

AUGMENTED CARE TAP REPLACEMENTS

Background

There were ongoing concerns regarding the performance and reliability of sensor-operated taps within the Augmented Care Areas. A consistent pattern of failures had been identified, with many occurring within a relatively short period following installation, raising concerns about product lifespan and durability. In addition, it was not possible to carry out thermal disinfection on the sensor taps, which presented a challenge in maintaining effective infection control standards. These issues were not isolated, as similar problems had been reported across all three hospital sites within the group, indicating a systemic design failure. Furthermore, a growing number of localised fittings were also beginning to fail, suggesting a wider issue with the reliability of installed components.

Challenge

There were additional concerns regarding the practicalities and risks associated with undertaking the required works. Carrying out the work while the Augmented Care Areas remained in use presented significant challenges, particularly as many of the taps were located within high-risk and restricted areas. This raised important considerations around maintaining patient safety at all times. Furthermore, there was a risk of dust contamination during the works, which needed to be carefully managed to avoid compromising clinical environments. There was also the potential for temporary loss of water supply during the works, which could impact both patient care and operational continuity.

Solution

The works were carefully pre-programmed around individual wards and clinical areas, with a full programme agreed in advance by all relevant parties. Work areas were appropriately contained to prevent dust and debris from contaminating live hospital environments. Temporary mobile wash hand basins (WHBs) were installed to ensure there was no disruption to water services. Additionally, an in-line thermal disinfection unit was installed at each location, and new isolation valves were fitted as part of the upgrade.

Result

The works have resulted in the standardisation of taps across all Augmented Care Areas within the three hospitals. All newly installed taps are fully serviceable and have been designed to support ongoing maintenance requirements. In addition, the new taps can now undergo thermal disinfection, improving compliance with infection control standards.

