Conquest Hospital

Based on a gently sloping site in Hastings, the Conquest Hospital is a modern District General Hospital. Built over four levels, the hospital opened 16 years ago and in 2002 merged with Eastbourne Hospital to form East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust serving the population of East Sussex. The Trust employs over 5000 staff and is an extremely busy hospital trust. In the last year the Trust's maternity teams delivered 3835 babies; 95,393 people were treated as inpatients and day cases and a total of 115,147 patients were treated in their two emergency departments.   They also carried out nearly five million pathology tests.

In 2007, the access control system at the Conquest Hospital failed and could not be recovered. Installation of a new system by the current provider was not a realistic option because of the cost that had been quoted to them. John Kirk the Security Manager for both The Conquest and the DGH in Eastbourne explains: "Security is very

important in this sort of environment. Hundreds of people come through the hospital every day and we do need to ensure that the general public cannot wander into some areas of the hospital, whether this is by accident or design."

John decided to investigate installing a Net2 networked access control system from Paxton Access. John says, " The Eastbourne Hospital is already secured using the Net2 system. In addition, one of our satellite buildings on the Hastings site had four doors already controlled by Net2.

> ### "The ability to clearly define who has access to which site is essential and Net2 provides us with this"

"Our Security Team Leader, Steve Edwards, had been managing the satellite system at Hastings and found it very easy and effective to use. Our site in Eastbourne was also very happy with Net2. We were aware of Paxton Access as the market leaders and that their systems set the industry standard, it also made more sense for the hospital to have a consistent access control system across our different buildings."

Vistec Systems of Crawley were approached to tender for the installation and won the project. The Net2 system is now working across all of their sites. This includes the main hospital in Hastings, Bexhill Hospital, the Irvine unit, St Anne's and the Woodlands unit. Net2 connects to the remote buildings and between floors using the hospitals existing network.

A total of 6500 user cards are now issued and 83 doors are controlled by a Net2 System. John comments, "These sites have a mix of different staff that work for different trusts, in fact some work for more than one. The ability to clearly define who has access to which site is essential and Net2 provides us with this."

Steve controls all of this from one PC at Conquest Hospital. He believes the main advantage of Net2 is how easy he finds it to use. "Despite the huge number of staff, Net2 is still simple and user friendly because the software is very intuitive. It is so easy to set up individual groups and different access levels for each group. The Windows interface means that training other staff to use Net2 takes less than an hour." In addition to the rapid software training several maintenance staff were given free training at Paxton Access. John says, "We can now undertake basic checks on the system ourselves."

Using 11 TCP/IP Ethernet interfaces the remote sites are controlled via the hospitals IT network. Dean Hawkins of Vistec says, "In fact, instead of hardwiring between floors we decided to use the TCP/IP interfaces as they were so much more convenient and cost effective."

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Conquest Hospital has also found that some of the more specific characteristics of Net2 fit their needs perfectly. "We are subject to opportunist theft," says Steve, "but using the Net2 events screen we can refine who was in the area at the time of the theft. Not only does this mean we can narrow down the culprits but it also deters thieves from stealing in the first place. It is a very, very useful tool and is easy to monitor constantly if needed. The emergency lock down of different areas is also really appealing. It means that in the case of any eventuality, such as a chemical spill or the need to create a temporary mortuary, we can prevent access to chosen parts of the building."

Steve compares the Paxton Access Net2 system to the system that they had previously, "The instant nature of Net2 is much more reliable and reassuring. The previous system sometimes took days to register or cancel a card meaning that security was compromised. The moment a card is registered on the Net2 system it becomes live and appropriate access levels are in place."

The hospital also houses an essential blood bank for the local area. However there are strict EU guidelines that must be adhered to when handling blood. Each time the blood bank is opened someone must be accountable for the action and blood can only be signed in or out by a qualified member of staff. Access to the blood bank is obviously restricted to those members of staff. John explains, "Having access control on our blood banks is extremely important. Without it the process would be more time consuming and less accurate, we can quickly access reports on who has opened the doors and when; we have total confidence in our system."

"Having an Access Control system makes our staff feel more secure than just having CCTV"

Other highly controlled areas include the baby unit and the mental health wing. "As you can see," says Steve, "we have a real mixture of doors that have to be controlled at many different levels. Not only can we achieve this with Net2, we can achieve it easily."

After the turmoil caused by the previous access control system, how do the staff feel about the Net2 option? "Our staff are very happy to have the system in place," says Steve, "they grasp the swipe cards immediately and because the swipe cards have their picture and details on they can also use it as visual ID. Having an Access Control system that actually works makes them feel more secure than just having CCTV. Although the CCTV complements Net2, our staff realise that while CCTV records – it does not actually prevent unauthorised people gaining access to the building or parts of it. The transition was also really smooth because we were able to use all of our existing HiCode cards. This saved both time and money."

"Compared with our earlier access control system it is far superior. This is the best period of security stability we have enjoyed in a long time"

John and Steve have been so impressed with Net2 that it will be integrated with their fire alarm and extended across their remaining remote sites. They are also in the process of adding another 10 doors around the Conquest site. "At some stage we will also combine the system at the Eastbourne DGH with the one at the Conquest," John explains, "this will give us greater flexibility over the management of both systems. We would certainly recommend the system; we are more than happy with it. Compared with our earlier access control system it is far superior. This is the best period of security stability we have enjoyed in a long time." They are also very complimentary about Dean and Vistec, John continues, "The project management that Vistec offered us was invaluable. Dean has a really good relationship with our staff and IT team which has made the whole experience really successful and problem free. We feel very fortunate."

System user	Conquest Hospital
Installer	Vistec Systems
Type of site	Hospital
Type of system	Net2 PC based system
System description	90+ doors , with 11 TCP/IP Ethernet interfaces