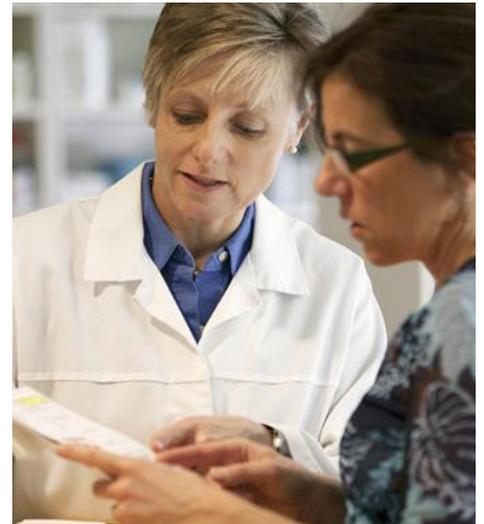


“Millions of people would be without medication if we couldn’t produce prescription forms. When we needed help at short notice, Xerox stepped in brilliantly. No breaks in production. And plenty of ideas for future improvements.”

– Julie Hickling-Walker, Contract Performance Manager
NHS Business Services Authority



Our Challenge

“The NHS uses around 70 million prescription forms and dispensing tokens every month. Both are a bit like banknotes: they have to be printed using special inks and anti-counterfeiting processes, and securely stored and managed.

The whole prescription process, from secure production of forms and tokens to paying pharmacies and other dispensers for fulfilment, is the responsibility of the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA); and we also produce more than 100 million other NHS forms and documents every year.

So when our previous print supplier told us it was withdrawing from the contract at short notice, we had to act fast to keep the supply of critical forms and documents flowing.”

Our Solution

“When moving such a large, complex contract to a new provider, you’d usually spend a year on procurement and six months switching over. We had just seven months to do the lot.

So we used the Crown Commercial Service’s RM1687 framework agreement to speed up the bidding process.

Xerox came out on top for service quality and pricing, and gave us confidence that they could take on the service efficiently within the short time available. And they did it — from relocating the special litho presses for prescription form printing, through to building a secure online ordering portal for nearly 4,000 users.”

Our Results

“There were no service gaps or delays — Xerox performed at outstanding levels from the start and everyone continued being able to get what they needed. That was vital for prescription forms, dispensing tokens and other key documents that have no substitutes.

We’re now looking at ways to produce some of our forms and documents more economically, without compromising on quality.”

- No interruption to prescription form supply
- Accurate printing and timely delivery, despite steep learning curve on complex contract
- Proactive advice on ways to cut print costs

“It’s fantastic to be working with a partner whose business is bigger than the NHS print contract — we can tap into so much expertise and advanced technology.”

– Julie Hickling-Walker, Contract Performance Manager
NHS Business Services Authority



Sometimes ‘the basics’ are complex

Each year, among the many services the NHSBSA provides to the NHS, it processes millions of prescription forms covering a billion prescribed items, and makes payments of over £9 billion to pharmacies and other dispensing contractors.

When drugs are involved, fraud is a worry. So how do you prevent prescription forms from being counterfeited? Or genuine forms being used falsely? Easy: by building multiple levels of security into the production process and tightly controlling ordering.

Well, it’s easy to say; not so easy to do.

NHS prescription forms must be litho-printed using special inks and sophisticated multi-layered printing. Each one must have a unique serial number that can be matched back to the prescribing organisation: to help NHSBSA track who has prescribed what. Individuals must be authorised to order prescription forms for their organisation. And the same applies to dispensing tokens, which patients sign when e-prescriptions are used.

“Much faster than we expected”

When Xerox took over the NHS print contract with its partners, they had to quickly relocate the purpose-built litho presses to a new secure facility, get to grips with all the templates and processes, and build a secure online ordering portal for authorised users.

“Xerox did everything they promised in their bid, and went live by the agreed date,” says Julie Hickling-Walker, Contract Performance Manager at NHSBSA. “They kept up the pace and moved to business as usual in under six months. That’s much faster than we expected, given the complexity of what they were dealing with.”

NHSBSA measures service performance monthly against key performance indicators — things like product acceptance, on-time delivery, availability of the ordering portal, and complaint-handling.

“Xerox consistently scores between 97% and 100%. So we know that the right forms and documents are being printed, and that users are receiving them when they need them,” says Hickling-Walker.

We can do better

With the print contract in full swing, NHSBSA and Xerox are looking for ways to make the NHS print contract even more cost-effective.

“Our job is to make printing as affordable as possible for the NHS, to free up more money for front-line services,” says Hickling-Walker.

As a first step, they’re planning to move more of their non-secure forms and documents from litho to digital printing. “We’ll put the same quality of documents into the hands of clinicians and patients, but we’ll spend a lot less producing them,” says Hickling-Walker.

She sees similar opportunities to help trusts save money printing generic documents, such as leaflets on stopping smoking. Trusts print these locally, so they can include their own logos and contact details.

“We could do this for them more cost-effectively via the NHS print contract,” says Hickling-Walker. “Xerox could bulk-print and personalise this type of document using flexible digital printing technology.”

“Xerox is actively driving our increased use of digital printing,” she points out. “They understand our cost-cutting ambitions on behalf of the NHS, and have the expertise and technology to help. That’s exactly the kind of support and innovation you want from a partner.”