

National Patient Safety Agency

The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) leads and contributes to improved, safe patient care by informing, supporting and influencing organisations and people working in the health sector. It covers the UK health service and is an Arm's Length Body of the Department of Health.

The NPSA operates through three divisions. The National Reporting and Learning Service, which aims to reduce risks to patients receiving NHS care and improve safety; the National Clinical Assessment Service, which supports the resolution of concerns about the performance of individual clinical practitioners to help ensure their practice is safe and valued; and the National Research Ethics Service, which protects the rights, safety, dignity and well-being of research participants that are part of clinical trials and other research within the NHS.

The challenge of effective expense management

Having completed an upgrade from 5.4 to 5.5 of Agresso Business World successfully, the NPSA was already aware of the rich functionality, ease of integration and post-implementation agility offered by the Agresso business and financial management solution. So when it was looking for an expenses system, an Agresso solution provided by UNIT4, was a logical option.

Dave Bell, Director of Finance and Facilities for the NPSA, commented: "We wanted to move away from the National Electronic Staff Records system we were using (for expenses) and UNIT4 was among the places to look as it has proven its capabilities in our complex organisation already. With Agresso Business World we benefit from having a powerful system which ensures we have up to date financial and business performance information at our finger tips - something we wanted to replicate with a new expenses system.

"Prior to UNIT4 we were relying on a largely paper-based expenses system which was cumbersome and time consuming for all concerned. It took anywhere up to two

months for people to be reimbursed through payroll and the quality of information management we had about what was being claimed, and by whom, was not as detailed as we needed it to be."

With the increased pressure on public sector organisations to provide greater transparency into costs and spending, the NPSA sought a more effective expense management system. It wanted a web-enabled system that was easy to use, drill into and report from. UNIT4 could provide that system.

Agresso Expenses - quick, easy and controlled

The Agresso Expenses module is part of the HR and Payroll suite which is the only HR and Payroll solution with genuine post-implementation agility, meaning it can be quickly adapted to changing organisational demands or new legislation, increasing its longevity and reducing the overall cost of ownership. An organisation like the NPSA only need to enter data once – into the single shared information store – where it can then be used across the wider organisation to facilitate strategic thinking, effectively plan resource for projects, and respond to changes in the business or marketplace.

Dave Bell said: "We did look at a few alternatives when we were considering upgrading to 5.5, including the system used by the Department of Health, but we felt that Agresso gave us the functionality we needed as well as the ability to adopt a web-based system which was easy to use.

"With a highly mobile workforce, we are used to frequent travel expenses being submitted and since the implementation of the Agresso solution the processing of

expense claims and subsequent payment times have been expedited. We can set specific parameters within which each employee can claim expenses and the sign off process is a simple mouse click by the line manager and then by Finance staff who process payments through the accounts payable module.

"From an employee perspective, the solution's self service approach is vastly more efficient when inputting and managing the expenses process than our previous system. They can access and update their records, and with it all being online our paper usage has been reduced which is good from a cost and environmental perspective.

"In addition, from a management perspective, we can drill into the data that staff enter and extract management reports quickly showing how and where people are claiming and for what, without complex report writing requirements. We can use this information to see where we can become more efficient as we, like many organisations, look at ways to save money, while maintaining the service standards and levels expected of us. "

Widespread user acceptance

Over 300 people within the NPSA use Agresso Expenses and Dave Bell mentioned that staff were involved in the evaluation process and as a result felt included in the decision and motivated to optimise their use of the system once implemented.

Since the solution went live around 50 claims are input each week and staff can submit their claims at any time of the day, week or month. Although they still need to send in paper receipts to the finance team to reconcile against their online claim form, the process is so much faster, flexible and easier. Dave Bell said: "User feedback has been largely positive. And of course the information held in our expense system is integrated with our core Agresso finance system so we have a single view of key information from within a single system which saves time and resource – leaving us with more time to get on with analysis, making decisions and delivering a first class service to our stakeholders."

About UNIT4

UNIT4 is a global business software company that creates, delivers and supports adaptable business software and services globally to help dynamic organisations manage their business needs effectively. We aspire to set the global standard for business software that helps dynamic organisations to embrace change simply, quickly and cost effectively. We have a broad portfolio of solutions that address different markets, requirements, technologies and types of organisation.

With offices in 13 European countries, as well 6 countries across North America, Asia Pacific and Africa and sales activities in several other countries, a revenue of €393.6 million was realised in 2008. UNIT4 is headquartered in Slidrecht, the Netherlands. The company has around 3,450 employees.

The Group incorporates a number of the world's leading change embracing software brands including Agresso Business World and CODA financial management software.

For service-intensive organisations, the Agresso Business World ERP suite is widely acknowledged as the business software solution that delivers the lowest Total Cost of Change. This is achieved thanks to its VITA™ architecture which allows for ongoing, post-implementation changes without the typical external IT costs and services that can cost firms huge sums of money each year.

CODA, our best-of-class financials brand, offers mid- to large sized organisations around the world financial management, analysis and business process management. CODA solutions are differentiated by its LINK™ architecture that provides financial executives a 'no compromise' approach to application change management by allowing business systems to be added or changed and easily integrated into the most dependable enterprise financials solution on the market.

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