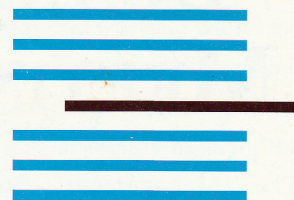


DATA NEWS



'PROFESSIONAL DATACARE - COMPUTING FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE'

ISSUE 6 - OCTOBER 1992

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROFESSIONAL DATACARE ORGANISATION

WELCOME TO MERSEY CUSTOMERS

Following protracted negotiations over a six month period, Professional Datacare have been successful in obtaining a substantial part of the payroll contract in the Mersey Region. The transfer of service is effective from December 1st 1992.

In addition to providing processing and support services for the Standard Payroll System, Professional Datacare are providing a total Facilities Management service for the UNIX version of the Direct Input of Pay System, the addition of POWERtec, the manpower system, will provide several Mersey customers with a completely integrated system. In recent times the integrated manpower and payroll system has been unsuccessfully attempted by other companies.

Professional Datacare and POWERtec will be the first to achieve an integrated system which includes the Standard Payroll System as the payroll option.

The new system will provide a single input facility for both payroll and manpower. This will avoid the duplication of input that is a feature of many of the existing systems. The integrated solution will also provide a facility through POWERtec to integrate a database updated from the payroll and ledger systems. POWERtec has a very powerful report writing facility which enables a multitude of reports

of different kinds to be produced at a wide range of locations. Such reports will enable manpower costs to be closely monitored, and compared against budget.

The Direct Input of Pay, and the POWERtec system operate under UNIX. As a new service Professional Datacare are providing solutions to customers, without the associated hassle of hardware purchase. For an annual fee, Professional Datacare will provide the hardware necessary to operate these solutions.

The hardware will be located at Professional Datacare in Prestwich. Professional Datacare will be responsible for the purchase, maintenance, and all other services associated with hardware implications of providing such a service. The customer receives a top quality service without worrying about the hardware implications. Professional Datacare can provide the complete service - as a Facilities Management Contractor, that's our business.

Preparations for the start date of the contract are well advanced. Everyone at Professional Datacare

has played a part in securing this new business.

Recently, management said "thank you", and as a token of appreciation a buffet lunch was provided for everyone.

The future expansion of the manpower and payroll integrated system is already taking place. There has been a great deal of serious interest shown, and future sales are expected to be substantial. One of the reasons for the present refurbishment of the building is the additional business coming later in the year from Mersey customers.

In the coming months all the necessary preparations will be completed in time for the big day. Professional Datacare are justifiably proud of their record for delivering high quality payroll services. The Mersey customers have already expressed their confidence in the ability of Professional Datacare to provide a quality service which represents the best value for money.

The acquisition of new business elsewhere is actively being pursued - again offering the manpower and payroll integrated solution. Indications are that there is a great deal of interest, particularly from Trusts for this solution. The close monitoring and control of manpower costs is a pre-requisite to providing high quality, and cost

effective healthcare. It looks as if Professional Datacare and POWERtec have combined to provide the sort of solution that much of the NHS has needed

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to Mersey
Customers

•

Board Meeting

•

File Transfer Facility of DIP

•

Smoking Cessation
Programme

•

Personal Computer (PC)
Training

•

Business as Usual

•

BS5750 Update

•

General Ledger User Support

•

Administration Team

•

FTAM

•

Mainframe Upgrade

•

BOARD MEETING

The Management Board of Professional Datacare held their regular Quarterly meeting on 30th September. Pictured from left to right are Tameside Health Authority Chairman Councillor J.B. Leck, Board Chairman Dr. S.D. Horsley, Professional Datacare Chief Executive Mr. R. Tunnicliffe, Professional Datacare Systems Development Manager Mr. P. Griffiths, Lancashire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Chairman Mr. A.G. Thompson and North Western Regional Health Authority Deputy Director of Finance Mr. D. Soper. Other Board members not in the photograph are District General



Manager Burnley Health Authority Mr. R. Crail, District General Manager Bolton Health Authority Mr. R. Sutherland, Regional Head of Personnel Mr. J. Lyons and Regional Director of Finance Mr. D. Edmundson.

FILE TRANSFER FACILITY (FTF) - THE NEW FRONTIER!

