HBL ICT Shared Services

Annual Report - 2023

Managing Director's Welcome Message

Welcome to our 8th annual report as an ICT Shared Services Partnership.

As a trusted ICT Service provider, we understand that we need develop and innovate our services so that we can meet the demands of our member organisations. In 2023, we have continued to make significant investments in our cyber defences, commenced deploying the latest MS Win11 operating system to all end user devices across the enterprise, and invested in Robotic process Automation (RPA) within Primary Care to improve digital services, freeing up the scarce clinical resource time.

Our interface and interaction with our customers are of vital importance to us, and this year we have made significant improvements to our communication channels, including redesigning virtual agent and chat facilities to make our technicians more accessible. Likewise, we are really excited by the launch of our new redesigned corporate website and have published a new video which explains our organisation and services.

During the year we have secured investment from the partnership to redesign our hybrid cloud services. This includes relocating our on-premise data centre to a new commercial site and replacing our core technology stacks via an operational leasing model in partnership with HPE as a strategic supplier. This strategic financial shift presents a more sustainable technology model with greater flexibility and reducing the cost of ownership to HBL ICT, making technology more accessible and affordable.

As with previous years, it has been truly heartening to regularly receive praise and recognition for all the functional areas within HBL, which is further endorsed by the customer survey results.

This demonstrates the value that is placed upon us as a well led, quality driven, integrated ICT service provider. This achievement should not be underestimated and is due to the excellent contribution, commitment and resolve that all our staff have demonstrated, as we have worked together as a cohesive supportive team to deliver digital services.

Our staff are at the forefront of everything we do in HBL ICT and with this in mind, this year we have continued to invest in several key initiatives. Including, all managers engaging on a programme of 360° feedback, a comprehensive staff training programme and the introduction of 'inclusion champions' within HBL ICT, which provides our staff with a confidential support channel to enable them to be 'listened to'.

Looking ahead, 2024 will focus on delivering a 5-year business and digital strategy, focussing of the strategic outcomes that commenced in 2023, thus ensuring that HBL ICT maintains its importance and relevance to the member organisations and enabling their planned digital strategies and digital transformation agendas. In June 2024, will be introducing GPIT services for West Essex HCP into the Partnership, which will ensure consistency in GPIT service delivery across the HWE ICS.

Financially we know that 2024 will present further significant challenges for the Partnership as we will see further financial pressures, which all NHS organisations are facing but we are confident that due to our proven prudent fiscal management we will successfully navigate through these challenges with minimal impact on the partnership.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank our staff, partners and stakeholders who have contributed to making 2023 yet another very successful year. Our commitment is to focus on delivering our strategic objectives to the member organisations, ensure that we deliver digital solutions and services to the Partnership, and maintain financial equity.

Yours sincerely

Phil Turnock

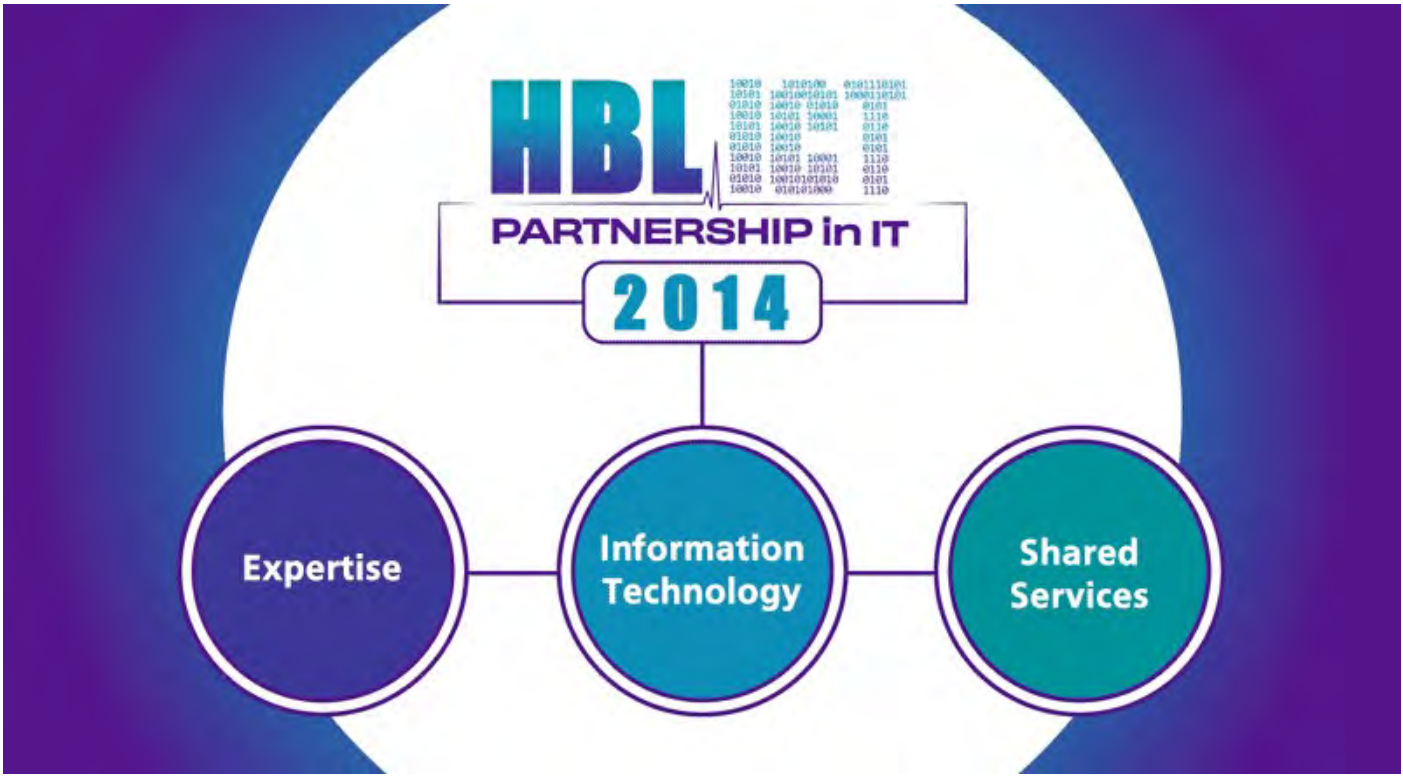**Managing Director of HBL ICT Shared Services**

