



United  
Lincolnshire  
Hospitals  
NHS Trust

## United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

As a Provider of Excellence in Rural Healthcare, United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust (ULHT) is committed to providing safe, quality care to patients, believing that services of the highest quality should be received. The Trust considers patient safety and ongoing quality improvement to be the central focus of all aspects of healthcare service delivery.

**During 2017 ULHT were looking to review their existing retail catering offers at three hospitals (Grantham, Boston and Lincoln) – following which a tender process took place and an external provider was awarded the contract in early 2018.**

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## Background

During 2017 ULHT were looking to review their existing retail catering offers at three hospitals (Grantham, Boston and Lincoln) with a view to improving the services provided for patients, staff and visitors to the hospitals.

Over the years the self-operated provision had been developed to the point where an external review and proposals on how the sites could be repurposed was required. There was a view that external foodservice brand operators could drive improved sales and margin albeit this view had to be investigated, challenged and revised.

## Brief

Litmus was appointed to carry out the initial review and undertook the following field work:

- ▶ Visited each hospital to assess the performance of the current retail operations and to understand fully the impact of future site developments on the available retail space and the overall retail opportunity;
- ▶ Reviewed current financial performance of retail, including the commercial returns to ULHT;
- ▶ Benchmarked ULHT returns against those of other NHS Trusts;
- ▶ Reviewed existing site plans for each location; and
- ▶ Held meetings with key stakeholders to understand future expectations.

## Approach

**Mike Iddon, the Litmus Partnership, said:** "We took a very collaborative approach to this project, and worked closely with all ULHT stakeholders to assess the most practical and attractive route to achieve increased levels of service and financial return for the Trust. Initial meetings were held with the Estates and facilities team so we could understand their objectives for the study, initial thoughts, challenges and opportunities.

"Following the review we were going to present our findings and recommendations to the Trust board. Therefore, it was crucial that we analysed not only ULHT, but the wider market, so we could give recommendations in the context of the sector as a whole.

"The review work we conducted included benchmarking the commercial return and performance of the current operation, appraising offers available from new entrants to the market, determining the best strategy for ULHT, providing an overview for a potential tender process and outlining an implementation plan for ULHT to roll out."

## Outcomes

Following the review report being presented and discussed with the Trust board, ULHT decided to tender the retail services at the three hospitals with a tender process led and facilitated by Litmus.

Litmus developed a list of providers for the tender, shortlisted this down to three, reviewed bid submissions and facilitated presentations to the Trust stakeholders to allow the Trust to make an informed decision.

One external brand provider was subsequently awarded the contract to provide retail services at all three hospital locations, which was implemented in early 2018.

*▶▶ It was very satisfying to have a lead role in this project which started life as an initial review and developed into us overseeing a tender process and appointing a new provider. It became clear throughout the process that tendering the contract out was going to be the best way forward for the Trust, and bring improved sales and margins◀◀*

*Nigel Forbes, the Litmus Partnership*



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