



## Supporting World Class Commissioning – Delivering cost savings in Berkshire East PCT

### Case Study

#### Introduction

Comprehensive, consistent and systematic validation of provider activity is a key consideration for all PCTs, particularly in the context of the drive towards World Class Commissioning. Berkshire East PCT was keen to take a particularly proactive approach to the area of data validation with specific reference to the Payment by Results (PbR) system. It enlisted the support of Sollis to introduce systems that would allow a far more rigorous level of challenge and validation of provider performance than would be possible with standard reporting systems.

Importantly, by adopting Sollis systems, the PCT has ensured that the information that it uses to challenge provider performance and invoicing is the same information base as the one it uses to inform its wider World Class Commissioning activities.

“Sollis’s reputation preceded them and we had no hesitation in enlisting their support. Together we have developed new systems that have allowed us to get a much firmer grip on data and on costs.”

**Mike McSweeney, Head of Information**



The results have been immediate. In well under 12 months, with the help of the Sollis **Clarity.CMS** commissioning system and **SP.Hypercube** Business Intelligence software, Berkshire East PCT was able to identify more than £1 million of savings in the 07/08 financial cycle, with a similar amount designated for 08/09.

Berkshire East is not the only PCT to recognise the benefits of Sollis commissioning offerings – the company is now providing healthcare commissioning systems and business intelligence solutions to more than 60 PCTs across the UK.

## Background

**Formed in October 2006, Berkshire East PCT oversees the primary care services delivered by 53 GP practices and 226 GPs.**

When the Payment by Results (PbR) Flex and Freeze process was introduced, the expectation was that some PCTs would restrict challenges to cases where patients were identified as not residing or being registered with a GP practice within the PCT boundaries. Berkshire East PCT decided to set more ambitious targets and was keen to adopt a particularly robust and dynamic approach to the whole area of data validation.

## The Sollis solutions

**Sollis provides Berkshire East PCT with its Clarity.CMS (Contract & Performance Management System). The system is fully-integrated with the national Secondary Uses Service (SUS) and is deployed to both validate and cleanse SUS datasets, as well as delivering web-enabled reporting and analytics on PCT SLA performance (PbR and non-PbR activity and finance). Access to patient level data (through strict security protocols) is provided as standard.**

**Clarity.CMS** is built around Microsoft SQL Server database technology. It uses Sollis SP.Hypercube Business Intelligence software to deliver vital contract and performance management information and other commissioning intelligence to all involved in the commissioning process. Business critical activity and finance information is disseminated to key decision-makers through management dashboards via a web portal.

At Berkshire East PCT, **Clarity.CMS** and SP.Hypercube business intelligence are at the heart of the PCT's data warehouse strategy. As such, they are business critical applications which support the delivery of healthcare intelligence in support of World Class Commissioning.

**Working in partnership, Sollis and Berkshire East PCT have developed approximately 50 data challenges, grouped into four categories:**

- **Verification of procedure/length of stay:** delayed discharge reports are used to establish whether elements of patient stay have been extended due to factors outside the PCT's control
- **Validation of patient:** patient population data can be downloaded from the National Tracing Service and linked directly to data held in **Clarity.CMS**, helping to highlight instances where commissioner rules are being interpreted incorrectly

- Cost savings based on inappropriate recording of data: challenges in this category range from querying multiple attendances for a single referral to increased depth of coding, for example re-classifying a 'without complications' patient as 'with complications'
- Cost avoidance based on inappropriate implementation of guidance: **Clarity.CMS** is set up in accordance with current PbR guidance, making it possible to identify where a Trust has adopted guidance incorrectly, for example in the application of the Special Service Top Up guidance.

