The Northern Ireland Cancer Centre
The Centre specializes in the treatment of rare and less common cancers and is, at present, the only provider of radiotherapy in Northern Ireland which has a population of 1.84 million. When it opened, there were 105 staff members and the first year 4,500 new cancer patients were recorded. Clinical trials are conducted by the staff in the Belfast Trust as part of high-quality patient care to find better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer. Clinical trials are coordinated by the Northern Ireland Cancer Trials Centre (NICTC), based at The Centre. The NICTC works in active partnership with Queen’s University Belfast, the Research and Development Division of the Public Health Agency, Cancer Research UK and Friends of the Cancer Centre. It also collaborates with other Trusts, research organisations and funders.

The Centre was designed to create a warm and patient-friendly environment with maximum use of natural daylight providing a therapeutic atmosphere to benefit and improve patient progress and well-being. The six-story structure, with powder coated aluminum panels and warm red areas of terracotta rain screening is connected via covered walkways to the main Belfast City Hospital. The aim of the Centre was to make sure that treatment was given in a hospital that provided doctors with the latest treatments options and best practices. The facility needed to provide a focal point where clinicians could lead medical treatment development. It was with this vision, that GE Healthcare began collaborating with the Belfast Trust and its various contributors.

Challenges & solutions
Like many Healthcare projects, it was vital to secure continued investment in the Centre in order to ensure that the facilities and equipment would be able to evolve to meet the changing clinical staff and patient care needs. In addition, the Cancer Centre needed to ensure access to an acute care hospital in order to provide a continuum of care for all its patients, which meant relocating from its current site. Belfast looked for a flexible Managed Equipment Services (MES) Solution that included a secure funding channel. GE contracted with Medipass to provide the imaging equipment for the site and along with Project Co. (PHT and building contractor (Graham Martin) supplied a fully equipped building. The appropriate mix of partners was crucial to the project success.

GE Healthcare, as a leader in the global healthcare market, was able to quickly understand clinical needs and designed the technology and its various contributors.

From vision to reality
Once funding was secured and plans were developed, the Trust and its partners needed to shift focus to project management with a long-term outlook. How do you secure true value for money in a rapidly evolving healthcare market both in respect to technology and clinical capabilities?

The answer, you partner with a healthcare expert with a global and long-term outlook on the industry like GE Healthcare. GE brings more than 100 years of experience in serving healthcare professionals and their patients in more than 100 countries around the world.

GE Healthcare worked closely with the Trust to understand current medical imaging assets and capabilities. Once a baseline was established, the GE project team helped access new clinical needs and designed the technology road-map to meet those clinical needs. On an annual basis, GE Healthcare holds Technology Band Reviews. These reviews provide an opportunity for the clinical staff at the Centre to evaluate technological developments and new offerings from GE Healthcare.

This helps enable the Centre to:
• Enhance their clinical capabilities
• Expand patient care areas
• Refresh their technology to the latest available within their chosen technology band

The Technology Refresh Plan also allows the Centre to convert equipment capital cost into an operating cost, both alleviating some of the financial burdens of a growing healthcare system and keeping their clinical capabilities current.

Worldwide healthcare leadership at your service.

Background
The Northern Ireland Cancer Centre is part of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. As one of the largest Trusts in the United Kingdom, it delivers integrated healthcare to 340,000 people as well as specialist services as demonstrated with the Regional Cancer Centre for Northern Ireland. The Cancer Centre, adjacent to the Belfast City Hospital, opened its doors in March 2006. This state-of-the-art building project was completed in December 2005 at a cost of £57 Million.

The facility incorporates a full diagnostic imaging department, an extensive radiotherapy suite, and 10 linear accelerators.
• 84 inpatient beds including five isolation beds
• Research and development facilities
• Outpatient clinics for rehabilitation and palliative care

Vision
The Centre needed to ensure access to an acute care hospital in order to provide a continuum of care for all its patients, which meant relocating from its current site.

GE Healthcare dedicated many project hours to consult on room layouts related to equipment requirements and sitting needs, while considering the patient experience vision that the Trust had for the Centre. Every facet was particularly vital to the Cancer Centre.

“My personal opinion is that GE has been more than reasonable in meeting our increasing demands. I don’t believe we would have achieved the level of equipment and software specification we are getting had the Trust been buying the equipment through the normal NHS tendering process.”

Peter Faulkner, Radiology Business Manager BCH Trust

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Over time, Technology Band Reviews have helped enhanced the Centre’s clinical capabilities and expand their patient care. In 2006, this meant moving from a fluoroscopic screening unit to the versatile Precision 500D which would enhance their capabilities by accommodating vascular patients. In 2015, the Centre once again enhanced their clinical capabilities by adding an Imaging Guided System IGS 540 to enhance their interventional oncology capabilities.

As the clinical efficacy of imaging technology grows and develops the clinical needs of the Centre changes. GE continues to stay flexible and strives to help the Centre enhance patient care enabling better patient outcomes. GE solutions to date have included MRI, CT, CT Therapy, Nuclear Medicine, Radiography and Fluoroscopy.

Unique IT solutions
GE Healthcare took the time to thoroughly understand the Centre's workflow requirements and met these requirements with IT upgrades and enhancements. The Centre received an upgraded PACS system to include RIS. The GE project team worked extensively with the Radiotherapy department to provide bespoke interfaces which allowed seamless integration to the Oncology patient information and operational systems. In addition, patient flow enhancements were enabled with a unique IT solution that allowed Cancer Centre patients’ identification numbers to be accessed and matched automatically – previously this was a manual process prone to errors. System integration between The Centre and Belfast City hospital was a vital element to ensure a seamless continuum of care.

Overall, these enhancements significantly contributed to The Centre’s goal of producing a unified electronic patient record for its patients.

Conclusion
Patients now have rapid access to diagnosis, a wider range of treatment options as well as an improved patient experience and support network. Clinicians utilize enhanced clinical capabilities and the Trust has a long-term relationship with GE Healthcare through the ever changing landscape of healthcare.

For more information visit: www.gehealthcare.com

“We at Medipass have been very happy with our excellent relationship with a valued equipment manufacturer like GE. They have worked tirelessly with us in providing excellent customer service to the Cancer Centre and have demonstrated flexibility in supplying equipment to meet the ever changing clinical needs of the Centre, which at times, meant going above and beyond their contractual requirements.”

Robin Rezende, Director of Operations, Medipass