

**A** hectic, twelve-week period at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust has produced an impressive, multi-million pound upgrade to the sterile services unit and brand new washer-disinfectors installed - with outstanding results.

As decontamination manager Robbie Cormie told *Inside Hospitals*: "I came here in May as the refit got underway and spent my first few weeks wearing a hard hat.

"For the past five years the trust had been looking at going into a regional supercentre for the decontamination of its instruments. Then, 12-months ago, it was decided not to go off-site and things had to move very quickly to re-build and re-equip.

"The whole department was gutted, the entire floor template re-designed, with every wall ripped out and moved. I just made a few tweaks to the design but basically it was spot-on."

The building work saw 20 tonnes of rubble removed from



## "Superb equipment and a fantastic team"

Opting to keep its sterile services on site Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust embarked on a crash, 12-week re-build programme and now boasts an impressive fully compliant facility that will be the envy of many



Robbie Cormie and Debra Gough

the first-floor facility without any disruption to other hospital services.

Recent retirees, Linda Denison, the then sterile services manager, and Joan Aughton, as project lead, masterminded the operation, with the trust's estates and facilities design team.

"These two ladies planned the decant of the service to Synergy's sterile services centre at Chorley - which was achieved without any disruption to the hospital's service," explained Robbie. "The department's team was bussed-out every day, in a two-hour round trip to Chorley, where they processed the hospital's trays using Synergy's equipment and facilities.

"The team was brilliant, very flexible - changing hours and everything required to accommodate this. And all this was on top of the hospital doing additional activity to continue to meet 18 week targets. It's full credit to the HSDU staff that we

were able to keep the hospital afloat during such a busy period."

Describing the equipment selection, Robbie said: "With the washer-disinfectors we had before, the wash quality was not good, and being over 15-years old they did not comply with current standards and were prone to daily failures and



breakdowns.

When it came to the evaluation process for new equipment, the trust was one of the first to use NHS Supply Chain's recently introduced Decontamination Pilot, as Pam Rowlston, of the trust's procurement and commercial services department, explained: "Working with colleagues in NHS Supply Chain it was

possible to discuss the Framework Agreement for washer-disinfectors and similar equipment used in the HSDU. The whole process became a smooth operation which led to a satisfactory result."

Procurement manager Jon Hannah added: "The main benefits were ease of use, ensuring value for money due to the collaborative nature of the Agreement and adherence to OJEU regulations."

Following a detailed evaluation process and site visits the washer-disinfector contract was awarded to Dekomed.

Opened on 5th July, the highly efficient and stylish new department has an eye-catching array of four DEKO D32 Excels and a similarly sized pass-through hatch that form an impressive wall between the wash area and the clean room.

"The team went with the proven track record," said Robbie. "Our criteria were quality, reliability and service.

"Dekomed was new to me when I came here. The machines are superb, the training was superb. We've not had one single dirty instrument. Every load comes out clean as required and the machines are extremely reliable. They're very straightforward and easy to operate. We're happy customers all round.

"To cover for increases in

demand, the department's been designed so that the pass-through hatch can be slid out and an additional, new washer-disinfector installed - all services are there ready for it to go in."

Exceeding the standard performance and design requirements of ISO/DIS 15883-1 washer-disinfectors Parts 1 and 2 and ISO 13485:2003, the DEKO D32 Excels guarantee process results

throughout with a Class C independent, full process verification recording system.

Staff appreciate the ergonomic design, compact dimensions and touch screen technology, as sterile services



Dekomed's Soniclean irrigated ultrasonic cleaner

supervisor Debra Gough explained: "The DEKOs have only been in for two weeks and everything's going well - we're very impressed. We're not used to having so many 'passing' cycles.



"They save space. You just pull out the shelf - they're easy to load, easy to handle, we've got every confidence in them. You can move the shelves,

so you can maximise the capacity, which is important because we do lots of different size trays. It enables us to keep them together for traceability. And the installation and the machines look good."