Some Direct Input of Pay (DIP) customers may have noticed a new addition to the 'family' recently. Following lengthy but nevertheless extensive system testing at a number of pilot sites throughout the Region, the new File Transfer Facility (FTF) option will be coming to a screen near you in the near future.

The File Transfer Facility is a new option which has been specifically designed to offer an additional facility to customers in the transfer of pay input data to the ICL mainframe computer at Professional Datacare. This means no more tapes to download - no more drivers to book so that the tape is despatched to the computer centre on time - the FTF facility provides the means whereby Professional Datacare takes care of the data transportation for each individual customer.

Little change in working practices is noticeable to the customer. The transfer process operates in one of three modes - "File Transfer", "Tape Transfer" or both simultaneously. This is defined by a preset system flag. If the "File Transfer" option is set, the only additional effort required by the operator is a phone call to Professional Datacare when the process has been run - the staff at Professional Datacare will take care of remaining tasks. Whilst data is being transferred, extensive error checking is carried out to ensure the integrity of the data being received. On completion, the data is transferred to the ICL mainframe computer ready for processing pay via the Standard Payroll System (SPS). The whole process takes place in a matter of minutes - in fact, the FTF process is faster than it takes for the mainframe computer to read the tape.

If however the "Tape Transfer" option is set, the process currently being used will operate, i.e. pay data will be dumped onto magnetic tape for later transportation to Professional Datacare.

It is anticipated that the FTF facility will be available to customers by December 1992.



Warren Ridings, Jeannette Domokos and Anne Hughes - The FTF Team at Professional Datacare. Carl Tillotson unfortunately unavailable for the photograph.

SMOKING CESSATION PROGRAMME

NATIONAL NO SMOKING DAY in March of this year saw the introduction of a "No Smoking" policy throughout the whole of Professional Datacare. Previously, smoking was only allowed within the Rest Room area of the Main Building.

Naturally, Chief Executive Ray Tunnicliffe recognised that some members of his staff would find the introduction of this policy extremely difficult to implement, so instructed that a Counselling

programme should be introduced to help those who wanted to give up smoking to realise their goal.

The programme commenced on 18th May and was held within the training facilities at Professional Datacare. Each hour long session was conducted by the Smoking Cessation Unit of Crumpsall Clinic and the programme commenced on a regular weekly basis for the first four weeks.

Remaining sessions were held on an approximate two weekly basis through to the 2nd September on dates to suit course participants. Of the relatively small number of students, a success rate of 38% was achieved - a result which is apparently slightly above average for a group of that size. Says course tutor Ruth Hurst "Stopping smoking takes time and it is not always easy. Those who did not achieve cessation on this occasion have received knowledge, challenged their attitudes and explored strategies for giving up. Ongoing support and individual counselling will be available from the Smoking Cessation Unit.

Professional Datacare has given every encouragement and support to members of staff wishing to give up smoking."

Our congratulations to those members of staff who took part in the programme and who managed to "kick the habit".

PERSONAL COMPUTER (PC) TRAINING

Now that all of the modifications to the buildings of Professional Datacare have been successfully completed (see article on centre pages) the Training Room has finally been kitted out to provide PC training. Initially, this equipment will be used to train Administration staff in the use of the wordprocessing package WordPerfect for Windows, which will enable a substantial improvement to be made in the presentation of documents emanating from Professional Datacare. Further training is also planned in the use of a spreadsheet package - either Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows or

Excel for Windows and will quickly be followed by a training programme for Harvard Graphics.

In addition to the implementation of this programme, the facilities are to be "opened up" to all customers, subject of course to availability. In addition to PCs, the facilities available also include:

- * White Boards
- * Flip charts
- * Overhead Projection Equipment
- * Data Show Equipment for use with PCs
- * Lecturers Table
- * Lectern



All this is available at a cost of £50.00 per half day session, or £100.00 for a full day. Costs are fully inclusive of all equipment, together with mid morning and mid afternoon refreshments.

Buffet lunches can also be arranged - prices available on application.