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Our Vision….

To become the ICT provider of choice, by delivering without boundaries; cost effective, cohesive and innovative solutions that improves patient outcomes.

Our Strategic Principles: "IT Just Works"

- **i**   Patient outcomes at the centre of strategic decisions.

- **i**   Promote a consumer like experience.

- **i**   Promote equality throughout the partnership.

- **i**   Create an environment that encourages innovation.

- **i**   Be socially aware and mindful of the impact of technology can have on our environment.

- **i**   Provide an environment that ensures information is easily accessible to meet the demands of healthcare provision.

Our Value Proposition

Within HBL ICT it is important that our ICT strategy, service and technology capability is driven by the value it provides to our member organisations.

The HBL value proposition reflects this.

Responsive digital experience, through multiple contact channels that are easily accessible

To ensure that all our service users are able to access the support they need, when they need it.

To ensure that we resolve any faults as quickly as possible, including first contact resolution where applicable.

The right technology, at the right time, to access the right data, to meet the end user's business/clinical needs

To provide our service users with the best possible technology so that they can perform effectively in their role in the organisation – 'IT Just Works'.

Underpin and enabling the digital strategies of our member organisations

To ensure that our business and digital strategy supports and complements the digital aspirations and strategies of our member organisations, ensuring equity across the partnership.

Providing ICT systems that are highly secure, available and easily accessible at all times

To provide and maintain an infrastructure that is fit for purpose, ensuring that all systems are accessible via the HBL Hybrid Cloud.

Solution driven & forward thinking in innovation and technology design and advancement

Horizon scanning to identify new technologies to keep the partnership evergreen and up to date with IT industry developments.

Commitment to developing and delivering innovative solutions and services, embracing value-add technologies and systems.
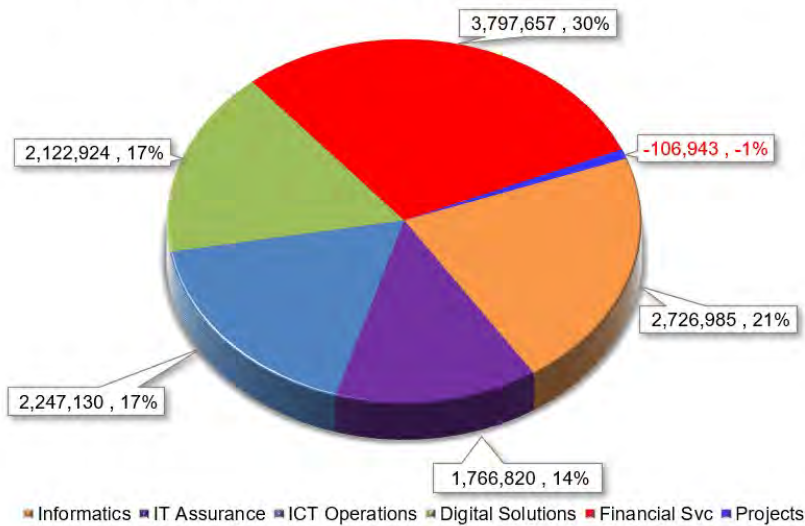
Finances at a glance… 2023/2024

HBL ICT obtained its allocation in 2022/23 based on a rollover budget methodology that included an inflation and cost improvement objective, which the company accomplished successfully, leaving a tiny surplus at the conclusion of the fiscal year. The operational revenue from partners was changed in this fiscal year 2023/24 to include the National Pay Award, which was modified by revising the inflation uplift and altering the Cost Improvement Plan objective.
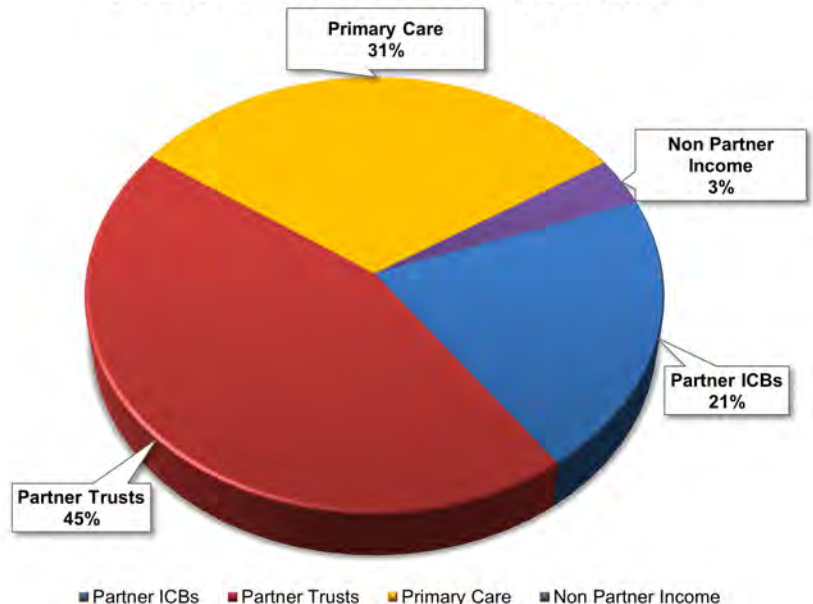
The overall growth in 2022/23 revenue baseline included 6% uplift for additional services introduced, 6% increment due to the pay award and back pay and 2% standard non pay related inflation (net) grant. Compared to prior years, this revenue allocation from partner organisations remained stable and reflective of increase in the overall business activity allowing our partners to fulfil their strategic digital plan. Projects in HBL ICT operate on nil profit basis, however at the end of the fiscal year 2022/23, a significant expenditure was incurred due to a pre agreed lag in project deliver as a result of surrounding circumstances in the preceding year.

This report reflects the robust financial health and operational success of HBL ICT NHS. Despite market challenges, the organisation has demonstrated resilience, innovation, and a commitment to excellence.

HBL ICT Expenditure 2022/23 by Service Area

3,797,657 , 30%
-106,943 , -1%
2,122,924 , 17%
2,726,985 , 21%
2,247,130 , 17%
1,766,820 , 14%

■ Informatics ■ IT Assurance ■ ICT Operations ■ Digital Solutions ■ Financial Svc ■ Projects

HBL ICT Revenue 2022/23 by Customer

Primary Care 31%
Non Partner Income 3%
Partner ICBs 21%
Partner Trusts 45%

■ Partner ICBs ■ Partner Trusts ■ Primary Care ■ Non Partner Income

Remote Experience Team

The focus for 2023 has been to continue the journey of service improvement for all our customers, ensuring a timely and effective response to any issues that have been raised. The continued development of our self-help support channel, via the virtual agent and service now customer pages, have significantly contributed to our customer support offering. The Continual Service Improvement Team have led the way with developing these innovative ways to improve support. Throughout the year the virtual agent managed 51,288 conversations.

The Remote Technicians and the Application Support Team have dealt with over 18,641 phone calls and the average speed to answer has reduced significantly and now stands at 1 minute 30 seconds. The teams also oversee live chats with our customers, on average 800 per month which provides our customers with an alternative support channel. We also support our partners with site clinics, agreed with the partner IT leads, the appointment booking option still provides a valuable face to face option for the more complicated support issues.

Relationship Management Team

The team continued to work effectively as the bridge between our partners and other customers to ensure that their operational and strategic aims are developed in conjunction with HBL ICT.

The key aim of the team is to maintain existing relationships and provide the voice of the customer with the internal teams within HBL ICT.

In 2023 we saw the redesign and launch of our new public facing HBL website, along with a much-improved Staff Intranet and greater presence on Social Media platforms.

The Relationship Management team continues to provide communications, including ICT Alerts, Self-Help Guidebook, and Knowledge Articles to effectively provide guidance to our service users and represents HBL ICT at Partner events.

They have also been instrumental in providing self-help support through a variety of channels to make our self-help portal easier to use and accessible.

Overall, it has been an enjoyable and successful year collaborating with our Partner Organisations and other Customers, including ICB's, Provider Trusts, Acute Trusts, Urgent Care Services, Private Healthcare organisations, POD's, and Hospices.

Service Delivery

The Access Management Team have continued to support our partners with both Registration Authority (RA) and Corporate Network support and have continued with team cross training to provide greater breadth of team knowledge and resilience across these key areas.

Once again, the RA team have supported a variety of customers and offer site clinics and appointment based support options. We also have a drop in option for customers who can attend our base in Charter House.

The team have actioned 20,268 incidents and 14,500 tasks of which the Robotic Process Automation (RPA) resolved 7,649 number of requests across both RA and the corporate network support.
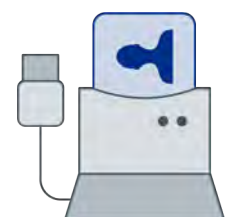
Service Delivery (cont.)

The Deployment team have actioned over 6539 requests, covering laptop and phone deployments and disposals of hardware.

The Technical Deployment Managers continue to support our customers service requests for moves and changes that require light touch workstream management with experienced on-site presence. This has kept those requests in a more agile format which enables them to be executed quickly.

Key to the success of the IT Operations is to collaborate with partners to receive feedback on our performance. During the year we surveyed our partners and had an overall satisfaction rating of 8.04 out of ten, this has increased from 7.7 when we ran the first survey.

It has been a productive year for the Digital Solutions team as we continue to strive to deliver an excellent service to our partners as well as supporting them in their digital strategies. To that extent we have successfully delivered a range of digital projects across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, and West Essex to support patient care.

Aligned with our cyber security strategy we are well on the way to upgrading to Windows 11 through automated in-place upgrades across our supported clients. In addition, we have successfully signed off on the latest version of Windows 11 (23H2) bringing us up to date and ahead of the curve.

Our InTune Mobile Device Management platform is now ready to deploy mobile devices on-mass with very low touch provisioning. A significant improvement on the previous mobile provisioning methods.

We have completed the rollout of 802.1x across all our supported sites, greatly improving the security of our environment.

To support the greater need for remote working, we have upgraded all our VPN firewalls and associated infrastructure to provide a more robust and scalable architecture to our partners.

Keeping the server and network estate up to date with the latest patches is an ever-growing task for the Network Operations Centre (NOC) team, both monthly and when CareCert and/or security patches are required.

Cyber security plays a significant role across the end-user estate too and the expanded Security Operations Centre (SOC) team have dealt with over 3,500 incidents throughout the year, whilst ensuring no significant cyber breaches have occurred. To continue to raise the awareness of cyber security to our supported staff across the partnership, phishing campaigns have been successfully completed, along with other training and educational materials to ensure our user base remains safe.

Over the last year, Datacentre and cloud services have been heavily engaged with designing and procuring new datacentre technology which will be used to host the HBL ICT hybrid cloud service.
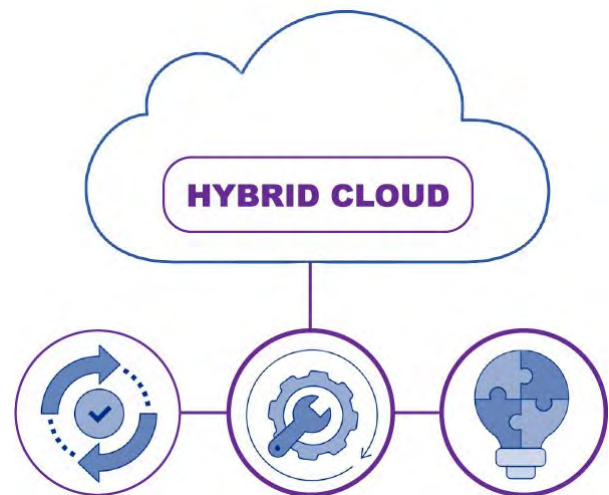
The solution is more in line with that offered by cloud-based providers regarding a revenue/consumption-based costing model. This offers more flexibility and scalability than the current compute and storage infrastructure we are using, but still has the added benefit of being controlled and hosted within our own dedicated datacentres.

We have procured and implemented a PAM solution which is in line with many penetration test and DSPT recommendations. This provides us a means of truly separating administrative user access from everyday accounts and automating password refreshes on privileged user access.

DHCP has been redesigned and implemented to offer higher availability and is providing services for all SDWAN sites which have been onboarded over the last year.

This has eliminated the overhead of having split subnets across DHCP servers and datacentres.

We have successfully expanded and evaluated our DMZ zoning to include both datacentres which was a single point of failure within the environment. This provides extra resilience for ADFS and our Web application Proxies.

We have rolled out a multitude of security hardening policies TLS\SSL\Ciphers, Security updates and configurations to our servers and applications.
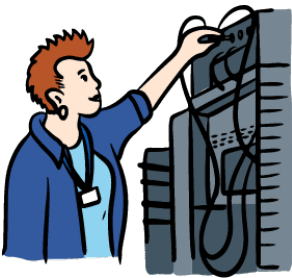
The Digital Development and Automation Team continues to grow its expertise in Robotic Process automation and have recently finalised a process to assist BLMK GP Surgeries linked to SystmOne to automatically manage submissions of their deceased patients to the local Medical Examiners. This will save the surgeries a considerable number of man-hours daily. Once the benefits are seen, it is expected that we will be required to refine the system to cater for GP Surgeries in HWE which are linked to both SystmOne and EMIS.

We are also engaged with three of our partners with a view to automating their HR Processes, and this may lead to the inclusion of a fourth, non-partner, organisation.

Developments continue with ServiceNow, our primary ITSM Tool. Primary Care colleagues (GP's and Pharmacists) have recently been on-boarded helping the Informatics team streamline their reporting.

We continue to work on the deployment of a new CMDB; however, due to constraints in the way ServiceNow functions, to facilitate the CMDB we may well need to change domain settings within ServiceNow.

We continue to work with HCT to improve the way their current overnight processing operates so that they have robust systems for their daily reporting,

2024 will see us deliver several key strategic projects including:

- Commissioning of a new data centre in Meridian Park, Enfield
- Decommissioning of three legacy data centres
- Technology refresh across our DCs
- Implementation of new MCM environment
- Windows 365 and VMware virtual desktops
- SEIM
- Digital Telephony migration
- MFA for externally available systems
- Bomgar Cloud (in line with NHS Digitals Cloud first strategy)

The IT Assurance team has continued to support the organisation and the wider system through the delivery of solutions into production, facilitating internal and external audit activity, and ensuring ITIL management of critical services.

The HBL ICT Shared Service provides organisations the ability to leverage solutions and bring economies-of-scale where this is most beneficial. The Programme Management office (PMO) has continued to collaborate with our partners to support their digital priorities, to enhance cyber security measures, and provide new infrastructure and network technology.

A key objective for 2023 was the deployment of SD WAN to the partnership. The roll-out began in late 2022, and the PMO have continued the cutover of partner sites to the new infrastructure throughout 2023.

The work is now nearing completion with almost 80% of sites now cutover and benefitting from enhanced speeds and resilience at critical sites. This rollout is the enabler for new features, technology and procedures within the partnership including the increased use of Cloud-based technologies.

Another key focus has been the deployment of cyber security technology to the partnership.

This includes the set-up of multi-factor authentication for NHS mail, which involved a roll-out to 9,000 users. This has been a complex project ensuring that an additional layer of security is applied to all NHS email accounts. Detailed communication strategies and remote support arrangements were developed ensuring a stable, sustainable approach to end-user support.

Additionally, the deployment of Windows 11 has been initiated to ensure cyber security compliance and provide the latest operating system features to the partnership and which will continue into 2024.

The PMO initiated the work required to migrate one of the existing HBL ICT Data Centres from Charter House to a new commercial site managed by, the government-backed venture, Crown Hosting.

This is a significant undertaking, requiring the refresh all of data centre equipment, the introduction of a "consumption model" for storage and compute, and the physical migration of the network to a new site. The model mirrors the offering of the public-cloud where capacity can be easily flexed to the demand. This will allow HBL ICT to easily scale data centre capacity in-line with the needs of the partner organisations. This will be the most significant HBL ICT project in 2024 with a go-live in the summer.
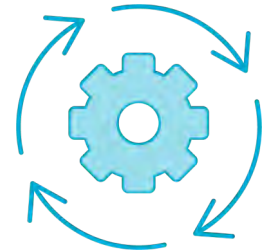
The team have facilitated a significant volume of internal and external audit work in 2023. With increased cyber and data security threats, comes increased regulatory requirements. The four partner organisations developed rigorous audit schedules for Cyber security, Business Continuity, Disaster Recovery and Data security to take place throughout 2023 and this has required significant effort to support. The IT Assurance team have facilitated all audit activity ensuring consistency of engagement, reporting and control. The processes for evidence gathering, walkthroughs and action tracking have been enhanced and further efficiencies will be developed in 2024.

During 2023, the IT Assurance team also successfully transitioned the Data Protection and Information Governance-as-a-Service functions to HWE ICB. These GP support services are now centralised within the ICB for all GP practices in Hertfordshire and West Essex.

The processes for ITIL Change and Problem Management functions continue to be owned and delivered through IT Assurance. These processes have successfully enabled the technical and operational functions of HBL ICT to focus on their critical activities, with 482 ITIL changes delivered, and 45 Problem records addressed in year.

We have also worked alongside the ICT Operations and Digital Solutions directorates to design, test and deploy the latest ServiceNow Change module.

This will provide HBL ICT with the latest functionality for ITIL Standard Changes and virtual emergency CABs. These enhancements are expected to bring workload efficiencies to staff across the organisation.

Further large-scale changes are planned for 2024 and include the deployment of Multi-factor Authentication for all externally hosted systems, the procurement and deployment of a digital telephony platform to be used across the partnership, migration to new a Mobile Device Management platform, and the automation of repetitive HR processes through Robotic process automation.

We look forward to playing our part in delivering these key changes.

This year has seen the overarching management of GPIT within west Essex transfer to HBL ICT from the ICB. The contracted IT support provider differs from the rest of the GPIT estate within HWE ICB, but are working to ensure a consistent support model is provided.

Training

There has been a marked increase in the number of practices and customers making use of our self-learning guides tailored for a number of new starter roles within TPP SystmOne practices.

This has enabled the new starters to undertake a number of bite-sized modules pertinent to their role at both times and at a pace suitable for their learning style, as well as minimising interruptions to the training or to their day-to-day role.

This has resulted in fewer, new starter training sessions being taken by our trainers, thereby enabling them to provide further training sessions on other areas of clinical system functionality.

Implementation & Utilisation

This year the Implementation & Utilisation team have continued to support both Hertfordshire & West Essex (HWE) and Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Integrated Care Systems. There has been a big focus by the National Primary Care team on the ongoing recovery of Primary Care services and in particular, patient access to those services under the Primary Care Access Recovery Plan (PCARP).

The team continue to support the following programmes in both BLMK and HWE:

The NHS APP, encouraging patients use of the NHS APP and the provision by practices of the services for patients to access using the NHS APP. Supporting with the implementation for push notifications via the NHS APP to mitigate and reduce the SMS cost burden.

Patient Access to Records, supporting practices to meet their contractual obligation to provide prospective access to their full record to patients.

Patient Proxy Access restricted to access for medications, enabling Care homes to order repeat medications electronically from the patient's practice.

Online Consultations, supporting HWE practices with the use of and where requested switch of system between the two procures systems of choice of the ICB, AccuRX and eConsult.

Electronic Referral Service (eRS), supporting practices and the ICBs in the use of eRS. Answering queries, dealing with and resolving issues, and enabling new services.

GP2GP, supporting practices to improve their rates of integration of records and avoid the production and transmission of paper records.

Shared Care Record, supporting the ICS programme within the primary care estate.

Business Change

Operationally, the team continue to deliver Business Change requests and Ardens Change Requests to General Practice and the ICBs.

The Clinical System and Reporting consultancy, advice, and guidance to the wider Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) has continued to grow.

They continue to undertake significant work on the still developing PCN and Extended Access arena and are now also working with EMIS Hub units as well as SystmOne Hub units across the wider Hertfordshire and West Essex (HWE) geography.

However, the team are about to begin a pilot in a Milton Keynes practice and deploy a Digital Assistant to further support the administration staff.

In both ICSs they continue to support the work in relation to the Medical Examiner System requirements with a pilot in East and North Herts place. In BLMK the team have deployed a SystmOne Community unit to support the reviews of deceased patients by the Medical Examiners. This is working well, with both the GPs and the Medical Examiners.

The Digital Assistant is the first example of HBL's innovative use of Robotic Process Automation technology (RPA) and works directly between the two SystmOne units.

Business Change are now looking to support HWE with a separate Digital Assistant development, which will work in a mixed system economy, to create a patient summary from the GP records which is then emailed to the Medical Examiners.

The team continue to manage the significant workload around change requests for the Ardens product suite and have expanded the team to bolster this and support the work they are doing with Acute Trusts 2ww referral forms.

They continue to support the vCKD ICS project which is moving from a successful pilot to a BAU service, and are currently engaged with and waiting to begin the work to deploy the solution into the HWE EMIS environment using EMIS technology.

The team has also managed four successful practice and SystmOne unit mergers in BLMK and continue to support Hospices and other smaller Health and Social Care customers in the ICS areas.

GP IT Systems

Informatics continue to work with the Commercial and Procurement Hub, regional colleagues, and suppliers to manage procurement activity for the General Practice Clinical systems, across both ICB footprints, from the various Buying Catalogues and frameworks.

GP Clinical System procurements are also managed, when practices migrate etc. and supporting systems included as more strands are added to the relevant frameworks.

PCARP Cloud-Based Telephony

Following on from the very successful national pilot around developing a specification for Advanced Cloud-Based Telephony Systems, there has been a national initiative, under the PCARP banner, to replace analogue systems within general practice.

This is fundamentally to enable them to improve their patient access, which has been seen as a major problem since the pandemic ended. This has involved Informatics working with the Commercial and Procurement Hub and National Team and managing the procurement of replacement systems for 53 practices across HWE and BLMK estate.

Again, the teams have successfully delivered the national ask for this work within some very short timescales. They are now embarking on a second phase of this work to replace low-level cloud-based systems where they do not have the necessary functionality to deal with the access issues.

Solutions Architect — Projects

Online Consultation

During 2023 work around online consultation has increased, this software is a major piece of the PCARP recovery programme.

Highlights of this project include:

- Working with both ICB's to provide support for the software.

NHS App

The NHS app has moved to the forefront of a lot of the work that has happened in primary care in 2023. To date we have:

- Worked with trial sites around the NHS app and push notifications, this will be an important piece of work as we move into 2024 with SMS costs very high.

- Run trial projects around the NHS app and usage in BLMK and HWE, the results of these were very encouraging with increased uptake.

- Going to work across Informatics to increase usage of the NHS app in 2024, a project is already underway.

- We have continued to inform our ICB partners about changes to the APP.

- As we change the way people access primary care, we are always mindful of Digital Inclusion. We are taking part in a project with the ICB and Youth Champions, we also attend PPG groups on behalf of the ICB to promote the NHS App.

VDI

VDI has undergone several major changes in 2023, with the main one being that the project has now moved to a BAU platform rather than its previous pilot phase. As a result of this the following changes has occurred.

Main points of 2023 are:

- In August SNEE ICB informed us that they wished to withdraw from the VDI project as they have a limited number of users.

- As a result of SNEE withdrawing we had one month to move the whole VDI support over to ITS who agreed to take this over. This was completed at the end of September.

- The HSCN line that hosts VDI has move from NHS Leicestershire to HBL ICT, this was completed at the end of September.

- Emis have upgraded their Emis Web platform to 64bit, this meant we had to change the way the VDI works so Emis can continue to work.

- Emis have also moved their Data centre to AWS. This meant configuring over 300 Network changes to keep the platform working, this is ongoing, but all sites are up and working.

- We have continued to work with ITS developing the support and helping offer a better end user experience.

- The number of users has continued to grow, as of the middle of December we have only 650. The level of concurrency has also increased and is now at 40.

Financial Services

For the 2022/23 year, the Financial Services team has upheld its duty to the organisation and its partners to safeguard HBL ICT's financial status. Despite the additional challenges presented during the year, Financial Services managed to safeguard HBL ICT's stable financial status and ensure that we completed the year with a balanced budget that aligns with the partnership agreements.

2023 was the first full calendar year in which HBL ICT delivered its operational obligations under the hosted arrangement provided by the Herts and West Essex ICB. It commenced with the approval of accounts submitted for the previous year by the hosting organisation's auditors.

The revenue allocation for the year reflected the significant effort invested in developing the methodology, which resulted in a swift agreement with its partners on the Quantifiable Measures methodology. An activity-based costing method, which has been refined over the past years, resulted in fully auditable supporting information and a transparent detail of HBL ICT's activity data and its related cost based on apportion methodology was submitted, which resulted in partners accepting the charges with confidence whilst appreciating the effort invested in refining the overall process.

Numerous additional economic challenges arose during the year, due to the inflationary costs arising from nationally awarded pay rises, and a significant increase in non-pay related costs continued to be an ongoing challenge throughout the year at various stages and magnitude. However, the diligent planning, tracking, and monitoring of all income and spending by the team ensured that these external elements did not impact the business of either HBL ICT or its work with the Partnership.

HBL ICT is proud to announce that the challenges highlighted above and their respective impact on the finances were met without recourse to additional partner funding except where the centre had agreed to award additional funds.

The Strategic Procurement function within Financial Services worked tirelessly throughout the year to ensure that both BAU and project-based large-scale procurements continued to be carried out compliantly and expeditiously, and its operational target of nil waiver was achieved throughout this journey.

Additionally, significant time and resources were devoted to ensuring the financial risk posed by the unprecedented rise in non-pay costs was minimised and mitigated as far as possible. This ensured delays to any core works based on supply issues could be minimised, and the net effect of cost drift remained within the pre-planned budgets.

During this fiscal year, HBL ICT initiated several initiatives related to the technology upgrade deemed pivotal to preserve the integrity and security of its digital infrastructure. Such initiatives could only be implemented through the allocation of substantial financial resources.

Nevertheless, because of the stringent financial policies upheld by HBL ICT's partners, it was impossible to reach an agreement on allocating funds for such initiatives until subsequent years.

Such work schemes necessitated preparatory work, which HBL ICT performed without charging its partner an additional fee. It did so by realising efficiencies by renegotiating non-pay costs and re-evaluating its strategic priorities, all while ensuring that its digital roadmap and strategic commitments were not compromised.

Financial services played a pivotal role in delivering the following noteworthy procurement projects.

Data centre refresh

- With the approval of its partnership, HBL ICT Embarked on procuring its data centre, including the connectivity based on a non-traditional leasing method rather than outright purchase. The project was delivered on time whilst satisfying all the pertinent requirements of the revised mechanism and sourcing the deliverables by the specified requirement. This also included negotiating a contract to move one data centre to a new site hosted by Crown Commercial.

- On behalf of the Informatics division, Financial Services executed a significant procurement initiative by standardising and streamlining the delivery of additional GPIT services following a considerable period whereby the services were availed on an ad-hoc basis. The services were incorporated into the Primary Care sector because of the revised working methods and were subsequently consolidated under a single contract after considerable effort. The contract is operational and continues receiving ongoing support from the contract management framework.

- The positive relationships this function has built with the entire supplier base have meant that where significant delays were forecast in certain areas, these could be mitigated as far as possible, and on some occasions, ensuring that estimated delivery dates were met and bettered. All whilst ensuring that Best Value for Money remained an embedded principle within the business. Negotiating and renegotiating contracts were carried out with a strong focus on supplier relationships, allowing HBL ICT to obtain as significant a market advantage as possible.

Despite all challenges, the Transactional Procurement function had no operational escalations during the period and maintained a high level of service across the board. Procurement processes continued to be developed and implemented to help ensure that procurements carried out on behalf of the partnership were compliantly conducted using the best available expertise at all levels and without fear of undue influence by suppliers, thus satisfying the requirements of the Standing Financial Instructions.

A year in numbers...

During the year we have been busy managing services for our partners, the following gives an overview of the detail of the services provided over the course of the year:

The ICT Operations teams have handled over **28,392** telephone contacts this year, and our Remote Technicians have managed **7,981** booked appointments.

This year we have held over **10,643** Customer Service 'Live Chats'.

The Virtual Agent, handled over **51,288** customer chats.

20,268 incidents and **14,500** tasks were actioned across both RA and the corporate network. **7,649** of these requests were resolved by Robotic Process Automation (RPA).

The Deployment team have actioned over **6539** requests, covering laptop and phone deployments and disposals of hardware.

Our Procurement team procured over **13,167** line items.

We supported over **20,000** network connected devices.

We stored over **300 Terabytes** of data for our Partners.

We successfully blocked over **7033** viruses/malware infections attacking our network.

We delivered **13 projects** with another **19** projects still ongoing.

We managed **35** responses to our partners to support them in responding to Freedom of Information requests.

We had **482** changes raised for action via the Change Advisory Board.

159 Business Change work packages were opened for customers with **93** completed. **412** Ardens change requests were also made to the team.

We received **416** training requests of which **338** were actioned.

626 Implementation and Utilisation requests were opened for customers with **605** requests completed.

Our unique selling point

We in HBL ICT Shared Services are working hard to define an ICT Service Portfolio that meets the demands of our Partners across Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Luton, working with strategic suppliers within the industry, which collectively makes our unique recipe for ICT Services.

We have the understanding and knowledge of IT systems in context of the Health & Social Care industry, operating within an NHS organisation. We believe that we understand your business and will bring information to the hands of those that need it at the point at which they need it.

This reflects the change that all of our health customers are facing, the change in technology from fixed devices to mobile, the ability to take in large amounts of data, make sense of it and utilise it to good effect on safe excellent healthcare for patients. Additionally, the ability to use that data to pro-actively manage the services provided is the key to the future. We anticipate that it will only be successful by standing alongside our customers facing these challenges; together will we be successful in our chosen market.

We understand cost pressures and have demonstrated our own ability to deal with them and the drive to improve productivity whilst maintaining and indeed, improving service offers to our partners. We believe that puts us in the position of having the ability to support our clients effectively.