Robbie added: "I like to deal with people not corporations. The whole Dekomed team has been on site and contactable throughout - reliable and very



flexible. At one point we were a week behind with the validation schedule but Dekomed changed their whole plans to meet our needs. And validation and commissioning went without further disruption or delay."

Designed to complement the dimensions and look of the D32 Excel washer-disinfector, the DEKO H32 pass-through hatch has an intercom phone system, electrically and automatically interlocking doors with windows and gas springs, and two gliding and removable shelves.

As part of the whole washroom reconstruction the department also decided to invest in a new irrigator and, as it had been successful with the washer-disinfector contract, chose Dekomed's new Soniclean unit. Debra explained: "Cannulated and lumen instruments, anything that's difficult to clean, such as the trauma trays and nailing equipment, go into the



The pass-through hatch has an intercom phone system

Soniclean."

A recent addition to the Dekomed portfolio, Soniclean's S-2800 irrigated ultrasonic cleaner uses pulsed electronics to ensure rapid, powerful, reliable and uniform cleaning of internal lumens and fine parts without the risk of damage to delicate instruments.

Key to the success of the project was the input of Dekomed's sales manager, Andy Kimber, and the flexibility and attention to detail of service manager Steve Townsend and his team.

Debra said: "The training was very good. Andy did the training on the new washer-disinfectors and the

ultrasonic and Steve trained the estates' engineers."

Robbie added: "The team had certified training on all aspects of safety of the operation and I



The washer-disinfectors and pass-through hatch

took the training with our estates' engineers."

It's almost a case of déjà vu for Dekomed sales director Mike Bowden, who said: "It's good to reconnect with the department having originally worked with them in the 90s when they had DEKO machines before, and very pleasing to be recognised for the quality and reliability of the equipment.

"People always mention our high standard of service, which I always appreciate - but we find it is not difficult to achieve. It's rightly a high priority for any customer and something the whole of the Dekomed team prides itself on."

It's not just the DEKO machines that are new, the department has also switched its choice of chemical supplier to Serchem - using the company's UltraActive for the ultrasonic irrigator, Process ph Plus for pre-wash in the sinks, and Maximum ph Plus for the washer-disinfectors.

Tracking and traceability is by Meditrax's user friendly system. As Debra said: "Other than the DEKOs, Meditrax is the best thing that's happened to the department. We use the system in conjunction with the washer-disinfectors."

Describing other aspects of the project, Robbie said: "The department's MMM autoclaves and steam generator are good machines, and were refurbished, the plant room was upgraded too.

"Our AE(d) for the re-build was Don Forrest, who's been fantastic - here at every meeting providing straightforward common sense, advice at each meeting and at every level.

"With our ISO also having been achieved, due to the scheduled new equipment, Charles Bright of Plased, the medical device consultancy, came in at the same time as the new build was underway. It's thanks to him that we achieved the ISO. He wrote our quality manual, updated procedures,

carried out the first internal audit training and was here when Intertek, the notified body, came in to do our accreditation assessment."

Proudly displayed by the department's reception desk are the ISO 13485:2003 Certificate of Registration and EC Certificate, Production of Quality Assurance, Directive 93/42 for Medical Devices, Annex V.

The lasting impression is one of a quietly efficient and stylish environment. To ensure optimum working conditions staff chose the colour scheme for floors, walls and worktops, while the department has also been designed to be as energy efficient as possible. There's low energy lighting throughout, without light switches, and in the clean room intelligent lighting automatically adjusts its intensity to suit the outside prevailing conditions, ensuring



that the LUX level for fine working is always correct.

Justly proud of the new facility, Robbie Cormie concluded: "The department reopened on the fifth of July with a new management structure, new build and a new quality system. The trust has noticed a marked improvement in the quality and turnaround time and everybody from the chief executive downwards is very happy.

"The trust is committed to a quality workforce and has taken a huge decision to invest in staff and the department to keep it on-site."

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Robbie Cormie and Dekomed's Mike Bowden

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