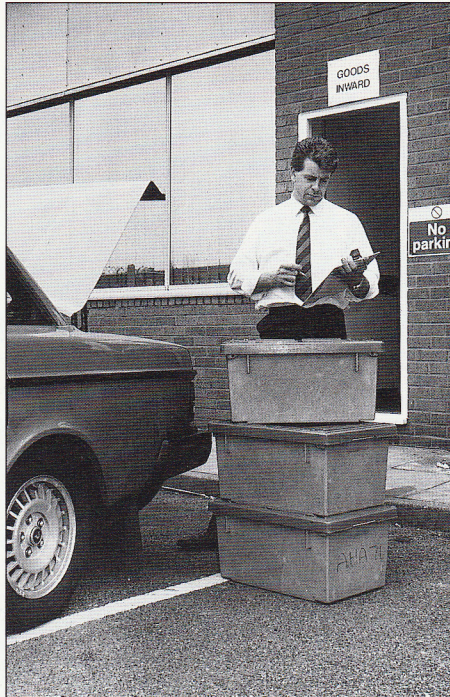
Interested? If so, contact John Stanfield or Stuart Edwards on 061-773-9211.

Professional Datacare has recently undertaken a major refurbishment of the "Main Building" of the organisation. The purpose behind the upgrade has been to provide a significant improvement in the services provided to our many existing customers throughout the North Western Regional Health Authority, and also to new customers coming "on stream" from Mersey Regional Health Authority. Throughout the remodelling exercise, work at the Computer Centre continued as usual, with only minor inconvenience being experienced by the workforce - and none at all to our customers - unless of course, you know differently!

DATA CONTROL

From the delivery and collection point of view, the most obvious improvement has been the relocation of the Data Control Office to the rear of the building. No longer will drivers have to run the gauntlet of the ever vigilant traffic wardens who seem to be continually prowling around in Prestwich. *Ample parking is now available at the rear of the premises and all deliveries and collections should now be effected by this route.*

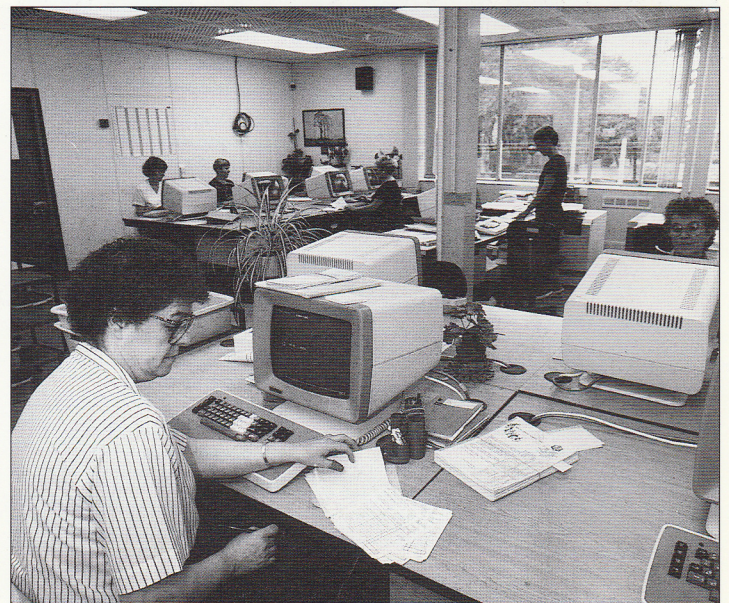
The photograph below shows Shift Leader Tony Lowe and other members of the day team working within the much improved Data Control office accommodation, and right the despatch/receipt area. Not shown is the additional office accommodation for the Installation Manager and for the two Production Controllers.



BUSINESS AS USUAL DURING THE MAJOR REFURBISHMENT

DATA PREPARATION

Data preparation work remains very much in evidence as a continuing requirement for our many customers even though more and more work is being undertaken directly onto remote terminals. The photograph below shows some of the merry band of workers in their new office. It was the first of the moves to be completed within the complex and was necessary to enable the whole shuffling exercise to commence and to provide enlarged accommodation for Data control.



HELP DESK

More Demands are being made on the Help Desk, with cries for help and assistance being received from North Western Region customers and an anticipated demand from Mersey customers. Thus at last the opportunity has been taken to enlarge office space for Help Desk staff and to enable new facilities to be introduced as requirements alter and increase. Pictured below is the Help desk Supervisor Tony Todd and his team, all of whom form the "front line" between Professional Datacare and the customer.



