

Musgrove Park enjoys 100 per cent more storage compared to conventional shelving systems

Two into one will go. When the project team at Musgrove Park Hospital were faced with the conundrum of moving into a new department where the storage room could not accommodate the anticipated increased capacity, it solved the problem with Hupfer's Easy Rider system.

Outlining the issues, Mark Morley, sterile services manager at Somerset NHS Foundation Trust's Musgrove Park Hospital, explains: "We were due to move into the new department in December 2022. In terms of planning the storage we wanted to make the most of the footprint we had in sterilisation. We wanted each container to have its own, individual location.

"Previously, we had the typical problems of other departments with traditional shelving. We've used sterilisation containers for a long time. Containers were often stacked on top of each other, so it was sometimes difficult to locate the sets you wanted, and it was difficult to stock rotate. There can be instrument damage through overuse. We do have some wrapped sets, but those are not stacked on top of each other.

"In our heads, we wanted to move to each container having its own location. We wanted to maximise the space. We needed to work on maximum reachable height. There's a new surgical build scheduled in two or three years which will result in an increased number of instrument sets. So, we needed capacity for both our current sets and to accommodate this future growth."

Mark says: "Basically, we were told this is the space, the footprint. We had to find a way to see how many sets we could fit in. We needed to know what where the best options out there.

"It came down to three companies at the final selection, but only Hupfer offered a solution that met our immediate requirements and was future-proof - able to take the extra instrument sets when the new surgical build comes online.

"We have approximately 700 sets at present in our current storeroom, With the new surgical build we'll have at least 1,500 sets. The Hupfer system enables us to accommodate 1,560 sets."

Outlining the build and the benefits, Mark explains: "John Trotman, one of our project managers, worked with Neil Bryan, Hupfer's business development

manager, and Kier, our main contractor. Neil came to site during the 'hard hat' days, before the storage room was completed to get a 'feel' for the space. He suggested relocating the computer point from near the door to an alternative location, which allowed us to increase the amount of shelving. It enabled us to make the most of the available space. That was typical of the advice and consultation he offered.

"I was a bit apprehensive at first about using Hupfer, partly because I was unsure if our colleagues would be able to move the shelving. But very early on it was apparent that even the smallest colleague can easily move the shelving. In fact, Neil reassured us that the more that's on the easier it is to move.

"You can actually move it with one hand - virtually one finger. It runs so smoothly and easily."

Mark says: "The fact that the system does not secure into the floor makes it easy to clean and there are no dirt traps. This was a key factor for infection prevention and control. The system is well made - that's one of its strengths. Sets have individual locations. It's not complicated to move things around to accommodate different sizes. I like the simplicity of the whole thing.

"By comparison, fixed shelving is very awkward. Hupfer is all low maintenance. It's so easy. It's just the full package really.

"We've put letters and locations on the end of the shelving to identify what's on each row. One of our clinicians said 'It's amazing for them.' Orthopaedic teams, who are based nearby, find it easy to locate their sets."

There's more to Musgrove Park's Hupfer solution, as Mark explains: "In the clean room we also have 12 height-adjustable packing stations from Hupfer, with individual storage slots for whatever the technicians want to use.

"Our previous tables were bigger, but we could not have accommodated the number we need in the available space. As with the shelving, the packing tables are well made.

"We also have some Hupfer UN-approved trolleys. We specified they should be UN-approved and able to go through our trolley washer. The wheels on the Hupfer trolley are easy to clean.

"We initially chose ones which are quite small as we wanted to ensure that all members of staff could move them. We're now looking to add some larger capacity trolleys too.

“When the new surgical build comes on line, the smaller trolleys will move to there and we’ll take on the larger capacity trolleys. We’ll add more Hupfer trolleys as we phase out the old ones we currently have, replacing them with Hupfer’s larger capacity model.

“The trolleys have a dual connection towing eye, so they can be moved by our electric tug or easily relocated using our in-department MasterMover (pedestrian operated electric tug). The electric tug takes the trolleys to day surgery and maternity.”

Equally enthusiastic about the storage room solution, Vicky Smith, deputy sterile services manager, says: “The storeroom is far more user-friendly than before. It’s easy to adapt the shelving for different sizes of containers and a lot safer in terms of manual handling if we want to make changes. It’s so light and easy to move. We can segregate it by different specialities.

“Theatres and our team find it a lot quicker in a trauma situation. Theatre staff are really happy. The height is often mentioned as a benefit when they’re in a rush, in a trauma situation.”

Vicky says: “In terms of the packing stations, we have staff of different heights and the tables being adjustable makes it user-friendly. There’s a wide range of adjustment. They’re easy to use, well made, solid and robust.

“Neil has been brilliant. We’ve had the benefit of Neil’s experience and ideas. The hours he put in and kept up us updated throughout the project. We had regular meetings to review. CAD (computer aided design) made it simple to design to achieve the optimum solution for us.”

