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NECS celebrated its 7th anniversary in April 2020.

Since April 2013 we have grown our turnover by 58% and, critically, met all of our key financial targets each year.



We have demonstrated commitment to our social purpose; to make life changing improvements – creating jobs and generating wealth for our communities.

We have created over 600 additional jobs for people in NECS since 2013. During 2019/20 we returned over £3m to customer owners of NECS - £1.3m in the form of a dividend and a £2m Transformation Fund which has been invested in a range of initiatives to address health inequalities across the respective integrating health and care systems of the North East & North Cumbria and Derbyshire.

Our turnover in 2019-2020 was

£90.2m

including **£37.4 million** of new sales, which was £10.6 million above our target!



We have improved our customer satisfaction scores to the highest ever achieved – reaching an average of 4.6 out of 5 in February 2020.



During 2019/20 NECS welcomed visitors from NHS England and NHS Improvement to find out more about our work including:

- Ian Dodge, *National Director: Strategy & Innovation, NHSE*
- Jennifer Howells, *Regional Director (South West) NHS England & NHS Improvement*
- Tessa Walton, *Director of NHS Delivery, NHS England*
- Alex Morton, *Regional Director of Primary Care and Public Health Commissioning NHS England and NHS Improvement - North East and Yorkshire Region*
- Tracey Grainger, *Director of Transformation - Learning Disability Programme, NHSE*
- Emily Lawson, *National Director: Transformation and Corporate Development, NHS England & NHS Improvement*
- Amanda Pritchard, *NHSE&I Chief Operating Officer*



The NECS Health and Safety Team has ensured all NECS sites are 100% compliant for fire safety, fire drills, fire risk assessments and fire training as well as keeping our people safe whilst at work.

All of our audits were 4 star rated, symbolising full compliance.

NECS Continuous Improvement System has helped us to release over

£1m

in efficiencies (a combination of time saved and cash released) every year since 2013. Over 86.7% of our people have completed the NECS Foundation Training Programme through our collaboration with Nissan Motor Manufacturing UK (Sunderland). We have also been delighted with the progress of our partnership with the NHSE&I Lead Transformation / Vital Signs team and the increasing use of NECS Expert Practitioners to deliver the programme in secondary care.

There are more than

1,300 NECS people

working from 28 locations across England delivering services in all 7 NHSE&I regions.



NHSE&I itself is one of our 300 customers and we are proud to have been delivering a number of high profile, national programmes including; transition of the Cervical Screening Call and Recall service back into NHSE&I, the Care Home Capacity Tracker, International GP Recruitment, General Practice Payments Calculation Futures (GPCCF) Programme and the Learning Disability Mortality Review Programme.



For the 7th year running the NECS Financial Accounting Team has successfully delivered the year end cash balances for each of our client CCGs within the range set by NHSE&I whilst also ensuring payments are made in accordance with the 'Better Payment Practice Code'.



We have re-enforced our commitment to the health and wellbeing of our people by holding various health promotion and awareness events, and have achieved the Continuing Excellence level of the Better Health at Work Award in 2020. In line with our Time to Change Pledge, we have continued our commitment to promoting positive mental health in the workplace, changing how we think about and respond to mental health within NECS. We have trained 14 Mental Health First Aiders and have 25 Mental Health Champions who support us to embed positive mental health practices within our organisation.



We have worked closely with Healthcare UK, completing the Export Catalyst programme which has helped inform the development of our Export Strategy. We enjoyed our first export sales of Consulting Services to the Primary Health Networks in Australia and the Provincial Health Services in Manitoba, Canada.



To enable Integrated Care Systems to drive improvements to the health of their populations, we have developed and continue to improve a number of digital applications including the Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) App (which has evolved from the North East's UEC Flight Deck and RAIDR), the VBC checker (helping patients avoid having clinically inappropriate procedures) now underpinning the national Evidence Based Intervention Programme, new RAIDR dashboards for Continuing Health Care and the Care Home Bed Capacity Tracker (which, in March 2019, was adapted for wider use across community rehab providers and hospices in response to the Covid-19 pandemic).

NECS is one of a small number of NHS organisations to have achieved a 3 star accreditation from the ICT Service Desk Institute for the third year running. Our ICT services for CCGs and General Practices continue to expand, building on our success in Derbyshire, and we are delighted to have been successful in securing the contract to provide similar support to North Yorkshire and Vale of York CCGs.