## Why Sollis?

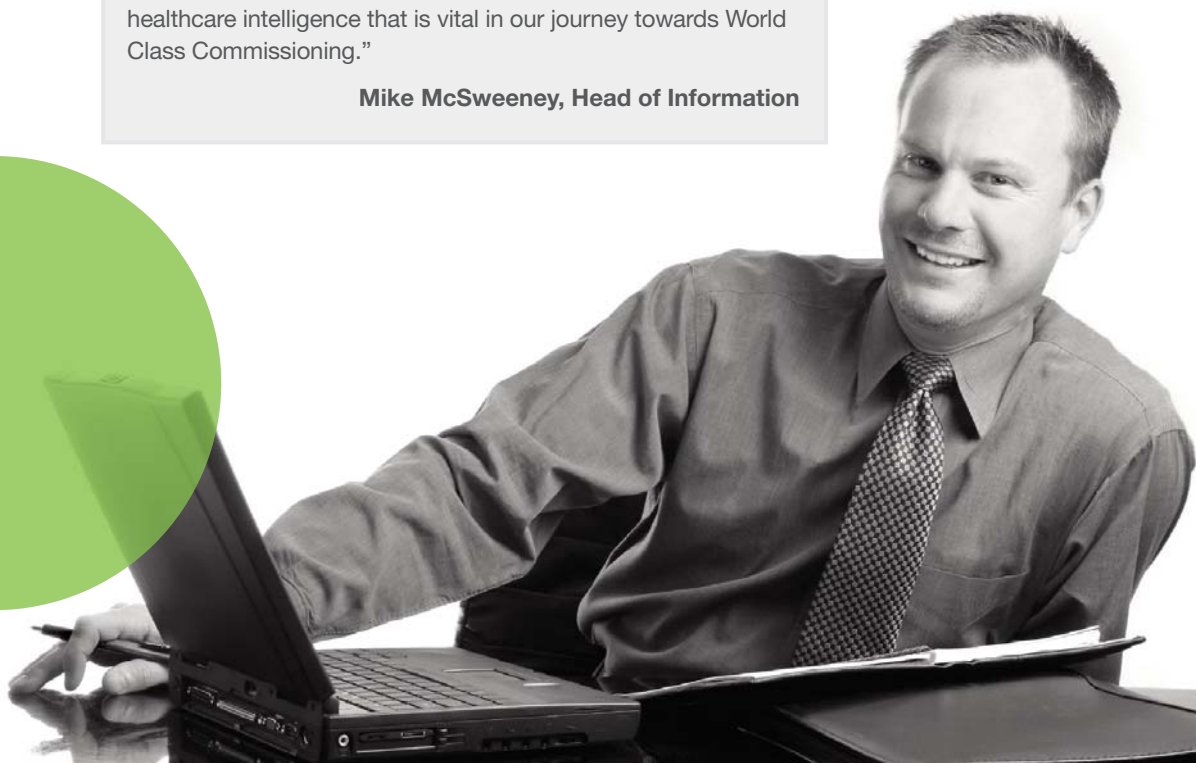
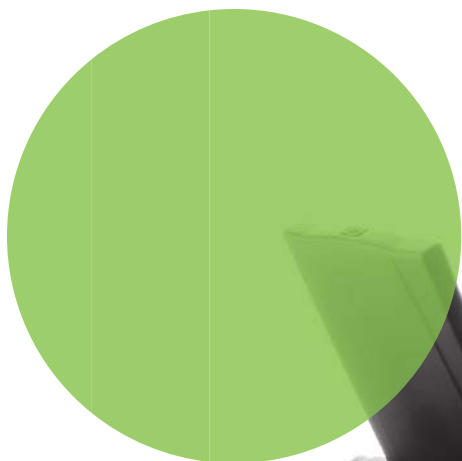
**Berkshire East PCT held discussions with a number of potential suppliers but, as Mike McSweeney explains, Sollis was the natural choice for a number of reasons: "First, most of the Sollis team have NHS backgrounds – they really understand the environment and stay ahead of developments such as World Class Commissioning. Second, the support from Sollis is second to none - the staff are very inclusive and open to comment.**

The software is extremely flexible – for example, we can add commentaries and adjust profiles, which allows us to gain a much more realistic picture of performance and expenditure and allows us to plan ahead with confidence. Finally, the Sollis solutions are cost-effective, which is naturally a key factor when our aim is to reduce expenditure."

According to Mike, the fact that more than 60 other PCTs are using the Sollis **Clarity.CMS** software is also a major advantage: "We are a large user group and we openly share information. This commonality of approach means that any glitches are highlighted and corrected swiftly and we are all involved in the evolution and re-design of products. If other PCTs are considering a similar approach, I would encourage them to take the plunge and I would be happy to share our thoughts and experiences with them."

"We have already reduced the Trust's outgoings by more than a million pounds and we have committed to similar savings in the next financial cycle. I would not make this commitment if I did not have the capability and infrastructure in place to support the reconciliation processes. Sollis and the Clarity product suite are an integral part of that process. Sollis software solutions deliver healthcare intelligence that is vital in our journey towards World Class Commissioning."

**Mike McSweeney, Head of Information**



# Outcome

The system was only introduced late in the 07/08 financial cycle, but Berkshire East PCT has already seen an excellent return on investment. More than £1 million of savings have been identified across the four categories. Examples include:

- £90,000 through identifying patient stays that had been extended due to factors outside the PCT's control
- £110,000 of non-contracted activity
- £120,000 through identifying inappropriate data and increasing depth of coding
- £350,000 through identifying incorrect usage of PbR guidance.

Data is also being used to support the case for service re-designs, for example analysis of A&E data has demonstrated the need for an urgent care centre.

“Our Trust is spending £450 million a year and in the interests of public accountability, we need to be absolutely certain that these funds are being spent appropriately. Rather than settling for challenges based around patient locale, we decided to find ways of validating provider activity in a far more comprehensive and systematic way. We were confident that additional savings could be made if we could identify errors resulting from inappropriate recording of data or incorrect implementation of guidance.”

**Mike McSweeney, Head of Information**

Sollis is now providing healthcare commissioning systems and business intelligence solutions to more than 60 PCT's across the UK

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