

Strasys case study: Mid Cheshire Hospitals

Making Place happen – Building a sustainable health and care system for local communities

“

The segmentation analysis was the first time I saw the lightbulb go on with the board and the executive team. We’ve now got this really good, understood, owned and embraced analysis of what we think our population needs.”

James Sumner, former CEO of Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Background

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (MCHFT) is an award-winning organisation...



Following the pandemic, Mid Cheshire was at a point of inflection. Previous unresolved issues around quality of care and sustainability had been amplified, and they faced new operational challenges, a growing backlog, exhausted staff and a growing list of compliance and regulation requirements.

The Board was under pressure to demonstrate results, with shifting priorities, system changes, a plethora of transformation and change initiatives from quality improvement, board development, new hospital build, electronic patient record/digital clinical system and governance. It was clear to the leadership that it needed new ideas and to think differently.

In 2021, Strasys was asked by the board to support a strategy refresh, determining its future and what it will take to deliver higher quality of care for its local population.

“The innovative strategy, framed around system understanding and seeking to meet the needs of patients rather than the interests of the organisation, is what attracted me to apply for the CEO position.”

Ian Moston, Chief Executive Officer

Summary outcomes



- Created four distinct but inter-related business models to meet the needs of the population
- Simplified the change programme from 200+ initiatives to 12, saving a significant amount of resources
- New hospital build funding for £500m+
- Identified future savings of £20m+
- Strategy adopted by the system as Place with an agreement on reallocation of resources across the system

Problems to be solved

Challenges in Mid Cheshire

Economic instability

- Unstable health and care system with ever increasing burden of hospital care
- Primary care and social care under enormous pressure

Operational challenges

- Decline in productivity and high costs spent on governance and administration
- 200+ change initiatives consuming management resources

System change

- Growing list of compliance and regulation requirements
- System reconfiguration challenges

A growing demand and backlog

- Almost 20% of people using secondary care could have been treated elsewhere

Workforce pressures

- Exhausted staff post COVID, 25% churn rate in y/e 2020
- Board development needs with a recent turnover

“The current NHS system that we work in is a bit broken to be frank. So we knew that something had to change. So we held a series of sessions with Strasys and the board over a year where we focused in on what’s important to the local population, how do we deliver things now and what do we focus on in the future.”

James Sumner, former CE

“Before Strasys was brought in, we were thinking how can we do more of the same. We have staff that are absolutely exhausted and fatigued and more and more people coming through our doors that we have to manage. We traditionally write strategies about how many more knee operations or cataracts we are going to do. This was more about let’s turn this on its head and what are the needs of the population.”

Heather Barnett, former Director of People

The journey

The exam question: *How do we create clinically and financially sustainable care and wellbeing services that are best able to meet the changing and growing needs of the local population?*

What did Strasys bring?

Turned data into actionable insight – Decision intelligence

- A great deal of complex data needed to be digested by the senior team in a way that was accessible. Strasys was able to distil this down to identify what needed to be changed.

Bespoke offering to meet client needs

- Worked closely with the client to understand exact local/regional requirements.

Responsiveness

- Strasys stood alongside the board supporting executive team members during every stage of the journey, guiding Mid Cheshire through a non-traditional NHS analysis/process.

Executive/board development

- Strong coaching enabled Mid Cheshire to get to a point where they needed to be, developing and landing the strategy with all key stakeholders.

Different approach

- Brought in a different way of thinking and connections beyond the public sector.

Reimagined the workforce around population needs

- Identified the needs of the patient population and translated this into an economic model and sequence of projects.

“We have been taken on a journey of development and we have created the strategy with intelligent data and someone giving us the time and the space to think differently. I’ve felt really privileged to be part of this learning - it’s stretched me as an individual to think differently.”

