



News release

10 January 2008

£140 Million Managed Equipment Service Commences

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust guaranteed the latest diagnostic imaging and pharmacy equipment for the next 19 years

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and Asteral have announced a £140 million (at today's prices), 18.9 year Managed Equipment Service (MES) contract. This is the largest stand alone MES contract in Europe to date.

Under the terms of the agreement, Asteral will install, commission, maintain and manage the latest equipment across the Trust's multiple sites for the lifetime of the contract. It will also provide project management, training and related support services across each site.

The contract includes an uptime guarantee ensuring improved availability of equipment. This increased availability, combined with the improved speed and accuracy of the latest digital equipment, will allow the Trust to deliver swifter patient throughput and reduced patient waiting times.

The MES also provides a guaranteed rolling replacement programme. Each type of equipment has a pre-agreed lifecycle, ensuring the Trust's equipment keeps up with technological developments and is not used beyond its recommended replacement date.

Equipment in the MES includes ultrasound, MRI and CT scanners, digital X-ray rooms, interventional fluoroscopy, cardiac catheter labs, static and mobile mammography services, and three robotic pharmacies.

Helen Seth, Deputy Director of Operations at the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, states, “This is an innovative approach to the procurement, management and replacement of over 210 items of clinical equipment that will deliver real benefits to the patients served across the healthcare community of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland using our hospitals.”

Stephen Hodgson, Business Development Director at Asterol comments, “This agreement is the culmination of 2.5 years planning and a close working partnership between Asterol and the Trust. The outcome will deliver a world class equipment solution to the patients, clinicians and acute hospitals of Leicester.”

Asterol’s MES model delivers a fully integrated approach to procurement, management and maintenance of medical equipment. Asterol is completely independent of the equipment supply companies. In partnership with the Trust it uses its scientific and medical engineering expertise to ensure the optimum combination of equipment is selected to meet each Hospital’s needs.

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About University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

www.uhl-tr.nhs.uk/

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) includes Glenfield Hospital, Leicester General Hospital and Leicester Royal Infirmary. It is one of the largest and busiest teaching trusts in England, employing over 12,000 staff and providing services for nearly two million people across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The Trust was given an ‘excellent’ rating for the quality of services and ‘good’ for use of resources by the Healthcare Commission in the 2006/7 Annual Health Check. These ratings put it top of the league for large acute teaching trusts in the country and it was the only trust to receive an ‘excellent’ in the Midlands.

About Asterol

www.asteral.com

Asterol is the leading vendor-independent Managed Equipment Service provider to the NHS. It is headquartered in Reading with offices in Leicester and Peterborough.

The company has a proven track record of managing medical equipment for the NHS over the last 10 years. Asterol changed its name from AssetCo Healthcare in early 2006.

Asterol's customers include University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, Whittington Hospital NHS Trust and Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust.

In 2003 Asterol was awarded its first contract with University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, a £10 million, 8 year MES Radiology agreement. To date, Asterol has installed bespoke state-of-the-art medical equipment and radiology facilities plus a full-time on-site equipment manager/engineer and radiographer to ensure the smooth running of the service. This delivers improved equipment uptime, performance data and strategic assistance to the executive board in managing modernisation and the effective introduction of the latest medical technology. It was on the back of this success that the Trust decided to procure the second larger MES.