TECHNICAL SUPPORT

IT services provided by Professional Datacare has been much in evidence in recent years - and this interest is set to continue and gather pace as time progresses. In their old location, Technical Support was positively bursting at the seams, with for example, the DEC/VAX team accommodated remotely from the remainder of the Group. Much more suitable accommodation has now been provided, as will be seen from the photograph below, and anyone who has paid a recent visit to the Technical Support group will no doubt agree that there has been a significant improvement.



BS5750 UPDATE

Issue 5 of Datanews reported that it has been decided Professional Datacare is to seek BS5750 Registration in October 1993.

This may perhaps be seen as being a long time off, but in terms of what lies ahead, it can best be regarded as just around the corner! Work towards achieving this goal has now begun in earnest.

In the first instance an independent Consultancy - Selly Associates - was commissioned to produce an initial audit report on the organisation and make recommendations of tasks to be performed over the 17 month period to achieve accreditation. David Selley has also been retained to provide a monthly "watching brief" on progress made.

Secondly, Hugh Clark was contracted for a 3-month period to provide help in compiling the draft of the Quality Assurance Manual scheduled for completion by 28th August, and the Document Register, scheduled for completion by 30th October. Great strides were quickly made with both of these manuals. All 18 of the policy areas of the Quality Assurance manual, with topics ranging from "Process Control" and "Areas of Management Responsibility" through to "Training" and "Statistical Techniques" were completed through to Draft "A" status in advance of the target date and work on the Document Register Manual has so far yielded

approximately 128 individual documents.

Given Hugh's background of 27 years in the British Army latterly as a Warrant Officer, perhaps predictably towards the end of his tenure with Professional Datacare he rejoiced in the sobriquet of "Sergeant Bilko"! Our thanks to Hugh for giving us such a good start.

The next major area of the journey towards BS5750 is to address the Procedures Manual. Work on this Manual will inevitably mean hard work and co-operation of all members of staff at Professional Datacare.

To help focus on this requirement, and to stress the importance of the tasks ahead, David Selley presented Quality Assurance training sessions, each lasting two hours, to all members of staff, on 23rd and 24th September, with further sessions arranged for those who were working night shift, or who were on holiday or sick. All staff within Professional Datacare are now fully aware of what is required of them on an individual as well as on a collective basis. Obviously, much hard work lies ahead, but hopefully, the satisfaction of accreditation at the end of the road.

As was stated in Issue 5 of Datanews "The aim is to improve the quality of the services provided by Professional Datacare, and to demonstrate that there is commitment throughout the organisation to achieving consistently better quality".

GENERAL LEDGER USER SUPPORT

The second phase of implementation of the Computer Associates Masterpiece General Ledger system was completed in December 1991. To ensure that customer Districts and Trusts throughout NWRHA receive sufficient support in using the system as efficiently as possible, and to its full capabilities, Professional Datacare have appointed two accountants to form the General Ledger User Support Team. These accountants are your District / Trust representatives within Professional Datacare. David Speare, with 21 years NHS experience, will be well known to users, having been involved with the system since its first introduction

in 1988. He was part of the team which evaluated the various options available prior to implementation, and has subsequently provided both technical and user support.

Paul Richardson was previously with Computer Associates for three years. His work during that time included training staff from around the region as part of the implementation of Phase II. His experience of Masterpiece goes back to 1983, when he was recruited by West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive to initially choose and then implement the package. The team is making an introductory visit to each District from Trust; this programme will be completed during October.

From 1st September 1992, David and Paul are available to provide advice, help and training. Some of the training will be organised as a formal programme and will be presented in Professional Datacare's newly refurbished Training Facilities (see Issue 5); more specific training may be given at customer sites. Requests for advice and help should initially be made via the Help Desk at Professional Datacare.

The team will also service the newly established Financial Systems User Group. This Group, consisting of a senior finance representative from each customer will determine priorities for further development of the system.



David Speare and Paul Richardson - Systems Support Consultants, Financial Systems

NEW MEMBERS OF STAFF

Professional Datacare welcome the following new members of staff:

PAUL STREET -

Project Leader, Patient Administration Systems, commenced 3rd August.