The app has seen some rapid developments to support these systems including the implementation of Primary Care OPEL reporting through a quick and easy to use system. This has resulted in opportunities to discuss mutual aid and support options amongst primary care services, particularly with the implementation of Primary Care Networks capability in the app allowing GP Practices to share their status whilst also viewing the wider demand and capacity across the UEC system. Critical Care capacity has become a major area of focus lately and as such the app now also includes a specific Critical Care Capacity module which provides regional visibility of not only bed availability but also reflecting overall CritCon status based on staffing and equipment factors. We have continued to enhance the integration with the national NHS 111 Directory of Services to both receive and provide data.

Our Value Based Commissioning application, the VBC checker, is designed to protect patients from having clinically inappropriate treatments and helps ensure the most efficient use of NHS resources. A total of 14,000 procedures have been avoided during 2018/19 and 2019/20. Whilst the most important benefit is the safety and quality of life gain for patients, the VBC checker has delivered an £18m saving to the North East and North Cumbria health economy over this time. The VBC checker now has over 1,200 registered users outside of the North East and is making a valuable contribution to the implementation of the national Evidence Based Intervention programme for which it is one of the demonstrator sites.

The Assurance and Transformation programme has been a huge success in Continuing Health Care (CHC) Services and is driving us on towards achieving our ambition of becoming a service exemplar for digitised CHC. Examples of our progress include new digital reporting dashboards, electronic checklist and Decision Support Tool, workforce strategy and competency framework, improved model of compliance testing and an overhaul of data quality. We are able to evidence marked performance improvements, improved staff satisfaction and a 'substantial assurance' rating for our core operational and finance processes from Deloitte (NHSE internal audit).

NECS is a strategic partner to the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System, contributing significantly at senior leadership level (Joint Senior Responsible Officer for Population Health Management, membership of the Great North Care Record Programme Board and of the ICS Health Strategy Group), providing good-will project management and subject expertise for Regional ICS Workstreams and the Urgent and Emergency Care Network) and re-investing margin into ICS development programmes. The ICS Lead, Alan Foster, is an Associate Director of the NECS Customer Board.

THE TIME IS NOW

During 2019/20 we worked with NHS England to establish a baseline of carbon impact and set a target to reduce our carbon and impact by 30% focusing on car journeys.

Our CSR strategy details four organisational priorities: travel and transport, natural resources, supply chain and social value. We have removed all single use plastics from NECS sites.

NECS invested £60k in the North East Climate Coalition in 2020, helping agencies and individuals across the north east to channel their energies and resources towards 'Becoming England's Greenest Region'.

In 2020 NHSE requested that NECS lead a National Waiting List Validation Programme (part of NHSE's Winter Extras Programme) which was an at scale, 80 day intensive piece of work designed to target waiting list validation based on the outcomes of a diagnostic to help address the root causes of poor waiting list data quality and remove erroneous pathways in up to 80 Trusts.

- 58 diagnostic reports produced
- 1.8 million pathways analysed
- 618k pathways identified as a validation priority, of these, 79,917 were 26+ weeks (12.85%) and 1040 were 52+weeks (0.17%)
- One Trust experienced a 9.32% reduction in the waiting list size
- One Trust experienced a 3.47% improvement in performance utilising Clear PTL without receiving any external validation support and in only six weeks.

In 2019 a comprehensive staff survey was undertaken in NECS for the second consecutive year. 880 people completed the survey (70% of employees). Responses were incredibly positive overall and a working group was set up to work on any recommendations.

93% say their role contributes to the improved experience of customers

Actions following on from the 2018 survey saw changes made to one-to-ones and team meeting templates to provide guidance and standardisation around discussions; additional communications around the support on offer to the workforce including our Freedom to Speak up Guardian and more training options were offered in addition to bi-monthly reminder bulletins about the development and how to book.

FUTURE FOCUSED FINANCE

The NECS graduate programme was launched in 2019 and saw three graduates begin working in the Finance and HR teams. The programme has been developed to provide individuals with on and off the job training through formal qualifications and internal training options.

The programme has been developed with the aim of cultivating individuals with the skills NECS needs for the future in line with our social purpose to create and generate wealth for our communities in regions where graduate roles are often scarce.

The Consultancy Team have continued to grow over the last year. As a result of their continued success in the London region, they have now recruited a London based team which will ensure continuity in the high quality work they deliver in and around that geography.

This year, the team were shortlisted for two awards through the Management Consultancy Association (MCA) including an award for "Performance Improvement in the Public Sector" for their work on the NHS National Cancer Programme. The team now also have representation on the MCA Board, which is a great achievement as the MCA is the voice of the UK Consulting sector.

The Consultancy Team is working towards gaining accreditation to offer internal training and assessment for those seeking qualification as Chartered Management Consultants (ChMC). This is a newly established external certification developed by the MCA in partnership with the Chartered Management Institute. The Consultancy team will have to complete a verification of all of their processes and training offers to support 53 competencies. If approved, NECS would be the first public sector organisation to receive such accreditation.