Heather Barnett, former Director of People

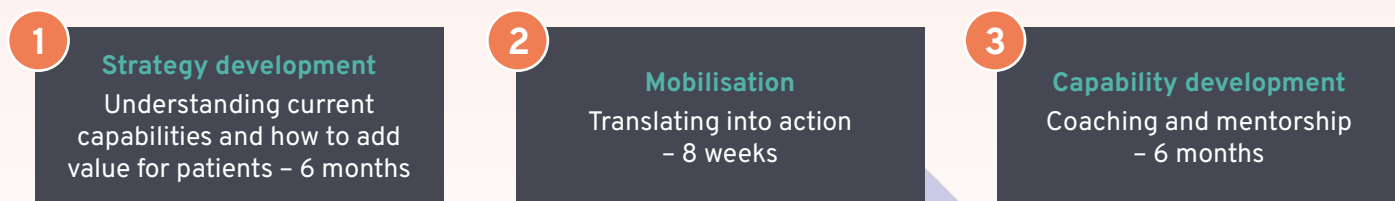
“The most dramatic thing that I would cite working with Strasys is their use of intelligence. By moving to patient segments which look at the care we give rather than the traditional model has been quite revolutionary. I think this is the closest to a roadmap that I’ve ever seen whereby an acute trust and the local community can move towards an integrated care system.”

Murray Luckas, retired Medical Director

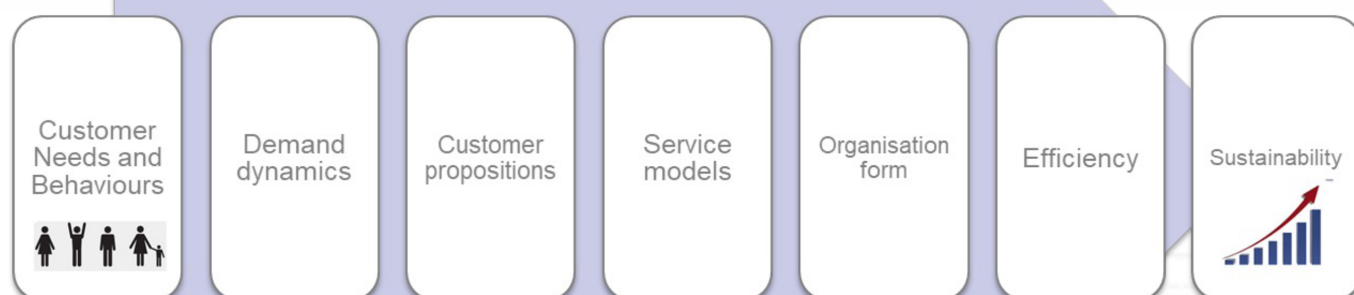
The Solution

Strasys was asked by the board to support it in refreshing its future strategy, determining what it would take to deliver a higher quality of care for its local population.

The work was split into three phases



The Thought Process



A strategy was developed that didn't talk about operational targets, performance metrics or what % of what target was needed to be achieved by when.

Most NHS systems are set up to count the numbers of people who attend the organisation so that payments can be made. The NHS is not particularly good at handling multiple sources of data and coming up with analytical insight.

Reimagining the workforce around population needs

At the heart of the analysis was the shift from focusing on services to understanding the population's needs and delivering a better experience and outcome. Strasys took the leadership on a process of discovery and design, fueled by advanced analytics and decision intelligence.

Strasys analysed multiple sources of data, looking in particular at:

- the acuity (severity of illness) of the population
- how patients used the organisation currently

- where they accessed services (hospital or community)
- how well those services performed from a financial or performance perspective

For the first time, a clear picture of needs and wants emerged, versus what was currently provided. There was a realisation that everything Mid Cheshire was doing with the very best of intentions, was working very well in some cases, but in others, it was never going to work for the types of problems patients were dealing with.

Strasys identified the needs of the population, the cost to serve and how their behaviours are likely to change over the next few years. This enabled the board to stand up within the system and say

“we're prepared to give up whatever we need to give up, in pursuit of a better service for the population”.

Outcomes

The new strategy was then translated into an economic model and a sequence of projects to deliver the new strategy over a period of five years.

The result was:

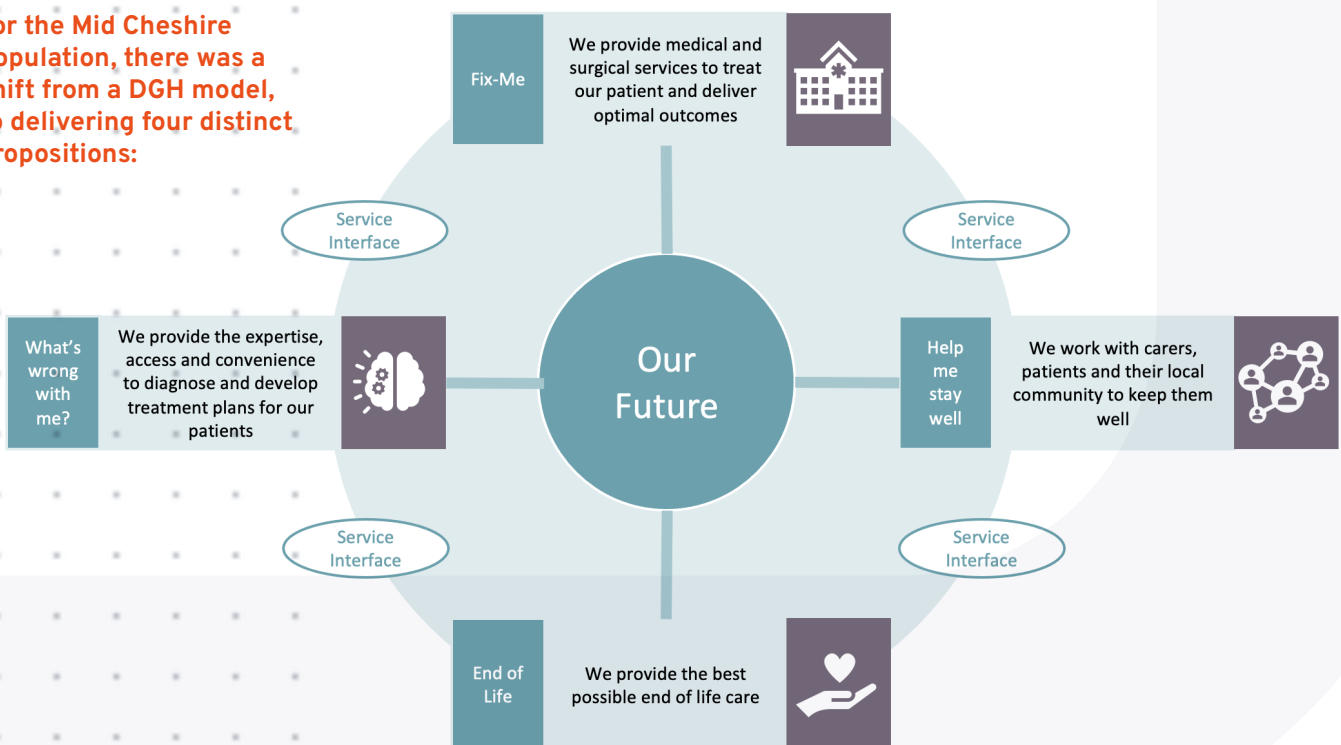
- A clear understanding of the population needs and behaviours
- Opportunities where the organisation can improve in delivering value and quality care
- Reimagining the Trust from being a hospital to being a care organisation
- Simplified transformation agenda making better use of limited resources
- A new narrative which enabled greater staff engagement and collaboration
- A restructuring of the organisation around the different patient needs
- Improved relationships with local stakeholders
- Agreement to move towards a Place agenda, which went out to public consultation for Cheshire East
- A re-energised executive team with a better understanding of their agenda and opportunities

Benefits delivered:

- A clear and better understanding of the patients served
- Simplified the change programme from 200+ initiatives to 12, saving a significant amount of resources
- Supported securing new build funding for £500m+ (strategy was key in developing the clinical perspective)
- Identified future savings of £20m+ by restructuring the business model
- Strategy adopted by the system as Place (consultation) with an agreement on reallocation of resources across the system



For the Mid Cheshire population, there was a shift from a DGH model, to delivering four distinct propositions:



Feedback

Some comments from Non-Executive Directors

Energising

The best discussion I have had so far in the NHS

Much of the material is close to publishable

Great to think bold

The opportunity to talk about the individual

Great to use data to drive ideas

Love the persona work

“This sort of analysis plays really well with those commissioners who may have understood the problem for a long time but felt unable to pull certain levers to do something about it.”

James Sumner, Former CE

“This has been the most different vision and strategy process that I have ever seen. They kept reminding us that whilst we’ve got operational pressures, this solution would solve them in the long term.”

Russ Favager, Finance Director and Deputy CEO

“I think what this strategy has taught me more than anything else is determination to get to the end game, clarity of purpose, clarity of vision and ultimately taking your staff and partners with you.”

Paul Newman, Ex Associate Director Communications and Engagement

Future

Mid Cheshire is developing a joint quality improvement methodology, a joint provision of workforce strategy and a joint community responsibility strategy. This negates the need to have five separate plans, ensuring try alignment across the system. It’s hugely exciting and a real test of strength.