PAUL RICHARDSON -

System Support Consultant, Financial Systems, commenced 10th August.

MISS AZRA RAFIQ -

Administration Assistant/Work Processor Operator, Administration Department, commenced 14th September.

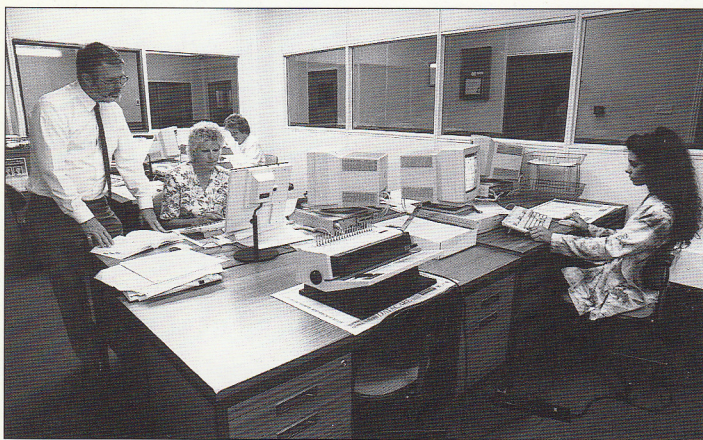
HARI GOHIL -

ICL TPMS Specialist, Technical Support Department, commenced 10th October

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

One of the consequences of the second refurbishment exercise to the "main" building of Professional Datacare described in outline on the centre pages of this edition of Datanews, has been to create an employee and visitors only entrance and reception area.

To improve visitors reception and to provide administrative support with much needed additional accommodation, the area which was previously used as the Reception/Administration area will in future, be a Visitor Reception only, and the additional accommodation pictured below will house the Administration Support Team.



Administration Office



Reception

The team provides a range of support services for the establishment as a whole:

- Administrative services from 8 a.m. through to 8.15 p.m. each day, Monday to Friday.
- Document production and reproduction, with all customer related documents being produced in the newly created House Style. This is a very important feature in the standardisation of customer documentation and is particularly relevant in the pursuit of BS5750 accreditation.
- Telephone and switchboard tasks, which will be improved in the near future with the introduction of a new 'Meridian' exchange.
- Reception duties. These are handled on a rota basis, enabling each member of the team to handle a full spread of work.
- General clerical and administrative services for a total staff complement of 130.



Joyce McMinn

Joyce has over 18 years service with the North Western Regional Health Authority and has worked in a variety of roles in numerous locations. She came to Professional Datacare in 1988 and has since proved to be the "Major Domo" of the team - relied upon by staff at all levels to be the source of all information! Her typing skill level is the talk of the Department!



Marjorie Holland

With 18 years experience with Professional Datacare, Marjorie is the longest serving member of the team. She commenced work with the Data Preparation Section of the Operations Department, but transferred to Administration some 2 years ago. Marjorie's keyboard skills are of the highest level, with excellent accuracy.



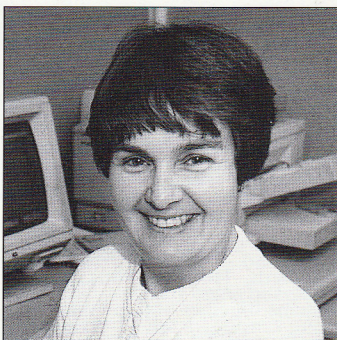
Susan Roberts

Susan has also been with Professional Datacare for approximately 6 years, and she too moved from Data Preparation to the Administration Department 2 years ago. Susan's sharp wit and humour has certainly brightened up the department and the Project Manager's days.



Carol Mann

Carol has been with Professional Datacare for approximately 6 years, in the first instance as a Data Preparation Operator. She transferred to Administration in January of this year. Visitors and telephone callers alike will quickly discern that Carol does not hail from the northwest region of the country, but she assures all of her work colleagues that she has now settled down in the "frozen north".



Glensy Brady

Glensy provides the evening cover on Reception, working from 4.45pm to 8.15 Monday through to Friday inclusive. Glensy has been with Professional Datacare for 7 years, starting her employment with Data Preparation and transferring to Administration in December of last year.