The team have demonstrated great cross regional working and flexibility throughout the course of this year and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, responding rapidly to the asks of new and previous customers. This includes providing support to the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) projects, work on the Capacity Tracker and Key Worker Testing Programmes. The team have also been able to flex and rapidly resource other high profile and fast moving projects including:

- London Regional PMO redesign and Covid Recovery and Response PMO
- Digital diagnostic review and production of Digital Insight Tool across Midlands and East regions
- London Outpatient Transformation Programme
- Midlands EU Exit Support
- ISC Business Cases Support with Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership

The national target for GP practices to fully digitise their patient care record by 2022 has resulted in the need to secure a solution to enable digitisation of the legacy Lloyd George paper records. NECS' Business Change and Benefits team was requested to produce a report highlighting the benefits and cost efficiencies of digitisation in 26 practices in North Tyneside CCG. Key benefits described by practices include time saved whilst processing patient records as there is no longer a need to identify and pull paper records, secure transfer of patient data when required due to secure digital transfer protocols and the release of estate space as the solution eliminates the need to continue to store the paper record. Analysis showed, on the metrics measured across 26 practices, efficiency savings of £6,489.47 per month or £77k per annum.

NECS has consistently met the required standard for the Information Governance/Data Security & Protection Toolkit (DSPT) since 2013. The DSPT is an online self-assessment tool that enables us to measure and publish our performance against the National Data Guardian's ten data security standards. Through this we are able to provide assurance that we are practicing good data security and that personal information is handled correctly.

In 2018 NHS Digital replaced the Information Governance Toolkit with the Data Security and Protection Toolkit. The DSPT places more emphasis on cyber security in line with the National Data Guardian's ten data security standards. In 2018/19 and 2019/20 NECS published a Standards Met assessment, demonstrating our compliance with the mandatory requirements.

NECS was delighted to be commissioned for the first time to provide consulting and analytical expertise to the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trust. We drew upon our experience of urgent care and data modelling to identify scenarios and real life examples of Urgent Care Centres to produce a report that enabled our customer to develop an options appraisal and business case. The onset of coronavirus at the beginning of 2020 prohibited site visits but the project was delivered remotely to the customer's satisfaction - a really important test of capability.

The NECS Volunteering Programme set up during 2019/20 offers NECS employees the opportunity to engage in volunteering to make a difference to the communities we serve.

NECS has made available 365 days of volunteering entitlement, that is a whole year of our people's time to go out there, do something different, have fun and make a difference where it is needed!

NECS delivered project management support to the North East and Yorkshire Region, testing concepts and approaches to offering alternative choice to patients who had been waiting 26 weeks or more for care or treatment. The programme has resulted in reduced waiting times and improved patient experience. Since successful completion of the pilot it has been rolled out nationally.

NECS worked with NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde to provide a review of the current demand and capacity mapping pathways and providing a tool to enable a detailed analysis of capacity against forecast levels. A detailed report was produced tying together the data analysis, process mapping, qualitative analysis and demand and capacity modelling, which resulted in 10 key improvement recommendations.

NECS produced recommendations to roll out the Early Days Mental Health approach to phase 2 prison sites across the NHS England South Region resulting in the implementation of new lean, safe and effective processes within each prison across the Region.

Our experience of continuous improvement, change management, delivery of projects at pace and an end-to-end solution focused approach gave us an important advantage when delivering this project. Our work embraced mapping the prisoners' journey of experience from custody to early days mental health assessment, reviewing estate requirements, development of job descriptions and recruitment support and establishment of a performance measurement system.

During 2019/20 NECS was commissioned to review the demand and capacity across the Urgent and Emergency Care pathway in Greater Manchester. NECS developed a bespoke system balance model for 11 localities based on the Six Steps to Managing Demand in Social Care. Having a system balance model that links both social care and health data has allowed for more informed and joined-up working.

NECS undertook a clinical service review of the 'out of hospital' offer for urgent and emergency care pathways within Community, Primary Care and Social Care services in Oldham, alongside a review of the Directory of Services (DoS) and NHS 111 activity. The team completed an in-depth report that provided key recommendations and priorities to support system wide planning and development of key services.

RAIDR has evolved further into a Population Health Management (PHM) intelligence tool helping ICSs, and particularly Primary Care Networks, to develop their population health management capability. We are proud of the contribution we have been making not only in the North East and North Cumbria ICS, but also supporting PHM development across the Suffolk & North East Essex and the Humber, Coast and Vale Integrated Care Systems.

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