

CASE STUDY

Creating the 'National Patient Safety Training Suite' to minimise avoidable harm and save lives

A Virtual College Case Study



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94% of learners would recommend the courses to a colleague and 84% said the courses would change their way of working.

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The **background**

The project's original learning need arose in 2010, when NHS Diabetes research showed significant problems in the treatment and care of diabetes sufferers in hospitals.

This included over 30% of inpatients who had experienced an error in medication and nearly 3,900 incidents of incorrect dosage involving insulin. A series of high profile cases, including three deaths, were also highlighted.



The **challenge**

In June of the same year, the National Patient Safety Agency issued an alert requiring training on the Safe Use of Insulin.

The need for an effective and reliable way of delivering accurate and measurable training quickly, to large numbers of healthcare professionals on a national level was subsequently identified by NHS Diabetes.

Clearly, this training would need to adhere to the highest standards of medical practice and adopt the latest academic and policy thinking.



The **solution**

The Safe Use of Insulin e-learning course was developed rapidly and tested by Virtual College in partnership with NHS Diabetes (now NHS England). A bespoke Learning Management System was created in order to register learners and allow them instant access to the course.

The anticipated number of learners was expected to be around 40,000 spread across a number of different hospital trusts. In less than 12 months, the number of learners had already exceeded 50,000.

Building on the success of this service and the recognition that online learning could provide a successful solution for other areas of patient safety training, Virtual College has developed the comprehensive National Patient Safety Suite (NPSS), in consultation with subject matter experts.

Now in double figures, each CPD certified course is a response to learning needs clearly identified by Virtual College's sector partners, and includes subjects such as:

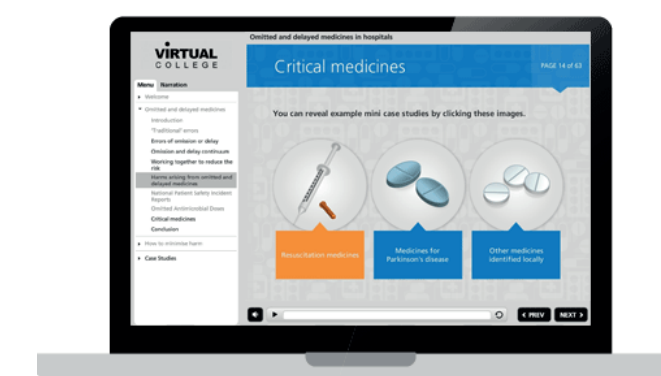
- Omitted and delayed medicines in hospitals
- Basic Life Support
- Safe Management of Sepsis
- Overview of Medical Terminology

As the project has evolved, Virtual College has adopted the most appropriate technology available to suit learners' needs. The unique audience of healthcare workers, who need to learn around shift patterns and high-pressure situations, required an efficient, easily-accessible technical solution.

The straightforward style of e-learning is brought to life with simple interactivity including memory tests, multiple choice questions and practice assessments. The user design focuses on the message, not the medium, due to the learners' needs and the seriousness of the subject matter. The result is improved patient care, without affecting the time learners can spend with patients.

Responsive training resources can be developed quickly, and learners can access courses at home and on a variety of mobile devices. A simple subscriber system is in place whereby organisations pay a low annual fee so that each member of their staff can access all of the NPSS courses at any time.

These subscription fees are reinvested into researching and creating new courses based on the needs of the learners. Virtual college works closely with subject experts and stakeholders to make sure course content and design is clear, memorable and easy to implement.



“... an extremely valuable learning tool.”

The results

Over 100 organisations across the UK are now subscribed to the NPSS - including NHS trusts, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), universities, GPs and private healthcare providers.

The NPSS is making a real impact on healthcare through improved knowledge of high-risk areas such as diabetes care and sepsis.



By the end of 2015, there were over 300,000 registered learners taking courses helping to make a major contribution to improving patient safety.

Importantly, learning has been delivered in a way that works for the healthcare audience.

This learning strategy has been very effective, with a strong impact on individual and organisational performance:

- Navigation of the NPSS has been consistently rated as easy or very easy by 86% to nearly 91% of learners between 2012 and 2015
- 93% to 94.3% of learners would recommend a NPSS course to a colleague
- The number of available courses has steadily increased since the NPSS began, with each new course focusing on subscribers' and learners' needs

“ We will undoubtedly use this as a source of information for future management of patients... ”

What next?

It is highly likely that organisations will continue to experience more demanding checks, further budget cuts and a varied-ability workforce. Within this context, online learning can provide a particularly relevant training solution.

Through an iterative approach, working closely with subscribers to understand their objectives, and listening to the needs of learners, Virtual College has established the NPSS as a hub of patient safety training excellence, with widespread positive impact.

Courses are being created which fulfil their goals of upskilled staff and better patient care.

The National Patient Safety Suite is a major success story. Since 2010, it has had lasting positive impact across many healthcare organisations, including specific high-risk areas such as diabetes care.



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About Virtual College

Since 2006, we have provided training to every NHS Trust and now work with over 60 local safeguarding boards. Over this period, we have donated more than £200,000 to healthcare and safeguarding charities.

We are part of Virtual College, which has over 1.75 million learners and is growing at a rate of 1000 per day across public and private sectors.

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