Demonstrating the ease with which the shelving systems can be moved, Ali Withers, sterile services technician, explained: “It’s effortless to move and now so well organised. The difference is huge. It was difficult to move before. Now it’s so easy and light to move. You can move it with just one hand.

“It’s so easy to identify which set is which,” adds Ali. “They all have their own location. The ability to have the sets higher means there’s not so much bending. It’s efficient, effective. It looks nice too. In fact, just by looking at it you can see it’s a well organised system.”

In the clean room, Graham Kimber, senior training officer and internal auditor, says: “The Hupfer packing tables are easy to adjust. It saves back problems - although I don’t have an issue.

“The storage room shelving’s ideal. It’s very good. Space saving. You can easily see where everything is. Plus, there’s room to expand. Space was always an issue before. Stock rotation was always difficult when you were having to move lots of containers to get to a certain one.

“That’s all been overcome now. It’s a benefit for health and safety too. Plus, time saving. You’re moving just one thing, instead of five.”

Looking at the equipment in more detail, Hupfer’s Easy Rider system is an ideal solution when storage capacity has to be increased but space is limited. As it eliminates the need for redundant aisles, the Easy Rider system can increase the capacity of storage rooms by up to 100 per cent compared to conventional shelving systems.

All Hupfer Norm shelving units can also be attached for storing a wide variety of goods. The Easy Rider systems for containers or baskets, alongside their insertion systems, are specially designed for efficient, space-saving storage of containers or Hupfer sterile goods baskets in StU and ISO formats.

Hupfer’s packing and work tables are completely made of stainless steel and come with either height-adjustable screw feet or in a mobile version with castors. While electrohydraulic height adjustment at the touch of a button is available, Musgrove Park chose the manual height adjustment option, operated by a screw handle.

Tops and bases in StU or ISO sizes can be individually equipped with baskets, shelves and many other accessories. This enables essential work equipment to be clearly sorted and within easy reach at all times.

Easy to manoeuvre, Hupfer’s sturdy transport trolleys have a hygienically fully welded stainless steel body with no undercuts. The enclosed trolleys are an ideal solution for containers, baskets and sterile supplies when being transported or stored.

“We’re there to improve the workflow,” explains Neil Bryan, Hupfer’s business development manager. “Mark said that with the new surgical centre coming on board there would be additional sets, so additional space will be required. On the same footprint, a static system would only be able to accommodate 766 containers - and to achieve that you’d have to stack them eight containers high.

“In the same space the Easy Rider system will accommodate 1,566 containers. The system will hold 12 shelves if required. And you can easily adjust the shelves to accommodate different size containers.

“When the tender came out, we realised they needed a comprehensive solution providing. I had a walk-through of the site after looking at the plans. Due to the requirements and the scale of the build, rather than the order be delivered at first to our UK distribution facility, I felt it would be better to deliver direct from the production facility to the hospital.

“I decided that the best approach would be to project manage the scheme. This ensured that we designed, delivered and correctly installed to ensure complete customer satisfaction. The installation was conducted on a timescale to meet the customer’s requirements, with an ergonomic solution that improves workflow.

Neil says: “In the previous storage room, sets were stacked on top of one another and were not being rotated. This can lead to overuse, with resultant damage that incurs repair costs.

“The Hupfer solution is a free-standing system. It’s not drilled into the floor and there are no dirt or dust traps. It’s an easy to clean ergonomic system.

“Hupfer has a checklist. When we design a new department, Hupfer asks some key questions, such as: What’s the number of sets? Do you store in categories/type of sets? Are your instruments containerised or wrapped, or a mixture of both? How are they transported?

“You can design your own solution using the Hupfer checklist. Every item has a specification sheet. Our CAD system is a great design tool. It will produce the most cost-effective solution and maximise the use of space. The solution is quality design, that’s bespoke, built to suit your requirements.”

“As well as the Easy Rider storage solution we provided height adjustable packing tables and trolleys,” says Neil. “Hupfer’s trolleys UN designed and certified as standard. They’re tested to 435kg - far more than people will ever use. Musgrove Park also has other stainless steel hardware, together with bunded chemical storage cabinets and an instrument cabinet.”

In summary, Mark adds: “Neil has been very supportive and there’s been good communication throughout. No one has a problem. The shelving system’s so easy to move. The storage area has been a great positive for the whole ‘new department’ experience.

“It was all time critical, so that the surgical build can start as planned. Where sterile services were located is part of where the footprint for the new surgical centre will be. It was all delivered on time and on plan. Due to some issues which we had onsite, Hupfer stored the components until we were ready for the installation. Their team handled the installation. They put it all together over a few days.

“At the outset, we asked: what are the best options? Which system offers the best storage capacity and is easy to use?

“The whole experience of working with Hupfer for Vicky and myself has all been very good. I’d recommend Hupfer to anyone.

For further information, call Hupfer on 0151 549 1010, email NeilB@HupferMedical.com or visit www.hupfer.com/en/