

TAKING CONTROL TO OPTIMISE HEALTHCARE BUILDING EFFICIENCY

Sophisticated and fully integrated building management solutions can help hospitals and other health-related facilities to save energy and meet sustainability targets, says Priva Managing Director Anders Norén.

Comprehensive management

Whatever your view on the future of both the public and private sectors, it would be fair to say that these are eventful days indeed for healthcare professionals. In the post-2008 recession climate, there is a renewed focus on cost-reduction and operational efficiency over both the short- and long-term. Simultaneously, governments throughout Europe are in the process of implementing demanding new energy usage targets as part of an accelerated effort to cut carbon emissions.

Inevitably given its size and scope, the healthcare sector is integral to many of these programmes. A look at the situation in the UK is illustrative, where the NHS Estates Efficiency programme is helping the state healthcare provider to meet a necessary overall reduction in carbon emissions of 34% compared to 1990 levels by 2020. In a broader long-term context, hospitals will be expected to make a significant contribution to the Climate Change Act's requirement of an 80% drop in carbon emissions by 2050 (again, when compared to 1990 levels).

With fiscal tightening continuing to impact upon planning, the onus is on hospital managers to ensure efficiency at every single level of their operations. In terms of core technology this has already manifested itself in a number of commonplace changes during the last 5-10 years - for example, the switch-over from legacy lighting to LED systems, next generation fluorescents, or even the introduction of more efficient heating systems. But increasingly there is an awareness that only an entirely holistic approach can deliver the greatest possible efficiencies - and that calls for the introduction of building-wide management and control systems.

We are talking here about technology that allows technical staff to adjust and control every element of the healthcare environment, including temperature, lighting, humidity and CO2 content. Quite apart from their role in helping hospitals to meet energy- and cost-reduction targets, these solutions can also allow indoor conditions to be optimised more effectively than ever before. This also resonates with the growing body of research indicating that a healthy indoor climate and comfort level are fundamental to the recovery process.

In recent years there has been a steady expansion of the building controls technology sector as operational managers at civic buildings, hotels and other commercial buildings have become more willing to assign funds to integrated control systems. With a heritage that stretches back more than 50 years, Priva is a long-term leading player in this sector and is therefore well-placed to chart the growth in demand - not least from the global healthcare sector.

Our emphasis is on delivering both individual products and complete intelligent building management systems that can allow healthcare premises to take control of their environments. This is delivered through a substantial and expanding range of hardware and software solutions that have been installed at hospitals in the UK, mainland Europe and beyond.



Control made simple

For example, the combination of the Priva Blue ID hardware product and latest Top Control 8 control software allows staff to control and monitor installed systems and applications to ensure the climate is optimised right down to the level of individual operating theatres and wards. Meanwhile, the reliance of Priva Blue ID's message traffic on IP technology enables access to the system any time, anywhere via the Internet, thereby ensuring the greatest flexibility of control.

Also of note is the Priva Blue ID 2-wire network technology, which makes it possible to carry IP (Internet Protocol) using any single twisted-pair communication cable. While this gives hospitals a freer hand in specifying IP infrastructures for new facilities, it also means that existing two-wire cabling can be used in renovation projects - paving the way for substantial cost-savings.

Another notable part of the current range, the Priva Top Integration platform, allows the user to display at-a-glance knowledge about climate control, lighting, energy management, security, fire safety and more from a single screen. Then, with a single mouse-click, comprehensive information can be pulled up about each individual system.



'Complex building management made simple' is our watchword, and will remain so. With the number of

well-trained measurement and control technicians continuing to decline, the ease of use perspective is crucial; hence why, for example, we have included as much domain-specific knowledge as possible in Blue ID and Top Control8.

In March the NHS is drawing attention to the improvement of social, environmental and economic outcomes via best practices at 'Sustainability Day' roadshows throughout the UK. Energy and cost efficiency are sure to be recurring themes, particularly in light of ongoing economic pressures. In this context, overall building management technology is destined to become even more critical to delivering results in the next few years - so the quicker that all stakeholders can engage with the opportunities it presents, the better the outcome for the facilities and the patients they serve is likely to be.

ANY QUESTIONS?

We can tell you all about healthcare building efficiency!



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