paper working as it came under pressure, but instead it extended the system as part of its COVID-19 response.

"When we planned the deployment in early January, we could not have anticipated the scale of impact of COVID-19, yet two weeks after we deployed our staff were being asked to work at home if at all possible," he said. "Despite that, the organisation had the confidence to keep going.

"That's because OPENeP is so easy to use and once it's embedded it's impossible to remove. In fact, we had requests to roll it out further, for example to critical care pods so our

colleagues could make prescribing decisions without having to don personal protective equipment [to see the paper chart at the bedside].

“As a result, we have already expanded OPENeP to critical areas as part of our COVID-19 response, and that will inform our roll-out to medical areas.”

Digital project manager Gemma Chappell also said the deployment had been well-received. “There were no major issues at all with the go-live,” she said. “People really took it in their stride. Clinicians really like it, particularly our nurses, who would never go back.”

Gemma said that nurses who have been working on different wards during the coronavirus outbreak are very keen to see OPENeP deployed on their own wards because it’s so easy to use.

“When our nurses are doing drug rounds, they don’t have to look for paperwork,” she said. “All the information they need is to hand and OPENeP is quick and intuitive to learn.”

Better is an international healthcare organisation that opened a UK office this year. The Better Platform supports more than 22 million patients across 500 hospitals in 15 countries worldwide.

The OPENeP medication management application can be used as part of Better’s postmodern EHR strategy or deployed as a stand-alone product. It has been chosen by four NHS trusts since its first go-live at University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust in summer 2019.

The next step for Somerset NHS Foundation Trust will be to deploy the system across its emergency department, medical admissions areas, and medical wards. This is planned to go live shortly as the trust remodels care pathways following its response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Matt Cox, managing director of Better UK and Ireland, said: “Somerset’s rapid rollout of ePMA, with real pull from the clinicians and the nursing community, is a great endorsement of the way we have all worked together.

“It demonstrates that OPENeP, having been designed with clinicians for clinicians on an open architecture, is key to digitally transforming health and care services, even in the difficult circumstances that we face at the moment.”

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About Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust is the first NHS trust on the English mainland to provide community, mental health and acute hospital services. They work with health and social care partners in Somerset to ensure that they deliver outstanding services that meet the needs of their population.

The trust was formed on 1 April 2020 when Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust merged. They provide community and mental health services across the whole of Somerset and acute hospital services in the north, west and centre of the county and beyond.

About Better

Better builds powerful digital products that help doctors and nurses treat people. We are dedicated to leveraging the power of design and technology to exchange and use health data for seamless care coordination and constant innovation to ensure the best health

outcomes for all. With three decades of proven record at the technological forefront and vast domain knowledge, we are trusted by leading academic medical centres, children's and community hospitals, research and other healthcare institutions in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, Russia, Norway, Finland, Italy and more.

About OPENeP

OPENeP is a comprehensive electronic prescribing and medication management system, constantly improved in collaboration with pharmacists, doctors, and nurses. The system is designed as a stand-alone solution, with easy integration options to connect to the existing EHR system, and medication-related decision support systems.