



## UC4 Relieves Growing Pains for NHS Shared Business Services

NHS Shared Business Services (SBS) was launched in 2005 as a 50-50 joint venture between the Department of Health and Xansa (acquired by Steria in 2007).

NHS Shared Business Services primarily provides finance, accounting and payroll services to support NHS Trusts, and also provides a number of value added services to enable trusts to have improved financial reporting systems.

NHS Shared Business Services already has over 100 clients supported by service centers in Leeds, Bristol and Hampshire, using the Oracle Financials 11i platform.

In addition to building shared services to support clients NHS SBS needed to develop and deploy a solution capable of supporting rapid business growth. As more NHS Trusts joined SBS, there was an increased demand on financial transaction processing, in turn leading to an increased IT workload. Integral to the success of NHS SBS is the ability to scale its operations to provide maximum service quality and value to its clients.

Period end close and month-end reporting are recurring peaks in accounting calendars that have to be completed by all Trusts to fixed timetables. At NHS SBS, a real advantage to managing the transaction processing during these peak times was to automate systems where possible.



### **Shared Business Services**

*"I am continually surprised by the depth of functionality available with UC4--it's difficult to find limitations."*

Dominick Smyth,  
Service Delivery Lead for NHS SBS

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NHS Shared Business Services Ltd.

Business/Industry: Finance/Health

Centres: Leeds/Bristol/Hampshire, United Kingdom

Webpage: [www.sbs.nhs.uk](http://www.sbs.nhs.uk)

# CASE STUDY

## Business Challenge

- Establish an Oracle Financials landscape that would scale with rapid business growth
- Accelerate delivery of reports to end user clients
- Optimized use of available IT systems resource

## UC4 Solution

- Automated execution of applications based on advanced business rules
- Out-of-the-box finance and accounting process templates Management and monitoring of end-to-end business processes
- Oracle E-Business Suite 11i certified interface
- Seamless integration between Oracle Financials, Oracle iProcurement and Oracle Order Management

## NHS Benefits

- Scalable business operation that has grown to support over 100 NHS Trusts
- Increased productivity in NHS SBS finance processing teams
- 30-40% savings in reconciliation processes
- Accurate and consistent month end close completed for all trusts every month

## Automate or Else

Manual interaction between people and systems needed to be automated wherever possible. The processing workload would have to make optimal use of available IT resources if customer Service Level Agreements were going to be met. The impact of files not being available for processing, decisions not being taken and other operating delays had to be minimized. Addressing these issues would allow NHS SBS to establish a scalable platform that would support delivery of its shared service offering to all NHS organizations.

Dominick Smyth, Service Delivery Lead for NHS SBS, picks up the story, "At NHS SBS, our goal is to deal with increasing volumes while maintaining efficiencies and delivering real value to our clients. We knew we would need some sort of automation tool if we were going to achieve this. We looked at the pinch points in our finance processes--notably around month-end--and figured that if we could automate these we could deliver real quality and efficiency for clients.

"We became aware of UC4 Software through the recommendation of one of our colleagues. UC4 offered out-of-the-box templates that could automate finance and accounting procedures. It also had certified interfaces into Oracle 11i and there were no other products doing this".

## Accelerating Month End Close

NHS SBS uses the UC4 platform to ensure all financial accounting rules and validations are performed throughout the month end close process. Thorough checks ensure that payment runs and journal imports are complete. Once the books have been closed and end users have logged out, the period end reconciliation and reporting jobs that need to run are initiated automatically.

There are over 80 individual steps that need to be executed in a precise sequence on behalf of each NHS Trust. The UC4 platform manages the exchange of data between steps, checks job outcomes and report content before deciding what to do next. If figures don't reconcile, staff are immediately alerted to investigate and resolve discrepancies.

“Automating month end close was key,” continues Dominick. “UC4 has provided us with other potential benefits--mainly to do with report delivery. Reconciliation reports now go straight to the General Ledger teams--they don't need to be manually requested.”

“I am continually surprised by the depth of functionality available with UC4--it's difficult to find limitations. The commitment from the UC4 team is very positive and they are committed to working with us and our partners to resolve issues”.

## Scaling New Heights

Having found an automated solution to the month end close challenge, NHS SBS has plans to extend use of the UC4 platform to tackle other issues. Options include scheduling daily report requests on behalf of clients, optimizing inbound file transfer received in multiple formats, overnight refreshes for the NHS SBS web portal and integration with Oracle Discoverer to deliver formatted reports.

“Now month end has been a success with our financial processing teams, we realize we've uncovered the tip of an iceberg,” concludes Dominick. “We're now starting to look at the bigger picture--process automation and reporting. There are many areas in which we can improve process and provide users with the tools and information they need to do their jobs. As we move forward, we expect that the UC4 platform will play a key role in supporting us to improve the quality of service we deliver to our clients.”