



Enhancing the Patient Experience for Mater Misericordiae University Hospital with Award-Winning Soft Services



CHALLENGE

Mater Misericordiae University Hospital (MMUH), one of the largest Level 4 Acute Teaching Hospitals teaching hospitals in Dublin, wanted to enhance its entire cleaning operation to ensure that its patient care standards remained optimal. Given the potential for healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs) in all medical facilities, maintaining a low-risk factor and further strengthening the patient experience were the client's core strategic priorities.

In 2014, ABM was tasked to support these goals by delivering essential cleaning and support services throughout the entire campus. Through continuous improvement and collaboration, ABM sought to strengthen long-term operational capabilities for MMUH. This included managing the key relationships with the cleaning operatives' union, developing a strong working culture, increasing the staff retention rate, and ensuring that services and equipment were always industry standard.

As the client emphasised the importance of consistently high operational standards, the mobilisation process needed to reflect the requirements of a major teaching hospital. Similarly, service implementation had to be minimally disruptive due to fast-paced and delicate nature of healthcare delivery.

SOLUTION

ABM's mobilisation teams collaborated with MMUH at all stages to ensure a seamless implementation of services. Regular communication and cooperation were essential, both to understand MMUH's requirements in-depth and determine an effective mobilisation strategy.

Throughout this process, building a productive relationship with the staff unions was crucial to MMUH's long-term goal of enhanced patient care. By demonstrating its commitment to collaboration, improving staff working conditions, and providing gainful career development for high-performing staff, ABM was successful in developing these strategically important relationships.

"I cannot express how fortunate we have been to work with [ABM] in the past 8 years. The commitment and drive both from senior management and the onsite managers and supervisors down to each and every hygiene operative has been exceptional."

*— Kathleen Whelan,
Head of General
Services in MMUH*

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ABM transitioned the hospital's on-site team into one composed of predominantly by full-time staff. This greatly strengthened the working culture across the operational teams, which also helped to develop working relationships with the hospital's clinical staff.

To support the client's long-term operation and deliver effective cleaning services, ABM deployed many experienced specialists and subject matter experts that were familiar with the healthcare sector. This ensured the client was well-positioned to enhance its patient care, now that ABM's team had additional training and frontline managerial support. As a result, the hospital's on-site team has grown to include over 200 staff members.

To support this further, ABM established a consistent rostering pattern, so that individual teams were embedded within specific wards as a standard workforce management practise. This allowed teams to focus on specific areas over long-term periods. This significantly increased their productivity through greater independence.

As a result, MMUH's cleaning operation has won consecutive Gold Stars in the IASI (Irish Accommodation Services Institute) awards for its high standard of service delivery.

In addition to industry-leading and often award-winning services, ABM trained its on-site teams to include cleaning of patient equipment as part of their daily tasks. This includes interacting with the patient directly and ensuring that medical equipment was disinfected with UV rays, including ICU wards and surgery theatres. This was critically important for helping MMUH reduce the risk of HCAs developing in the hospital's wards. This was demonstrated further by the hospital's exceptional HIQA (Health Information and Quality Authority) audit scores.

Moreover, ABM has been successful in developing teams that can operate with increased agility and proactivity, which has become a standard training practise. For example, during the COVID pandemic, which was a particularly challenging time, ABM's operational and supervisory teams took it upon themselves – without any expectations to do so – to set up temporary accommodation on-site. This ensured that they were available at a moment's notice. As a result, post pandemic when the new Rock Wing was being officially opened by Leo Varadkar, Taoiseach of Ireland, our project team led by Gabby Bataila was invited to the ceremony and had a personal audience with the Taoiseach.

Since 2014, MMUH's cleaning operation has been successfully transformed by ABM's team, ensuring the hospital's high patient care standards were maintained and enhanced even further. Moreover, since 2019, ABM's operational cleaning methods took significant strides to support additional client requirements, which provided a refined set of cleaning methods, equipment, and training.

BENEFITS

- **Highly efficient operation:** ABM was able to transition its cleaning operation into a predominantly full-time workforce. This has enabled greater task ownership amongst teams, greater independence, and increased productivity.
- **Flexible and adaptive operation:** ABM, in collaboration with MMUH, was able to train and grow a highly flexible operation that has been able to adapt, organise, and deliver services according to the client's short and long-term requirements.
- **High staff retention:** ABM has significantly reduced staff turnover through a series of operational improvements, including additional training, gainful career advancement, and a strong working culture. As a result, the client experienced a cleaner, safer hospital.
- **Safe, clean patient zones:** The hospital's patient zones, including ICUs, surgery theatres, and patient rooms, are cleaner, more orderly, and at lower risk of HCAs.

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Similarly, clinical staff are supported with disinfected medical equipment within the patient zones.

- **Award-winning services:** MMUH's operation has won consecutive Gold Stars in the IASI (Irish Accommodation Services Institute) awards due to consistently high standards of service delivery.
- **Gainful staff advancement:** ABM has been able to provide long-term career development opportunities for team members, which has supported the client with experienced staff who have taken on leadership roles.
- **Significantly reduced costs:** Since partnering with ABM, MMUH has been able to reduce its costs due to increased efficiencies and streamlined supply chains.
- **Effective mobilisation plan:** ABM's cleaning operation has been able to deliver effective services with minimal to no disruption for the client. This process was essential in providing seamless implementation of services during a particularly challenging time for the hospital.
- **Positive union relationships:** Having demonstrated a long-term commitment to advancing staff working conditions, enhancing patient care, and maintaining transparency between stakeholders, ABM has strengthened its relationship with their team's union.
- **Consultative partnership:** ABM has been successful in helping MMUH navigate complex regulations pertaining to healthcare delivery and remain compliant with wider HSE (Health Service Executive) policies.
- **Access to ABM's network:** MMUH has been able to access and leverage ABM's wider network of specialists and SMEs to improve its operational capabilities.
- **Regular audit success:** MMUH routinely passed its HIQA (Health Information and Quality Authority) audits with exceptionally high scores.
- **Ward-based team delegation:** ABM implemented a consistent roster pattern that ensured teams were embedded within specific wards. This became the norm across the hospital, which enabled staff to take greater ownership of their respective tasks and cultivate productive working relationships.