

CASE STUDY

# Online resources aid patient safety training at East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

A Virtual College Case Study



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## The background

The East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust is proud of the range of general and specialist services provided by its dedicated staff.

They ensure patients get the best care across all four of its locations: Hertford County hospital, the Lister hospital in Stevenage, Mount Vernon Cancer Centre in Northwood and the New QEII hospital in Welwyn Garden City.

The Trust's emergency department services see round 130,000 people and about 5,500 babies are born in the Trust each year. In total, the Trust's staff treat around half a million people each year.



## The solution

From 2010, Virtual College worked with NHS Diabetes/NHS England to create an online suite of courses to address the need for a means of ensuring a large number of staff could be trained quickly and effectively.

Now known as the National Patient Safety Suite, this range of courses has grown and continues to evolve. There are currently (Jan 2016) 15 online patient safety courses in the suite which includes several focussed on treating diabetes.

Angela Thompson, the Trust's director of nursing, commented:

“The flexibility of Virtual College's online learning is ideally suited to our 24/7 working environment, allowing us to reach a large number of learners quickly with minimum disruption.”

Prior to making the National Patient Safety Suite available to their staff in March 2015, there was a huge publicity programme initiated throughout the Trust to generate awareness and interest, including posters, emails and flyers.

## The challenge

As the Trust employs some 5,000 members of staff, maintaining up to date training is a huge undertaking but vital in ensuring patient safety.

The NHS identified improved training for staff involved with diabetic patients as hugely important many years ago. In keeping with national NHS requirements, throughout the Trust, specific training is mandatory for large groups of staff dealing with diabetic patients.

Emer Corbett, Continuing Professional Development Nurse for the East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust, commented:

“Our diabetic teams view education as a huge part of their role and appreciate the added value and support E-Learning brings in educating large groups of staff.”



# The results

Staff throughout the Trust now have unlimited training access to all of the courses in the suite.

The Trust's communication programme worked very well and it was the first to be presented with a Gold Certificate of Achievement by Virtual College in recognition of the high level of engagement achieved by their staff in National Patient Safety Suite learning.

Emer commented: "Learner engagement has been very encouraging. It's very important that staff undertake the training and we need everyone to complete."

"We still provide traditional face to face in-depth training but this is made easier by using online resources to provide underpinning knowledge."

From the 15 courses available in the National Patient Safety Suite, 'Safe Use of Insulin' is the most regularly used across the Trust and is mandatory for all doctors and nurses.

Paediatricians use the 'Caring for children and young people with diabetes mellitus' course while clinical support workers log on to the 'The Safe Management of Hypoglycaemia' course.

Emer continued: "Our staff like e-learning – there's a large amount of in-depth content so it can take some time to go through the courses but it's very convenient for the learners."

"For the NHS, e-learning works really well allowing us to reach large numbers of staff very quickly."

"We have been well served by Virtual College and the National Patient Safety Suite offers very good value for money."

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## About Virtual College

Since 2006, we have provided training to every NHS Trust and now work with over 60 local safeguarding boards. Over this period, we have donated more than £200,000 to healthcare and safeguarding charities.

We are part of Virtual College, which has over 2 million learners and is growing at a rate of 1000 per day across public and private sectors.

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