



PTSG and Cofely: a clean bill of health for Queen Elizabeth Hospital



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Putting patient care at the top of the collaborative agenda at the world's largest single-floor critical care unit, Premier Technical Services Group PLC (PTSG), Cofely and the owners/operators of Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) in Birmingham established a unique, collaborative culture for the delivery of routine fixed wire testing throughout the state-of-the-art site.

Cofely is the contracted facilities manager for the new QEH in Birmingham employing around 150 of their own staff at the site. The hospital site includes facilities operated by two NHS Trusts: The University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and The Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust.

The £630m facility, built in 2010, was the second largest Private Finance Initiative in the NHS, built by a collaboration of Balfour Beatty, HSBC and RBS (aka Consort). The combined NHS Trusts employ more than 7,000 staff and provide services to more than half a million patients every year.

In 2014, Cofely issued a Request for Proposal (RfP) to carry out planned and reactive fixed wire testing throughout the site. Following a rigorous, competitive process, PTSG was awarded the entirety of the works. The project included:

- Testing in 17 individual areas from car parks through to critical care departments
- The comprehensive electrical testing of around 15,000 electrical circuits in compliance with BS7631
- The deployment of testing teams ranging from one to nine engineers (with a minimum requirement of two in mental health facilities on the site)

From the outset, one clear objective has been at the forefront of all organisations within the complex stakeholder group and that is the mitigation of any disruption which could have a potential impact upon patient care. This has created a unique culture where each organisation recognises and appreciates the likelihood of changes or cancellations at short notice, requiring adaptability, flexibility and innovative ways of working to become steadfast in the partnership.

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Due to the nature of environment in which the works are being delivered, PTSG has embraced a rolling, fluid programme of works to ensure the core objectives are achieved and not compromised by a focus on deadlines.

Prior to any work taking place on site, PTSG held several meetings with Cofely. The pre-start meetings addressed a number of factors including the aforementioned patient care priority. These also included:

- Work phase planning
- Access requirements and windows of opportunity
- Staffing levels appropriate to the work packages and access restrictions
- Appropriate testing procedures in the controlled environment
- Certification and compliance with testing standards

Reporting direct to Cofely, and in communication with Consort, the NHS trusts and the individual teams at each remote work site, PTSG is overcoming a number of challenges.

Access to all parts of the buildings needs to be planned meticulously to allow PTSG to complete the shutdown, testing and reboot of circuits without absolute zero impact upon the 24/7 critical operation of the facility.

Furthermore, PTSG has had to identify innovative ways of testing the infrastructure, which is conventionally completed using a range of live and dead load testing. In areas of the hospital administering critical care, dead load testing is not an option without substantial and unthinkable consequences and the PTSG and Cofely team is working with the stakeholder group to identify, plan and undertake compliant live load testing of infrastructure as an alternative.

Feedback from the NHS trusts and Consort has been extremely positive with all works carried out so far being completed without incident. Cofely has also expressed its pleasure at the standard of the works being delivered by PTSG on a number of occasions in the first five months of delivery.

Terry Venables, head of FM at Cofely, summarises the partnership as: "a team which has developed a strategy in accordance with the ultimate client and its customers. The relationship is seamless in delivering the works in a difficult, controlled and busy environment. I am incredibly proud of its work and would like to thank PTSG for its meticulous planning, in-depth understanding and quality of delivery."

