SERVICE WORKS GLOBAL
PART OF ADDNODE GROUP

CASE STUDY

Cardiff University

Project: To implement a comprehensive facilities management software solution to manage reactive and planned maintenance within one of the UK's leading universities.

Objectives: Manage the maintenance of the complex and large estate, supporting a team of in-house and external contractors.

Results: Streamlined information and reporting processes, resulting in improved administration of maintenance management and enhanced performance.

Supporting Academic & Research Excellence

Recognised in independent government assessments as being one of Britain's leading teaching and research universities, Cardiff University is the largest provider of adult education in Wales. The internationally renowned University attracts students from across the globe, and with an academic community of 27,000 students and around 6,000 staff, it is the size of a small town. Located in Cardiff's civic centre, the University's buildings contain more than 400,000 square metres floor area, with a footprint stretching from the city centre to the healthcare schools on the Heath Park Campus to the North. The main campus is concentrated around Cathays Park, the conservation area at the heart of the city and many of the University buildings are historically listed.

Cardiff University's Estates Division is responsible for the management and condition of the University's estate, supporting the University and its community through effective facilities and maintenance management. It is responsible for maintaining more than 300 buildings, including specialist academic buildings such as research and medical laboratories, in addition to student accommodation which comprises 25 per cent of the University's property portfolio. Hard and soft maintenance work across the estate is carried out by the University's inhouse direct labour force of around 30 staff, which works alongside a broad range of third party contractors to undertake a range of FM activities including cleaning, maintenance and refurbishment.

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A Modern CMMS Solution for a Forward-Thinking Academic Institution

Since the early 1990's, the Estates team at Cardiff University had used a computerised maintenance management system (CMMS) to manage all facilities and maintenance activity. However, by 2009, the system had become outmoded and was failing to deliver the operational benefits required by the Estates team.

Jim Atkinson, Estates Manager, explains, "After more than 15 years of usage, we reached the point where our incumbent solution was no longer aligned with the scope or scale of our workload. The Estates Helpdesk at Cardiff University typically records and manages around 35,000 reactive maintenance events each year. With our previous CMMS system, this had to be controlled via an output of paper job tickets, and as you can imagine, the resulting paper trail became rather unwieldy. We realised that we needed a system that could streamline the reactive maintenance process and manage events accurately and effectively. This was one of the main drivers for us in deciding to implement a new, more comprehensive CMMS system."

Once it had made the decision to move to a new system, the University began a structured selection process to evaluate the FM software market. An initial shortlist of six suppliers was narrowed down to three potential vendors who were able to meet the University's list of detailed requirements. Jim Atkinson and his team then undertook reference site visits to view the shortlisted solutions in a live operational environment. Following a series of successful site visits, Cardiff University selected QFM from Service Works Global as Atkinson explains,

"The University had a fairly extensive and complex list of requirements and QFM was the only system that could fully demonstrate that it fulfilled all of our requirements in a similar environment. The software demonstrated its ability to operate effectively in a busy educational institution and our choice was clear. For us, the selection of QFM was a risk-free decision."

QFM was installed at Cardiff University in late 2009 and went live in March 2010. Transitioning systems can be a demanding exercise for any organisation, but with support from SWG, the process of moving from their incumbent system to QFM was a smooth one for Cardiff University. Atkinson says, "We were able to manage much of the system migration process in house. Service Works' professional services team provided us with timely assistance when required, to ensure that this complex process was seamless."

Enhanced Performance

Following a phased implementation, the University initially went live with QFM Helpdesk to manage service events. Jobs are reported to the helpdesk via telephone or email, details of which are then entered into QFM, prioritised and assigned to the most appropriate contractor. The system will also be used to manage planned preventative maintenance schedules.

In addition, QFM Mobile from SWG has recently been rolled out to the University's in-house contractors. QFM Mobile enables the Estates helpdesk to instantly dispatch work orders from QFM to a handheld device, allowing field-based engineers to update and manage details of the job on their mobile device, from notification through to completion, reducing the administrative load on the helpdesk.

Atkinson explains, "The direct labour team has recently been set up with QFM Mobile, so they can manage their workload and complete job details in real time, via QFM. Contractors no longer need to return to base to pick up jobs or to close them down, which is a much more efficient use of resource. Whilst we are still in the early stages, the reporting of work is already much better and we are confident that QFM Mobile will deliver greatly improved contractor performance.

"One of the key benefits for the University since installing QFM is the ability to see the 'bigger picture', as Jim Atkinson explains:

QFM has allowed us to re-examine all of our procedures and processes. In the past, we had to tweak the way that we worked to suit our old system. Because QFM is fully aligned with our working practices, we can now produce accurate statistics about how long it has taken to complete a job and use this information to drive key performance indicators."

Future Focus

The installation of QFM has already been so successful that Cardiff University is looking at ways to expand its use and functionality across the University.

Jim Atkinson comments, "We plan to extend QFM to external contractors and university staff, via the QFM Web application. This will provide contractors with remote web-based access to QFM, enabling them to log on to the system from anywhere, at any time, to manage their workloads. Similarly, management-level staff in the University's 27 academic schools will be granted self-service access to QFM Web, which will enable them to log maintenance jobs themselves, saving time and reducing the administrative load on the Estates helpdesk. They will be able to view progress of jobs via QFM, providing us with instant access to business-critical information and delivering a greater degree of transparency to the building user."

Atkinson concludes, "In a large and complex organisation like Cardiff University, access to accurate information is absolutely essential. The performance of the estate and its effect on the performance of the University and its staff and students are inextricably linked. QFM has provided the Estates Department with a valuable and accurate insight into our performance. We are now able to analyse and report upon FM data with a high degree of accuracy and use this information to drive performance and improve our speed of service. QFM has enabled us to be far more proactive in providing accurate information to the University, allowing us to raise our profile and demonstrating to students, teaching staff and the wider academic community the high standards to which the Estates Department is committed to providing.