Azra Rafiq

Azra is very much the newcomer to the team, having only commenced with Professional Datacare on 14th September. No doubt she will soon find her feet! Azra seems quiet at the moment - but perhaps she's wondering what she's entered into! Employees at Gateway House will probably recognise her from her 18 months within Supplies Dept.

MOVING TOWARDS OPEN SYSTEMS

The Technical Services Department of Professional Datacare is currently involved in a number of projects to transfer data between different manufacturer's hardware over the North Western Regional Health Authority (NWRHA) network, and eliminate the practice of data transfer by tape. These projects are part of a general strategy to move towards an open systems network.

The DEC and ICL teams have nearly implemented a project to transfer Korner Aggregated Returns System (KARS) data, Korner Episodic System (KES) data and Contract Minimum Data Set (CMDS) between the PAS VAXes based within each District Health Authority and the ICL mainframe at Prestwich. Data transfer has been achieved using a product called FTAM (File Transfer Access and Management) which is an Open Systems Interconnection

(OSI) product. The benefits of data transfer over the network include elimination of costs and time involved in transferring each District Health Authority's data by tape, reduced risk of error as tape may be unreadable, together with utilisation of the NWRHA network during quieter overnight periods.

The data is extracted from the PAS system, typically running on a VAX 6310 processor, then procedures written by the DEC team are invoked to transfer the data to the ICL mainframe at Prestwich. The data is then fed into the PRIDE management information system, consisting of Ingres database software.



Maggie Parker and Trevor Gunshon

File transfer between two different types of hardware involves getting two dissimilar systems to communicate via a common protocol, where a protocol is a set of operational rules of communication. FTAM was chosen as the method for file transfer because it uses protocols that conform to the OSI Standards. However, linking two systems together and invoking file transfer using FTAM, does not mean that the two systems will automatically communicate with each other, as was found from experience! Considerable effort was required in obtaining compatible versions of software, hassling

suppliers, and monitoring data transfers with a LAN analyser before the DEC and ICL systems could be configured correctly to achieve successful data transfer. Further work was required to ensure that data sent from the VAX ended up in the correct format on the ICL mainframe computer. Eventually, the transfer of KARS, KES and CMDS data was piloted at Blackburn Health Authority for about three months, before rolling out the procedures to 17 other districts. Data transfer using FTAM is also being tested between a variety of computer systems including ICL VME, DEC VMS, various Unix hosts and PCs. Future projects that involve further migration towards open systems are the implementation of X400 mail across the NWRHA during 1992/94 and the commencement of testing of VTP Forms made early in 1993.

Acknowledgements:

Acknowledgements for contributions to this issue of DATANEWS go to:

**MAGGIE PARKER AND
TREVOR GUNSHON**

of Technical Services

•
JOHN STANFIELD

Business Manager

•
CARL TILLOTSON

of CH/IPS

•
PAUL RICHARDSON

of Financial Systems

•
DAVID SPEIGHT

Operations Manager

EVEN BETTER SERVICE - FOR NO ADDITIONAL COST!

It has been possible to improve our mainframe services to customers without any additional cost. This is another example of how Professional Datacare are constantly striving to achieve the best value for money services to our customers.

An agreement has recently been concluded with ICL which will allow a major hardware upgrade to the existing ICL configuration to provide facilities for new systems and an improvement in the quality of the printed output.

Those upgrades and their uses are as follows:

- **2 disc units - to support a new version of Child Health software and to support the introduction of the Outpatient and Waiting List service.**
- **Enhancement of the mainframe memory to support all on-line applications and to improve access and response times.**
- **Installation of a laser printing system to produce letter quality output for all normal single and multi-part listings (not pre-printed documents) In order to simplify processing and for filing of output, continuous stationery (plain white) will continue to be used.**
- **The replacement of four existing magnetic tape decks by four high performance cartridge tape units. These units, which will copy the equivalent of 25 full magnetic tapes are also many times faster than conventional magnetic tape units. The use of cartridge tapes will reduce operator time taken for security copying, will facilitate easier movement to Disaster Recovery Stores and in the event of the mainframe system having to be recreated on another computer, allow the re-creation time to be significantly reduced.**
- **DRS6000 Model 630 system to support the new on-line Payroll Enquiry System to be used by most regional customers.**