



LIVERPOOL HEART & CHEST HOSPITAL 2018

a donorflex client case study

Conversation with Mary Liley, Head of Fundraising (June 19, 2018)

Please tell us a little about the Liverpool Heart & Chest Hospital Charity's mission

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital is the largest specialist centre for the treatment of complex heart and lung diseases in the UK.

We were the first hospital in the country to be given the outstanding status by the CQC.

We deal with about 115,000 patients throughout the country.

Our core area is normally Merseyside, Cheshire, North Wales, Isle of Man and Lancashire, which covers about 2.8m people.

But, because we are a specialist centre, we take patients from all over the UK and, in the last few months, we have become the only centre in the UK that undertakes robotic heart and lung surgery on one site.

The charity itself supports everything that the hospital does. We were absolutely key, for example, in getting the robotic. If it wasn't for the charitable support, we wouldn't have had a robot.

But there are also all sorts of other things that we do.

It doesn't have to be one of our key tenancies, the latest and the best. We also talk about extending the excellence, and what that means is that we make the hospital as warm and welcoming as we possibly can make it.

So that could be anything from the charity supporting the establishment of a coffee bar in the Outpatients department, the refurbishing of the patients' garden in the Intensive Care Unit, or even supporting Robert Owen House, which is our patients' accommodation unit for their families. Because, as I say, people come to us from all over the country now.

When you're going through a very complex operation, you need your loved ones nearby, and the charity supports that.

So, there are three elements. We also support finding tomorrow's cures today.

Research is vitally important to a place like this, because we are on the cutting edge and we're also such a large centre, which means that when we're undertaking research, it impacts directly almost immediately.

Sometimes, people can see research as very lab-based. But, actually, our research impacts directly into patient care.

How much do you need to raise each year?

Asking a hospital fundraiser how much they need to raise each year – and, I'm guessing, any fundraiser – is a bit like asking 'how long is a piece of string?'

It depends very much on what you're doing.

We might have a special project or campaigns that we're running. Or, indeed, we might be looking at particular research project.

On average, we look to raise about £1m a year. Now, a hospital like this is what's known as an umbrella charity. In other words, we have one charitable number, but sitting underneath that we have a number of funds and they could be related to special projects. They could be related to wards or departments.

What we have to do is make sure that, when we're running these things, the money that the donors are giving us are going to the right place. It's not just one big pot which we dip into to pay for what we need to do.

There are lots of different demands in a busy, leading hospital like this. As a charity, we need to be able to identify where the support is coming from to help them do these things.

What was the need you required to satisfy when you replaced your previous CRM system with donorflex?

I think there were a number of different reasons why we had to replace the system we had.

I am the first head of fundraising for Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital Charity, and they had run quite a nice 'bank and thank' operation until then.

But it was a shift change from reactive thankyou letters to proactive fundraising, and I needed a fundraising system to help me put those building blocks in place and support that structure, going forward.

So, I looked at the system that we had and there were all sorts of reasons why, unfortunately, that wasn't going to help us do it.

donorflex, to me, seemed to be able to help us meet our immediate needs, but also grow with us as we grew over the years.

How does donorflex fit in with your day-to-day operation and strategic needs?

One of the key things for donorflex, for me and how it helps us achieve what we need to achieve, is that it's aptly named. It is flexible.

We're an organisation that's changing. We're going from bank-and-thank to running multi-million pound campaigns. That needs a donor database that will help us manage that process. So, it's

everything from 'thankyou for your £10 donation' to developing that donor pipeline so that we can build a better relationship with our donors, we can cultivate our donors who are capable of giving more money and take that right the way through to the end.

We've noticed, over the last three years that we've been putting this project into place, our donations have gone up 54 per cent, and that's because donorflex enables us to build a relationship with people who are supporting us.

We can identify what makes them want to give to us.

We can respond accordingly.

We can build that into a pipeline for developing the relationship with them.

We can notify them when they want to come to events. If they like golf days, we can tell them. If they like choral society things, we can tell them.

But, also, we're able to develop that even further because of the biography things.

We can start to identify more things about them. It's not just they like going on walks. It's a deeper level of understanding. How they respond to us.

And it helps us to manage all of that knowing that, when we're going to plan things for the future, we're building it on sure data and not 'let's put our finger in the air and see how it goes'.

In terms of support, I know for a fact that if I ring donorflex and I've got a problem, somebody at the end of the phone will be able to help me. They won't tell me to go away and they'll come back to me, and they never do. They will help me, there and then.

I have rung donorflex at 7am – because I'm one of nature's disgusting early-risers – and somebody has answered the phone to help me. So, you can't ask any more than that.

They have never let me down in terms of support, and they have helped me develop donorflex in a way which will help me meet my strategic and operational needs. We work together, as a team.

At the moment, we're talking about integrating our donation entry into our Sage system, so that we can just upload. It means that we're not duplicating effort and double-entry, mitigating any kind of potential errors that could happen and, absolutely, at the end of the month, saving days of time reconciling the two.

I know that donorflex will help me do that, because they have done it in previous jobs that I've worked with. You can't ask for any more than that.