

Overview:

Thermometers are required for indicative temperature assessment as part of patient monitoring. Due to the number of times a patients' temperature is taken on a daily basis, clinical users need to know that they are guaranteed access to a thermometer as and when needed.

In 2015/2016 two hospital wide audits found 164 thermometers across the hospital. Despite this large number of thermometers, access to them was identified as a major issue for nurses. In addition it was identified that the number of unscheduled repairs on thermometers was increasing annually. During Q4 2016, in conjunction with Nurse Practice Development, the Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering Department developed new policy and procedures for the improved management of thermometers across the hospital. This coincided with the first phase of installing new thermometers in the hospital. During the second phase of this install (2017), M.P.C.E also installed new security arrangements to reduce the probability of devices going missing. The chart below outlines the reduction in unscheduled repair work required as a result of these combined actions over a 4 year period (2015 – 2019).

Aims:

The aims of this new approach to the management of thermometers are:

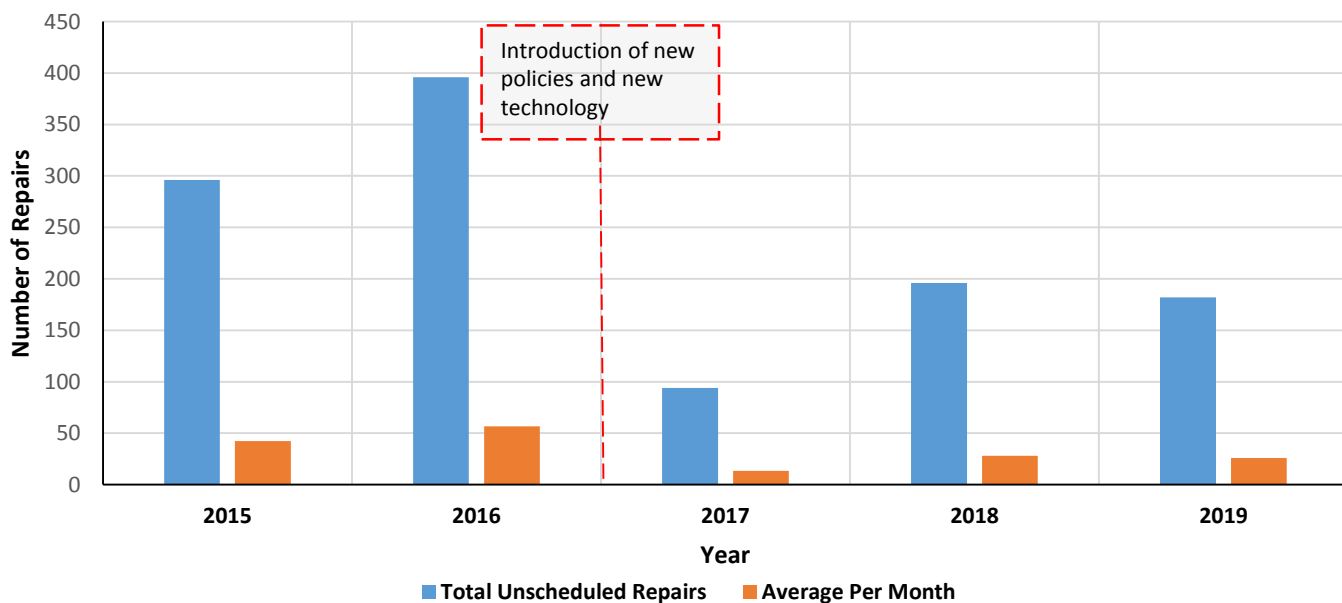
1. Improve availability of thermometers to clinical staff.
2. Reduce downtime associated with unscheduled repair requests.
3. Improved security of thermometers.

Actions:

To assist in achieving the above aims MPCE Department carried out the following:

1. Developed a hospital policy and protocol in conjunction with Nurse Practice Development for the use of thermometers.
2. Designed a new quick reference database to aid with new device management processes and technical queries.
3. Thermometers are now tethered to physiological monitors where possible.
4. Completed 2 audits each year (2015-2019) to verify data.

Thermometers: Unscheduled Repairs 2015 - 2019



Results:

1. Approximately 50% reduction in unscheduled repairs during the time period.
2. 100% reduction in reported missing thermometers between audits in 2016 and 2019.
3. 2 thermometers removed from service/decommissioned in 2019 compared to 27 in 2016.

Conclusions:

1. The audit work carried out by M.P.C.E in 2015/2016 provided definitive evidence of issues with thermometer management.
2. The development of a hospital wide policy in conjunction with Nurse Practice Development, led to a smooth transition to the new user policies and implementation of thermometer technology.
3. The new procedures coupled with additional security has meant that the thermometer downtime has been reduced compared to what was previously experienced by users