

Steria secures £26.7m contract to provide joined-up IT services for The Northern Ireland Health Service

Submitted by: Pleon

Thursday, 30 October 2003

30 October 2003 - The Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland has awarded a 10 year £26.7 million contract to Steria to link up all Healthcare organisations in Northern Ireland. At its heart is a new Health and Care Number system that allows nearly 400 organisations to share patient demographic information appropriately between one another. The implementation of the Health and Care Number and the establishment of a secure means of sharing information electronically will benefit patients, clients and staff. This initiative is broadly similar to other healthcare ICT initiatives in England and Wales.

The contract also includes a major ICT modernisation programme for GP practices, connecting 350 surgeries electronically into the healthcare community and providing all with secure email, Internet and electronic inter-system connection.

This is the first time a healthcare community as large as Northern Ireland has been inter-connected in this way. It is also planned to link Northern Ireland to similar systems in Scotland, England and Wales when they are in place.

In supporting this announcement the Health Minister Angela Smith said: "This is the most significant Information Communication Technology (ICT) investment for health and care to date in Northern Ireland.

The award of this contract will create the necessary infrastructure to support the successful implementation of the HPSS ICT programme and will result in a broad range of direct and indirect benefits to patients, clients and staff."

This initiative is the foundation stone for joined-up healthcare in Northern Ireland, improved use of resources and ultimately better patient care. The Health & Care Number prevents duplication of patient identities and reduces the administrative effort needed for every health provider organisation to maintain separate health records. It also, for the first time, provides the potential for healthcare professionals to have a comprehensive view of all their patients' records and health history.

The managed service that Steria provides will run over an encrypted Virtual Private Network (VPN) ensuring that all health communications are undertaken securely and confidentially. The project requires large-scale programme management involving networks supplied by BTNI, datacenter deployment and support, software supplied by Torex Health and service management. This is a true multi-skilled project involving all aspects of design, build and managed service, run on a central IBM hardware platform. This contract is managed from Steria's Belfast office and significantly increases the resources Steria has committed to Northern Ireland.

Richard Crade, Head of Managed Services, Steria Ltd, said, "This is a complex system that will link 350 GP Practices, 19 Hospital Trusts, four Health Boards, the Central Services Agency and in due course the General Register Office of Northern Ireland. While the procurement process has been a long one, it was needed in order to ensure the best solution was found. Steria is very pleased to have won this

significant contract and to have been judged to offer the best solution."

Steria has recently signed similar deals in Sweden, enabling different medical organisations in the national health system to exchange confidential information. More than 50 ministries and 60 public organisations work with Steria in Europe, including the Danish and Norwegian Customs authorities, the Norwegian and Swedish police forces, the Spanish Ministries of Labour, Economy and Health, Norwich County Council, the French National Marines, Belgian Ministry of Interior, the British Ministry of Justice and the French Ministry of Economy and Finance.

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About Steria Ltd (www.steria.co.uk)

Steria in the UK combines expertise in e-consultancy, applications, secure e-business solutions, intrusion protection technology, managed hosting services, network management and infrastructure management, with a focus on major business sectors: public sector, finance, manufacturing and utilities. Steria employs more than 1,500 people in the UK.

About Steria (www.steria.com)

With 2002 revenue of 1.018bn Euros and over 8000 employees, Steria is one of the top ten IT services companies in Europe. Present in 12 countries worldwide, the Group is positioned as an end-to-end IT services partner thanks to the mastery of its three core businesses: consulting, systems integration and managed services.

Its acknowledged expertise in managing large-scale projects and its range of industrialised solutions in Europe enable Steria to offer its customers a reliable service with commitment to cost and risk control. The Group has strong sector-based expertise in the Public sector, Banking and Insurance, Industry/Utilities/Transport and Telecommunications markets.

Created in 1969, the Steria group is a pioneer in employee shareholding, with nearly 30% of its capital being held by employees. Steria is listed on the Premier Marché of the Paris Stock Exchange and in the SBF 120 index.

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