HORNBILL

Hornbill Case Study

Transforming HR service with Hornbill

NHS
Guy's and St Thomas'
NHS Foundation Trust

At a Glance

Name: Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust

Location: London

Industry: Healthcare

23,700 employees

2.8m annual patient contacts

150,000 HR requests per year

£2.5Bn annual turnoverr

Guys and St Thomas Foundation Trust is one of the largest Trusts in the country, and the largest in London. The Trust is one of the main providers of healthcare in Southeast London (employing 23,700 staff across five hospitals and several community hubs) and is part of the Southeast London Integrated Care System. It provides a comprehensive range of specialist and acute services—including the Evelina Children's Hospital (a leader in Paediatric Medicine) and the Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospital (a provider of specialist Cardiovascular Services).

EXCEL 2025 hpma EXCELLENCE IN PEOPLE AWARDS

PROUD TO BE SHORTLISTED

The Capsticks Award for Innovation

The People Hub

The People Hub is a digital HR Service Management platform that powers the People Directorate at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. Designed around the realities of NHS workforce operations, it provides a single gateway for over 50 HR processes—from complex employee relations cases to routine workforce changes.

Managers are empowered with real-time visibility of reporting lines through My Team and My Establishment dashboards. Workflows for Establishment Control are fully digitised and integration with ESR is seamlessly automated via daily RPA feeds.

Expiry notifications for visas, FTCs and professional registrations trigger automated alerts and actions to minimise compliance risks and remove manual reporting.

The Employee Relations module breaks down complex policy documents by guiding managers through a series of tasks. The system provides prompts and reminders when action is needed and includes timely access to template letters and other relevant documentation.

Since launch, HR service requests have been processed via The People Hub, with 85% turnaround time compliance—enabling HR to scale support, reduce admin, and shift focus to process improvements and more effective service delivery.

The challenge

The Trust had an existing HR Service Management System, introduced in 2014. Its purpose was to deliver streamlined and centralised workforce operations and act as the primary access route for HR queries and transactions.

Problems for employees

The old system wasn't easy to navigate and didn't meet employee expectations for usability. On top of that, system outages and access issues made it unsuitable for a 24/7 clinical workforce.

People couldn't get the outcomes they required without repeated contact with the HR team and were frustrated by the increased administrative burden—taking time away from patient care.

Problems for the HR team

For the HR teams, the old system had a clunky user interface, making work more complicated than need be:

- A combination of system complexity and inflexibility limited the ability to adapt the system to changing organisation needs, and created a constant need for manual intervention to address gaps in system functionality.
- Basic tasks were spread across multiple system pages increasing the margin for error.
- The inability to add attachments to transactions was creating additional and unnecessary touchpoints.
- The process for managers to approve staff requests was multi-stepped, increasing complexity.
- Complex integration with ESR created the need for a separate integration engine (at significant cost) which increased system instability.

- Clunky navigation
- Low employee adoption
- Inefficient HR operations
- Regular system outages
- Employee access issues
- Lack of visibility
- Lost queries
- Feature gaps
- System inflexibility
- Complex data integration
- Poor integrability

What the trust wanted to achieve

- **Improve the digital HR experience.** Implement a simple, user-friendly system that staff would actually want to use—because it is faster and easier.
- **Channel deflection.** Provide a compelling alternative to phone and email that would drive a high self-service adoption rate.
- **Provide operational transparency** and a platform for service improvements with visible performance standards—allowing HR leaders to actively manage HR services and experiences against customer expectations.
- **Apply automation** to routine HR tasks. Reduce manual intervention and shift human focus to more strategic, value-creating activity.
- **Improve data integration** Automated ESR and budget holder updates reduces the risk of human error and the need for a separate integration solutions.
- **Improve value for money** by reducing supplier costs, improving user adoption and achieving a greater return on investment.

> "We aren't just switching on a new system, we have ambitions to transforming the service we provide to the organisation, using the new system as a catalyst for change."

NHS Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

The solution

Why they chose Hornbill People Hub

- Modern, digital employee experience mirrors consumer service experiences.
- Easy to navigate and use.
- Customer-centric.
- Provides transparency of progress to users.
- Drag-and-drop workflow design.
- Simple integration with ESR.
- Clear visibility of demand, performance, and trends.

> **"The user interface is clean and built with consideration to the NHS Web Access guidelines."**

Implementation and project management

In 2023, the Trust tendered for a new HR service management system and appointed Hornbill as new solution supplier.

> **"Given the scale of this change, we have involved service users—staff from across the organisation—from the start of the programme."**

A programme with over 40 workstreams was developed, including a number of activities which went beyond a simple switch-over from one system to another.

Many workstreams involved colleagues from across the organisation—to keep programme resources lean, costs to a minimum, and to ensure the programme was able to harness organisational knowledge.

The programme was supported by a Programme Board, which met monthly and included key stakeholders from across the organisation to help drive forward the delivery of key workstreams.

Go-live

Trust-wide go-live was over two phases starting with the Guys' and St Thomas's hospital sites in March 2025, followed by the Royal Brompton and Harefield sites in May 2025.

> **"The programme included a stabilisation phase and road map to embed the system with activities such as setting up a system user group, a 6-month system review with the service supplier and an on-going service improvement plan."**

Optimising user adoption

The path to user access was simplified to remove initial barriers to adoption:

- User access automatically granted based on ESR profiles.
- Single Sign On (SSO) removed a common access and adoption barrier.
- Step-by-step "how to" guides covering all HR requests were made available on the Trust's intranet and Learning platform.
- Steamlined system access for new starters.
- Improved line manager approvals with '1-click' approval process.

> **"The People Hub has been built with the user in mind and is more customer-centric than process driven."**

Which product features were most valuable at the start?

- Operational visibility for the service users.
- Clean, user-friendly interface.
- Clear and visible service turnaround times set agreed service expectations.
- The ability for employees to easily track their queries within the HR portal.

> **"We continue to work closely and collaboratively with Hornbill. The relationship has been one of mutual respect and contribution - working closely to develop the People Hub and supporting user material. This collaboration has created a fantastic product, developed in partnership with a responsive and flexible supplier."**

What's next?

The Trust sees the launch of the People Hub as the start of their service improvement journey. Better data quality, improved UI, and greater visibility of transaction history will enable the Trust to identify improvement opportunities and establish the root cause if things don't go to plan.

The Trust has recently launched an end-to-end review of one of the most common causes of overpayments. The People Hub will be core to achieving and tracking improvements in this area.

The ER module is being developed to include informal case management alongside formal activity—with the aim of developing greater self service and early resolution of ER case work.

NHS service management solutions

Hornbill People Hub delivers transformative value to NHS organisations by simplifying and modernising enterprise service management—spanning IT, HR, Facilities and other service teams. Designed for rapid implementation, codeless configuration, and high adoption, it enables NHS teams to streamline workflows, automate routine tasks, and improve response times without development overheads.

What's different about Hornbill People Hub

- Data Integration from NHS ESR streamlines workflows and removes significant manual and repetitive tasks.
- Pre-configured NHS HR service workflows based on NHS best practices mean faster go-live and higher ROI in year one.
- Established track record of success working with the largest NHS Trusts.

Find out more

Why NHS HR teams use Hornbill People Hub →

Benefits of ESR data synchronisation →

Read about digital transformation for NHS HR teams →

Hornbill NHS customers include:

NHS Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust

NHS West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

NHS Whittington Health NHS Trust

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