

## Case Study

St Thomas' Hospital  
Healthcare  
Managed Document Service

# St Thomas' Hospital improves emergency patient record handling with Ricoh healthcare service



St Thomas' Hospital in central London has one of the busiest Emergency departments in the NHS with around 140,000 patients every year. But key parts of patient record handling were still manual and slow. After

bringing in a Ricoh Healthcare Solution the patient pathway from admission to discharge has been sped up and made more efficient, and the risk of record-keeping errors significantly reduced.

## Executive summary

**Name:** St Thomas' Hospital  
**Location:** London, UK  
**Size:** 140,000 patients annually  
**Activity:** Healthcare

### Challenges

- Handling 140,000 emergency patients every year
- Slow, manual system for patient administration
- Increasing burden on NHS hospitals to improve services, reduce costs

### Solution

- Ricoh Healthcare Solution
- Ricoh Managed Document Service
- Automated patient record processing

### Benefits

- Improves efficiency and speed of processing patients through the Emergency department
- Provides a better patient experience by reducing administration delays
- Reduces the risk of patient healthcare errors

### Challenges

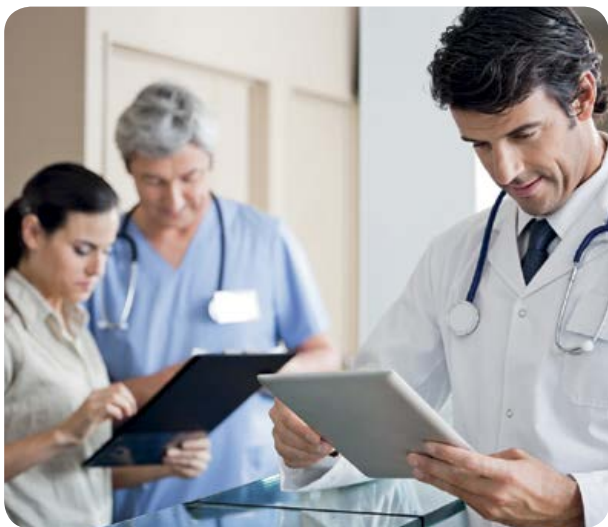
St Thomas' Hospital in central London is part of the Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and it provides emergency and other healthcare services to people living in and around south east London.

St Thomas' Emergency Department - which incorporates the hospital's A&E and urgent care services - is one of the busiest emergency healthcare departments in the NHS with 140,000 attendances a year or around 380 patients every day. As with all healthcare institutions, time is critical in ensuring that a patient receives the best care possible, not just assessments and treatments, but also the administration functions that support healthcare provision.

*"With Accident and Emergency timing is extremely important and every minute really does count,"* says Chris Mitchell, Service Manager in the Emergency Department at St Thomas' Hospital. *"One of the administrative functions that is key to good healthcare is when a patient leaves the Emergency Department and moves to a ward or is discharged. We must ensure that all their paper work is on the system before they can leave. This is essential for future medical reference."*

When a patient comes into the Emergency Department an electronic patient record is created or, if they are an existing patient, their record is called up. Any treatment they receive needs to be added to the patient's electronic notes so that other clinicians are aware of the healthcare history. This is critical to avoiding mistakes in future healthcare provision for a patient.

However, a key part of this process was still being done manually. Staff would have to search for the patient's notes and then make sure that any notes from treatment in the



Emergency Department were appended to their patient record. This manual operation was slow and cumbersome for staff, it slowed down patient care and impacted on the amount of time it took for the patient to move through the system.

NHS hospitals are under increasing pressure to improve services especially within their emergency and outpatient operations. So the hospital wanted to find way to a streamline the information and data gathering procedures whilst also ensuring that records were correctly identified and notes accurately allocated.

The hospital decided to use a Ricoh solution and one of the key features of Ricoh technology is its ability to handle the capture, management and distribution of information in a controlled and efficient way.

### Solution

As part of its work to improve efficiency, the Trust brought in a Ricoh Healthcare Solution based on a Ricoh Managed Document Service (MDS). It is being used to improve the way patients move through the Emergency Department, as well as support other administration functions around the hospital. The Ricoh solution comprises 10 Ricoh Multifunction Products (MFPs) connected via the hospital's corporate network. Three of the Ricoh MFPs have been deployed in the Emergency Department's administration offices specifically for handling patient information.

Doctors caring for patients in the Emergency Department write down observations, treatments and drugs administered on documents that have barcodes that are linked to a specific patient. The Ricoh MFPs have the ability to scan these documents so that electronic copies can be created. Document management software integrated with the Ricoh MDS identifies the document barcodes and then automatically links the scanned notes with the patient's master record.

The other Ricoh MFPs are used in other parts of the hospital for general administration such as printing, copying and some scanning.

### Benefits

As a result of the Ricoh MDS, St Thomas' has improved the patient experience and the way patients are managed through the Emergency Department. The speed and efficiency with which the Emergency Department is able to release patients, or pass them to the next stage of treatment, has been improved. For patients it means less time wasted on administration and a faster treatment process. It is also an important part of helping St Thomas' to reduce waiting times in the Emergency Department.

*continued overleaf*

## Case Study St Thomas' Hospital

Staff no longer need to find and attach individual patient records because the Ricoh implementation helps them automatically and instantly attached treatment information to the main patient record. The Ricoh solution helps establish a seamless link from admission, treatment and discharge through to the next stage of patient care.

Another important benefit of the Ricoh solution is to reduce risk of errors. Chris Mitchell says, "With 140,000 patients passing through the Emergency Department every year it is critical that we are able to make the process fast and efficient, but also to minimise risk of mistakes as much as possible. The Ricoh solution goes a long way to helping us achieve this because it automates the patient pathway and significantly reduces the chance of human error."

Administration staff have found that the Ricoh solution has helped patients move through the system faster, find beds quickly and have a more efficient experience.

"Many patients are treated in the Emergency Department and there are elements of the administration side of the patient's pathway that we can improve. What the Ricoh solution helps to do is make the information and patient record process as smooth and as slick as possible," says Mitchell.

### Ricoh Solution/Products

- Ricoh Multifunction Products

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Chris Mitchell, Emergency Department Service Manager,  
St Thomas' Hospital, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Guy's and St Thomas' **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust