



# HBL ICT Shared Services Annual Report for 2025

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## Terms and Acronyms

Term	Definition
ARRS	Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme
BHFT	Bedfordshire Hospitals Foundation Trust
BLMK ICB	Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board
CAF	Cyber Assessment Framework
CSAA	Computer Systems Account Amendment
CSAIS	Community and School-Aged Immunisation Service
DESP	Diabetic Eye Screening Programme
DSPT	Data Security and Protection Toolkit
EoL	End of Life
EPS	Electronic Prescription Service

## Terms and Acronyms (contd.)

Term	Definition
eRS	Electronic Referral Service
HCT	Hertfordshire Community Trust
HPE	Hewlett Packard Enterprise
HPFT	Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust
HWE ICB	Hertfordshire & West Essex Integrated Care Board
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ITIL	Information Technology Infrastructure Library
L&D	Learning & Development
MFA	Multi-Factor Authentication
NCRS	National Care Record Service (- previously Summary Care Record)
NCSC	National Cyber Security Centre
NHSE	NHS England
NHSE	NHS England
PCARP	Primary Care Access Recovery Plan
PCN	Primary Care Network
PMO	Programme Management Office
RA	Registration Authority
RPA	Robotic Process Automation
VDI	Virtual Desktop Infrastructure

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## 1 Managing Director's Welcome Message



Welcome to our 10th annual report as an ICT Shared Services Partnership.

2025 has been a year of significant change within the NHS with the announcement of proposed changes to Integrated Care Board's in becoming strategic commissioners and reducing the size of their organisations by circa 50%.

This reduction will impact HBL ICT's income stream, therefore we are collaborating with our partner organisations to adjust our services accordingly to ensure that HBL ICT remains current and relevant to all our member organisations.

As with any change programmes, the planned changes to the ICB's also presents some opportunities for the HBL Partnership, the combination of the three ICB's (Hertfordshire & West Essex (HWE) ICB, Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes (BLMK) ICB and Cambridge & Peterborough (CP) ICB, means that HBL ICT's geographical footprint will increase across these counties, providing a uniformed service provision for Primary Care and the patients we serve.

A further impact of the ICB changes will result in a host organisation for HBL ICT transferring from HWE ICB to the proposed new Central East ICB with effect from 1st April 2026. This new hosting arrangement is a positive development that will support and enable the HBL ICT partnership to expand its services further in the forthcoming years, potentially across the East of England Region.

As a dependable partner in service delivery, we understand that we need to develop and innovate our services so that we can meet the demands of our customers. During 2025, we have continued to make significant investments in our cyber defences, successfully completed deployment of Microsoft Windows 11 operating system to all end user devices across the enterprise, prior to the Microsoft deadline of October 2025. In addition, we have entered into a partnership with a new Robotic Process Automation (RPA) service provider (JifJaff) to provide RPA at scale within Primary Care. This will improve digital services, freeing up the scarce clinical resource time at the point of care.

As a trusted service provider, customer experience of the utmost importance to us, and as with previous years we have made significant improvements to our communication channels, including ongoing development of our virtual agent and chat facilities to make our technicians more accessible to support our customers.

This year we completed our redesign of our core infrastructure relocating replacing our on-premise data centre to a new commercial site in Enfield and replacing our core technology stacks via a leasing model in partnership with Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) as a strategic supplier. This strategic digital shift delivers a more sustainable technology model with greater flexibility and reducing the cost of ownership, making technology more accessible, adaptable, and affordable to the partnership.

As with previous years, in 2025 we continue to regularly receive praise and recognition across all the functional areas within HBL, which is further endorsed by our six-monthly customer survey results. This demonstrates the value that is placed upon us as a well led, quality driven, integrated ICT service provider. Our success 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. We in HBL believe in our service offer and its value to the NHS, our mantra is:

**“To achieve great things, first we have to believe in it”**

Our staff are at the forefront of everything we do in HBL ICT, and we are heartened to continue to develop in their future careers within the NHS. With this in mind this year we have continued to invest in several key initiatives.

Looking ahead, 2026 we will focus on delivering a 5-year business and digital strategy ‘Digital Once’, focussing on the strategic outcomes commenced in the past two years, removing duplication in the system, delivering scalable solutions, and resolving technology issues swiftly. An additional component of our strategy is to progress with RPA and generative AI technologies as this will further drive efficiencies across our enterprise.

In delivering our strategy we will ensure that HBL ICT maintains current and relevant to our member organisations and enabling their planned digital strategies and digital transformation ambitions.

We know that 2026 will present further financial challenges for the partnership as our member organisation look to make further financial efficiencies, but we are confident that due to our prudent fiscal management we will successfully navigate through these challenges and continue to deliver, as we have done for the past 11 years.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank our staff, partners and stakeholders who have contributed to making 2025 yet another very successful year for the partnership. 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



## 2 Our Vision

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



## 3 Our Strategic Principles: “IT Just Works”

- Patient outcomes at the centre of strategic decisions.
- Promote a consumer like experience.
- Promote equality throughout the partnership.
- Create an environment that encourages innovation.
- Be socially aware and mindful of the impact of technology can have on our environment.
- Provide an environment that ensures information is easily accessible to meet the demands of healthcare provision.



## 4 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.

### 4.1 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.

### 4.2 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.

### 4.3 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.

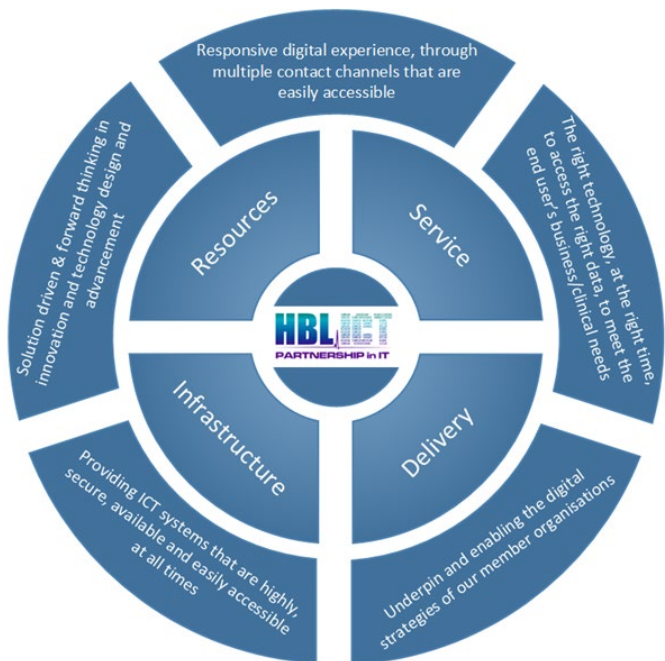
### 4.4 The right technology, at the right time, to access the right data, to meet the end user's business/clinical needs

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.'

### 4.5 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.



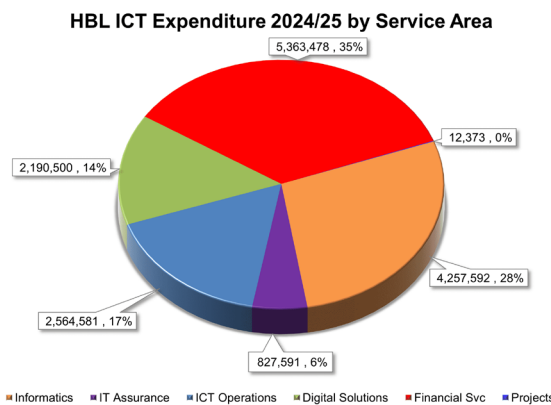
## 5 Finances at a glance for 2025/2026

### 5.1 Introduction

2025 was a landmark year for HBL ICT. For the eleventh consecutive year, the organisation successfully delivered against its control total, reinforcing a long-standing track record of strong financial discipline, resilience, and effective independent financial management. This consistent performance continues to provide a high level of assurance to partners and stakeholders.

The year also marked the third full year of operation under the hosted arrangement with the Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board. Throughout this period, HBL ICT continued to meet all operational commitments while adapting to increasing financial and operational complexity.

HBL ICT achieved a net 5% increase in its baseline allocation, including funding

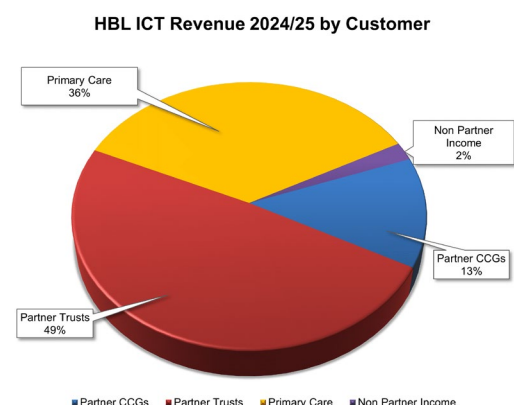


for new services. At the same time, the organisation absorbed significant inflationary pressures across all major cost categories, including the nationally agreed 2025 pay award. Crucially, this was achieved without requiring any additional funding from partners, demonstrating prudent planning, tight cost control, and effective financial stewardship.

### 5.2 Building Confidence Through Strong Financial Foundations

The swift agreement of the annual revenue allocation by partners reflected the growing maturity and credibility of HBL ICT's financial framework. Continued investment in refining the Activity-Based Costing model has strengthened the accuracy, transparency, and consistency of financial information. As a result, partners were able to place clear confidence in both the reported activity levels and the forward-looking assessment of funding requirements. This represents a step change in the quality of financial insight available to support informed decision-making.

This confidence was further reinforced by the organisation's Data Analytics capability, which now provides a robust, auditable view of activity across the business. Comprehensive and reliable data capture throughout the year enabled stakeholders to clearly understand service demand, operational performance, and cost drivers.



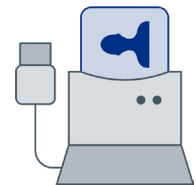
## 6 ICT Operations

### 6.1 Service Delivery Teams

**The Access Management Team** has continued to provide essential support to our partners through Registration Authority (RA) services, Corporate Active Directory assistance, and a wide range of access-related issues. During the year, the team also supported the transition to our new cloud-based Webex telephony system, helping to modernise communication and improve service resilience. A strong emphasis on cross-training has further strengthened team capability and resilience across these central service areas.

Throughout the year, the team has managed tens of thousands of incidents and tasks, with Robotic Process Automation (RPA) resolving a significant proportion of requests. Development of new Computer Systems Account Amendment (CSAA) forms is also underway to streamline Nebula account service processes.

**The Registration Authority team** supported customers through site clinics, appointments, and drop-in sessions at Howard Court in Welwyn Garden City, with additional clinics at Kingfisher Surgery in Newport Pagnell to improve access across the wider area. They also continued replacing older Smartcards with the new 09 Series and provided training on the enhanced self-service Smartcard unlock feature.



**The Technical Deployment Management team** completed 25 workstreams this year, averaging one every two weeks. They also oversaw the fit-out and relocation of HBL ICT HQ, managed the ICB Charter House clearance, and decommissioned three floors occupied by the ICB and HBL ICT. Key workstreams include:

- The successful deployment of 110 laptops at Little Plumstead to support Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust's (HPFT) additional onboarding of Norfolk's learning disabilities services.
- The Hertfordshire Community Trust (HCT) Community and School-Aged Immunisation Service (CSAIS) team was onboarded with 120 laptops across three sites, complemented by the installation of desktop equipment at five further locations.
- A significant update was completed for the Optomise software used by the Diabetic Eye Screening service, ensuring continued and effective operation.
- Various moves at distance for Norwich/Norfolk based teams, including network equipment as well as PC hardware relocation.
- Contributing to cost saving efforts, for example, the BMLK closure of offices at the Arndale centre and Borough Hall sites plus making sure ICB staff have their alternative work areas ready for use.
- Assisting in the final stages of the migration of windows 10 to 11 by augmenting the deployment team to replace older PCs.

**The Service Request Team** continues to be focused on delivering within the cost saving constraints faced by partners, while maintaining PC replacement programmes wherever possible.



The rollout of Windows 11 has completed with the deadline from Microsoft for the end of Windows 10 support met. As well as onboarding new services and supporting new starters with their equipment and we continue to replace hardware as part of the ongoing upgrading of the Partners estate including advice and guidance for new starters on best usage practices. During this time, we successfully moved HBL ICT headquarters and our stock & stores whilst maintaining continued service delivery.

Combining resource and efforts with other Operations teams allowed us to ensure a smooth rollout of the onboarding of HCT Essex CSAIS and the HPFT Norfolk L&D service, co-ordinating allocations, software licences, SIMS, and mobiles where applicable.

As part of our commitment to continual service improvement, the equipment request process has been simplified to ensure a more streamlined and convenient experience for customers. More online forms have been created and will launch soon, once completed, will further streamline process for customers, especially for mobiles.

## 6.2 Remote Experience Teams

In 2025, the primary focus was to advance the ongoing journey of improving customer satisfaction, while consistently delivering effective services to all customers across the partnership. The team placed a strong emphasis on ensuring that every issue raised by customers received a timely and effective response, reflecting a commitment to service excellence.

Throughout the year, partner organisations were surveyed to gauge satisfaction levels, resulting in an overall satisfaction rating of 8.37 out of 10. This score represents an increase from the previous year's rating of 8.19, highlighting the positive impact of the team's efforts and the continuous improvement in service delivery.

**The Remote Technician Team** played a pivotal role in supporting customers across the partnership. Their responsibilities spanned a wide variety of technical issues, including those related to laptops, desktops, printers, and smartphones. Over the course of the year, the team successfully resolved 17,243 incidents. In addition to incident resolution, the team managed 8,057 virtual appointments, which empowered customers to access support at times that best suited their individual schedules.



The team also responded to requests from partner organisations by conducting site visits and clinics up to four times per week, ensuring that in-person support was available when needed. For more complex technical issues, daily touch labour appointments were offered at Howard Court. Throughout the year, the Remote Technician team supported the Windows 11 upgrade project by addressing post-upgrade issues and executing numerous in-place upgrades.

**The Application Support Team** resolved 9,698 incidents related to NHS mail, Office 365, and SystmOne, and actioned a further 2,679 tasks. Beyond routine support, the team undertook important projects to enhance security and streamline operations.

This included assisting with the removal of user shared mailboxes from the NHS mail tenancy, converting them to true shared mailboxes, and ensuring that accounts on the long-term MFA exemption list were removed. These actions were taken to strengthen security across the platform and align with best practices.

Training was prioritised throughout the year, with ongoing sessions on the NHS.net connect CoreView platform to prepare local administrators for the upcoming migration. This training will enable the team to maintain effective support for partner organisations and ensure a smooth transition.



The Continual Service Improvement roadmap continues to drive improvements across the ServiceNow platforms, focusing on efficiency, and enhanced user experience.

The achievements outlined below demonstrate a sustained commitment to continuous service improvement and strategic alignment across the organisation.

- The team successfully supported the upgrade from the ServiceNow Washington release to Yokohama. All applications were updated in both TEST and LIVE environments as of November 2025, and a new automated scheduling process has been proposed to further streamline future updates.
- They expanded virtual agent workflows for both the HPFT and HCT service desks, notably introducing the “Topic Block” feature to provide out-of-hours support. Additional virtual agent flows were also developed and deployed for the HBL ICT Service Desk.
- The implementation of the Roadmap Terms of Reference (TOR) and the introduction of monthly prioritisation meetings have ensured that all initiatives remain closely aligned with strategic objectives.
- Operational improvements included the deployment of the new Service Operations Workspace across the HBL ICT, HCT, and HPFT service desks, featuring advanced capabilities such as drag-and-drop functionality and multi-incident views. Dashboards were comprehensively reviewed, cleaned, and migrated from the GLOBAL environment to TOP.

- The team completed ITIL license reviews, resulting in the removal of redundant licenses, and commenced onboarding of both the HCT CHIS and Medical Devices Team.
- Furthermore, integrating appointment booking and incident creation options has contributed to increased service efficiency.

Over the course of the calendar year, the ICT Operations teams demonstrated a strong commitment to customer service and operational efficiency. A total of 29,003 phone calls were managed, reflecting the team's responsiveness to user needs and technical issues. Importantly, the average speed of answer for these calls consistently remained under two minutes, ensuring that customers received timely assistance and minimising delays.

In addition to phone support, the ICT Operations teams managed 8,315 live agent chats. This multi-channel approach to customer support provided users with convenient access to technical assistance and contributed to the overall effectiveness of the service delivery.

## 7 Digital Solutions

During 2025 the team continued its major infrastructure transformation, completing the migration from a legacy smart stack to a scalable hybrid cloud model. Key to this transformation was the hosting of our services via two Tier III+ crown commercial data centre facilities ensuring operational resilience and energy efficiency for HBL and the partnership. In addition to this major infrastructure upgrade, we also successfully migrated our partners onto a cloud-based digital telephony platform, to provide more flexibility and collaboration across the partnership.



2025 also saw the team successfully decommission its legacy data centre footprints, supporting both HBL and its partners towards meeting their NHS Green Plan targets.

The adoption of AI across the partnership continues to gather momentum, and the team successfully onboarded over 1,000 customers into the national NHSE Co-Pilot pilot.

Significant progress has been achieved with Nexthink, enabling service automation and enhancing digital experience metrics. Targeted campaigns supported the migration from Windows 10 to Windows 11, while initiatives were implemented to drive application adoption among colleagues across HBLICT and the wider partnership.

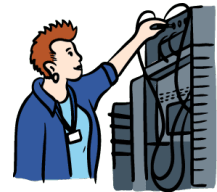
The threat from cyber security continues to grow and the Digital Solutions team have successfully mitigated against several threats over the last 12 months, including several zero-day vulnerabilities across the environment.

Our teams' tireless efforts to protect our critical infrastructure has meant that we have successfully delivered several schemes across our partners including:

- Ensuring that MFA is strictly enforced across all public facing services.
- Migrating over 10,000 end user assets to Windows 11.
- Ensuring that the patching of our systems is kept up to date.
- Continually monitoring our IT environment and proactively managing all infrastructure approaching end of life or end of service, ensuring timely upgrades, or decommissioning to maintain operational resilience
- Proactively managing the threats posed by phishing across the partnership
- Keeping our communications both frequent and relevant to our partners.

Key to our plans for 2026 include the Specops programme which has been launched to enhance security by aligning password policies with multi-factor authentication.

We will also continue to build our cloud presence as we look to leverage more services from the NHS national tenant including Windows 365, Co-Pilot, InTune, Sentinel and MDE services.



One of our core deliverables will also be to build out a capability to provide more automation services across our partnership using robotic process automation and UiPath.

Finally, 2026 will see the formation of Central East ICB and HBL ICT will be at the forefront of supporting the new organisations digital ambitions.

## 8 IT Assurance

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 with the ability to leverage solutions and bring economies-of-scale where there is most benefit. The Programme Management office (PMO) has continued to collaborate with our partners to support their digital priorities, enhance cyber security measures, onboard new clinical services and provide new infrastructure and network technology.

During 2025, the PMO led the IT onboarding of two new services for our partner organisations. These were complex projects involving multiple organisations, data migrations, site set-ups, and staff transfers. One project, the onboarding of the Norfolk Community Learning Disabilities Service, required engagement with multiple government organisations to migrate systems and data from an NHS Trust and Local Authority to Hertfordshire

Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT). This was a significant piece of work that had to be completed within an accelerated timeline. The project was completed on time and ensured that the transfer did not interrupt services.

A key activity for HBL ICT this year, was to complete the migration of the existing HBL ICT Data Centre from Charter House to a commercial site managed by, the government-backed venture, Crown Hosting. This has been a large-scale project, 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 migration was completed in the summer and was quickly followed by the decommissioning of the Charter House data centre in September.

As the existing fixed-line telephony system came to the end of its supported life, a project was initiated to procure and onboard several hundred users, from across the four organisations, to a new cloud-based platform. This was a new approach for HBL ICT as previous telephony systems had been hosted internally.



The project had to be delivered at pace but also ensure a smooth transition to limit any disruption to external communications. This project was led by the PMO and delivered successfully within a 6-month period.

The compliance deadline, set by Microsoft for the transition to Windows 11, had to be met in October 2025. The deployment to 9,000 corporate users began in 2023 due to the scale and complexity of the estate. A range of communication methods was required to engage with the user estate and encourage the installation of the latest operating system. The deployment was completed successfully by the compliance deadline and avoided the cost of extended support.

Following the announcement in March 2025, ICBs across the country have been working to meet the financial targets set by government. In the East of England this has led to the formation of three new ICBs. As part of this transition, HBL ICT will become the IT provider for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (C&P) ICB who will become part of Central East ICB. Work on the onboarding activity has started and will complete in March 2026 before Central East becomes a legal entity on 1st April 2026.

The IT Assurance team have facilitated a significant volume of internal and external audit work in 2025. With increased cyber and data security threats, comes increased regulatory requirements. The four partner organisations have been subject to the new NCSC Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) which has been used to augment the existing Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT). This has been a large extension to the DSPT standards and has involved the development of new baselines, evidence, and auditing practices. With HBL ICT's support, the four organisations successfully completed their audits and received very few recommendations.

In early 2025, the IT Assurance function took on responsibility for the management of Fact-Finding Investigations. These investigations are required to support disciplinary and legal proceedings and Subject Access Requests. The volume of these investigations has increased exponentially over a 2-year period and require strict control to ensure legal standards are met. The IT Assurance team have taken on this increased workload and established new processes, to be used by all partners, for requesting and managing this sensitive data.

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 539 ITIL changes delivered and 29 Problem records addressed in year. The IT Assurance team have also worked alongside the ICT Operations and Digital Solutions directorates to design, test and launch the Standard Change module within the ITSM tool to simplify and reduce the administrative burden for repeated low risk changes. This has been a successful roll-out and the new module is being used by all HBL ICT functions.



Further large-scale projects are planned for 2026 including the onboarding of C&P ICB to the HBL ICT platform, transition to the new Central East ICB and the onboarding of Essex ICB into the HBL ICT partnership. We look forward to playing our part in delivering these key changes.

## 9 Informatics

Over the past year, GP IT support within HWE ICB has focused on consolidation, building on the integration of West Essex from the previous year. The unified support model in place across both HWE and BLMK ICBs has proven effective, providing a robust foundation to manage the ongoing changes within the NHS.

To maintain cyber security standards and comply with the end-of-support timeline for Windows 10, we have successfully upgraded all desktop PCs and laptops in the GP IT estate to Windows 11. In doing so we enabled our ICB partners to avoid the cost of extended support for Windows 10, available for those organisations who failed to meet the deadline. This equates to c£115k in BLMK ICB and c£170k in HWE ICB.

We have advanced our Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) by introducing a Windows 11 image, upgrading the platform, and relocating connectivity to our two cloud data centres. We are also piloting a zero-client solution, enabling access to the VDI platform from devices without a Windows operating system. This approach allows us to repurpose laptops that could not be upgraded to Windows 11, enhancing sustainability without compromising security.

The Informatics management team continue to collaborate with the GP IT Futures team, the Commercial and Procurement Hub, regional partners, and suppliers to oversee procurement activities for General Practice Clinical systems across both ICB areas, using various Buying Catalogues and frameworks. We also manage GP Clinical System procurements and contract changes when practices migrate, upgrade, or implement new clinical or supporting systems, as additional options become available within the frameworks. Additionally, we provide ongoing support to the Hub and our ICB clients with PCARP Cloud-Based Telephony as needed.



## 9.1 Training

Many practices are increasingly utilising online training resources, which allows them to complete training at times and speeds that best fit their individual learning preferences. This approach helps minimise disruption to both their training and daily responsibilities. Additionally, our training capability offers more in-depth sessions covering other aspects of clinical system functionality.

## 9.2 Implementation & Utilisation

During the past year, the Implementation & Utilisation team has continued to provide support to both Hertfordshire & West Essex (HWE) and Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes (BLMK) Integrated Care Systems in respect of NHS National Applications. The National and local Primary Care teams maintained a strong focus on the ongoing recovery of Primary Care services, particularly improving patient access through the Primary Care Access Recovery Plan (PCARP). This work has contributed to the transition towards the Modern General Practice model of Total Triage. Additionally, we have played a role in ensuring that GP Connect is properly configured to support the Pharmacy First initiative.

The team has also worked to ensure that SMS communications by practices are used appropriately across both ICBs. This has included targeted Advisory Visits to help practices refine their messaging and ensure that SMS is used effectively when it is the most suitable communication channel. Furthermore, the team has provided substantial in-person support at various care and public events to promote the NHS APP, encouraging its adoption and increased usage.

Activity around the National Application stack is as follows:-

- **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 app to mitigate and reduce the SMS cost burden. The team, with the GP Systems Solution Architect, has run a number of NHS App days, across our geography, particularly targeting ethnic minority communities to support and encourage increased adoption.

- **Electronic Prescription Service (EPS)**, enabling PCNs with EPS.
- **National Care Record Service (NCRS - previously Summary Care Record)**, supporting practices with NCRS queries and problems caused by incorrect registrations and GP2GP issues.
- **Patient Proxy Access**, restricted to access for medications, enabling Care homes to order repeat medications electronically from the patient's practice.
- **Online Consultations**, during 2025 work around online consultations has increased, with more sites changing to a triage approach means more config and work for our teams. We run a monthly Digital Innovation group which focuses on online consultation and best practice for sites. We have also played a key role in HWE ICB managing and extending online consultation contracts during 2025, including securing significant savings.
- **Electronic Referral Service (eRS)**, supporting practices and the ICBs in the use of eRS. We have refined our eRS activity to ensure that we are not doing work that is the responsibility of either the commissioner or the provider organisation and clarified the support we can give practices.
- **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.
- **Patient Record Access**, supporting practices with the requirement to provide patients with access to their electronic records.



### 9.3 Business Change

Operationally, the team continue to deliver Business Change requests, Ardens and DXS Change Requests to General Practice and the ICBs. The Clinical System and Reporting consultancy, providing 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, this has been expanded to also include EMIS Hub units as well as SystmOne (S1) Hub units across the wider geography.

Business Change continue to manage the significant workload around change requests for the Ardens product suite in accordance with the newly introduced ICB Approval process. Ardens continue to raise issues relating to broken links and out of date referral forms, requiring substantial investigation to resolve.

The team uses the Informatics ServiceNow portal for Business Change and Ardens requests and is working to integrate DXS forms for Southwest Herts practices into this system. An EMIS system merge has also been completed for two practices in Southwest Herts.

Support continues for 111 HUC appointment bookings into GP practices and the team continue to support Willen Hospice with a number of requests to optimise the use of the clinical system for current services. This has been achieved by creating new resources, identifying better working processes to aid the important being carried to work alongside the current palliative work.

The Digital Assistant deployed to two Milton Keynes practices continues to support administration staff with the mandatory referral of deceased patients records to the Medical Examiner Service.

Business Change has considerable experience and knowledge of Pathology processes and systems and have supported numerous Pathology Requests including

- Configuration and enablement of a new Pathology provider, HSL Labs.
- S&W practices requests to Luton & Dunstable Labs.
- PCN Pathology results being returned to PCN Member practices.
- Resolving coding issues on returned results, consulting with Lab contacts.

The team has supported the national roll out of Reasonable Adjustments and a number of Clinical reports have also been created to support the early identification of Hypertension for BLMK patients.



Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (BHFT) have raised requests for 11 SystmOne (S1) community units to be fully reviewed and two new units have been procured for the delivery of Weight Management Service and Community Midwives which also includes a request to merge two S1 units. The two BHFT Hospital Palliative Service S1 units are being reviewed with a view to aligning their processes.

Business Change are supporting BLMK (Luton & Bedford) End of Life (EoL) Services (including hospices, Care Coordination Services, Community Palliative Services and GP Practices) to configure S1 units to best share information and increase integrated working. This includes one merge of care coordination services and creation of new Electronic Palliative Care Coordination System (EPaCCS) template.

Following the changes to the NHS England (NHSE) Guidance we have been working with ICB's, Safeguarding & LAC Services, Safeguarding GP Leads and EoE Child Health Services to create the new East of England process for the Management of Adopted Children's Records.

Support is being given to the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) teams in creating clinical templates and reports across HWE & BLMK to best suit the users' requirements. The team are also working on the set up of new Primary Care Network (PCN) S1 unit for Delta PCN.

## 9.4 GP IT Solutions Architect

Informatics is preparing for the transition from Emis Web to Emis X, the first major clinical system upgrade in over 15 years. Emis X webinars have increased to monthly sessions, and the team are actively supporting sites in adopting the Emis X companion app, launched in April 2025. As 2026 approaches, the focus will be on ensuring all sites are ready for the move. This includes the recent (and first) in-person Emis X event with over 60 attendees and with another planned for March 2026. Additionally, a groundbreaking partnership contract has been signed with RPA supplier JifJaff to implement an advanced Robotic Process Automation (RPA) environment, enhancing scalability and resilience for healthcare providers and to improve patient care locally and nationwide.

## 10 ICT Financial Services



### 10.1 Financial Services – Enabling Delivery and Transformation

The Financial Services team played a pivotal role in enabling several strategically important initiatives during the year, ensuring that delivery remained affordable, controlled, and aligned to agreed priorities.

Key achievements included supporting the establishment and migration of services to the new Crown Hosting data centre in Enfield, London. Through disciplined financial planning and close monitoring of expenditure, this major transition was delivered within agreed financial parameters.

The team also supported the onboarding of an external provider to deliver automation-as-a-service for Primary Care, oversaw the successful completion of the Windows 11 deployment programme, and maximised available funding to strengthen cyber security and organisational resilience.

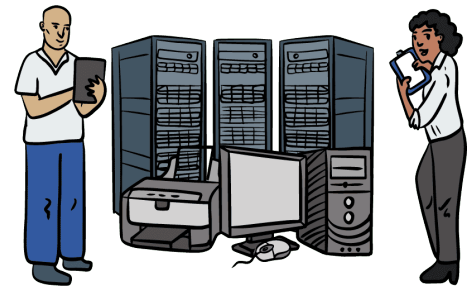
Across all these areas, robust management of income and expenditure, combined with firm commercial negotiations, ensured that external pressures did not adversely affect HBL ICT's financial position or its commitments to the wider Partnership.

### 10.2 Strategic and Transactional Procurement – Delivering Value for Money

The Strategic Procurement function continued to perform strongly, ensuring that both routine and large-scale procurements were delivered efficiently, compliantly, and on time. The achievement of a nil-waiver position across the year is a clear indicator of effective planning, strong governance, and disciplined execution.

The team also responded proactively to unprecedented increases in non-pay costs. Through careful supplier engagement, active market management, and continuous budget oversight, financial risks were mitigated and overall expenditure remained within approved plans.

During the year, HBL ICT progressed a number of essential technology upgrade initiatives required to maintain the security and integrity of its digital infrastructure. While partner funding constraints limited the ability to formally allocate additional financial resources at the point of recommendation, HBL ICT demonstrated considerable financial agility. Preparatory work was completed without additional cost to partners by leveraging efficiencies from non-pay cost renegotiation and ongoing reprioritisation. This ensured that strategic objectives and the digital roadmap remained fully on track.



Financial Services supported the successful delivery of several major procurement initiatives, including:

- Migration to the Enfield Data Centre
- Onboarding of a strategic collaboration with an external supplier
- Completion of the Windows 11 deployment
- Preparatory work for significant 2026 contract renewals, including Hardware Supply and GPIT Services

Strong and constructive supplier relationships remained central to securing best value for money. Balanced and well-managed negotiations enabled HBL ICT to achieve optimal commercial outcomes while maintaining service continuity and market credibility.

The Transactional Procurement function also delivered consistently high performance throughout the year, with no operational escalations and strong partner feedback. This reliability and professionalism continue to underpin confidence in the service.

### 10.3 Relationship Experience Team

In 2025, the team continued to cultivate a resilient and diverse Customer Portfolio, comprising ICBs, Provider Trusts, Acute Trusts, Urgent Care Services, Private Healthcare organisations, PODs, and Hospices. While some non-partner organisations stepped away or merged with others during the year, we were pleased to welcome additional services from our Provider Trusts, and new customers, further strengthening our network.

During the year, the team played a key role in supporting and delivering a range of strategic initiatives across our Partner organisations:

- **HBL ICT Self-Help Book:** Saw steady engagement, averaging 15 visits per day and approximately 500 visits monthly.
- **HPFT Staff Onboarding:** Enabled the onboarding of approximately 100 staff as part of HPFT's new adult community learning disability service in Norfolk.

- **HCT CSAIS Onboarding:** Provided critical support for the onboarding of the East of England Children's School Aged Immunisation Service, now delivering the full UK vaccination programme across Hertfordshire, East Anglia, BLMK, and Essex.
- **DESP Infrastructure Enablement:** Coordinated the deployment of specialised servers and endpoints for HCT's Diabetic Eye Screening Programme, to support implementation of Canon camera software to meet screening targets.
- **HPFT Blood Analyser Upgrade:** Successfully transitioned to a Raspberry Pi-based solution, following a successful pilot and subsequent rollout across seven clinical sites.
- **Shared Circuit Implementation at Lister Hospital:** Facilitated a joint infrastructure solution between HPFT and HCT, enhancing network performance for HCT and delivering cost efficiencies for both Partners.
- **Digital Telephony Transition:** Supported colleagues and our partners in the move to a new digital telephony platform – providing dedicated support specifically to the ICBs to enable a smooth and seamless transition.
- **BLMK Site Relocation:** Supported the closure of Arndale House and transition to Morton House, ensuring seamless connectivity and service continuity.
- **Dementia Pathway Development:** Collaborated with Essex LD Service, Bucks LD, and Hertfordshire County Council to co-develop and distribute accessible, easy-read resources.
- **Project Communications Support:** Delivered targeted communications for key initiatives including Windows 11 upgrades (via Nexthink campaigns), AirWatch to Intune migration, and the launch of the SpecOps uReset project. Additionally, materials were created to highlight ICT leadership initiatives throughout the year.
- **Process Formalisation:** Responded to increased demand by formalising the fact-finding investigation process, now transitioned to IT Assurance for ongoing management.
- **HPFT Safe Hinge full door ligature alarm:** We supported the proof of concept for a new solution at Bowlers Green. The door sensors will indicate whether anyone is applying a defined amount of weight/pressure on any sides of the door and then alarm accordingly.
- **Crusader Park Reopening:** Provisioned IT infrastructure for HPFT's refurbished site, including smart screens, videoconferencing facilities, and a new door access system.



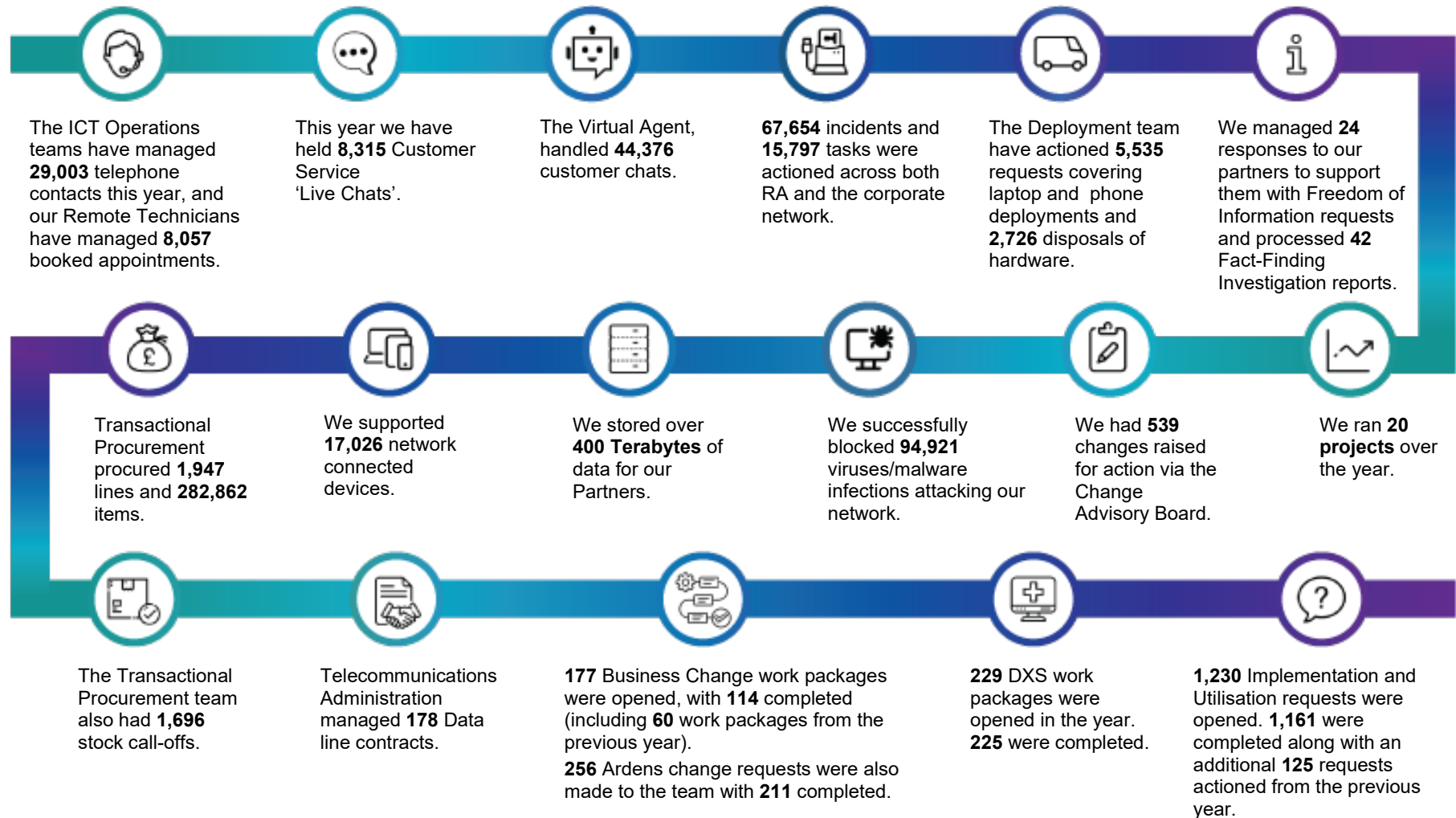
## 10.4 Summary

During 2025, HBL ICT further strengthened its financial, procurement, and governance arrangements, ensuring that all activity was conducted in full compliance with Standing Financial Instructions and best practice. These improvements reinforce transparency, accountability, and organisational independence. We continue to strengthen our partnerships, deliver impactful communications, and support strategic transformation across the health and care system.

Overall, this was a highly successful year for the Financial Services function. The team not only maintained financial control in a challenging environment but also actively enabled strategic delivery and transformation. Building on this strong foundation, the organisation is well-positioned to continue delivering value, resilience, and assurance to partners in the years ahead.

## 11 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:



## 12 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, collaborating 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 use 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.

