

WiFi SPARK creates a Hospedia alternative for hospitals

SPARK TSL offers trusts and health boards a new business model, improved bedside units, and more intuitive access to entertainment and communication services

WiFi SPARK is offering NHS trusts and health boards a route out of their Hospedia contracts, a year after taking over the management of the bedside terminal supplier.

The leading provider of wi-fi, entertainment and communications services is launching SPARK®TSL as an alternative for the 75% of acute hospitals in the UK that use Hospedia terminals.

SPARK TSL is built around a new business model that moves away from Hospedia's unpopular and administration-heavy 'patient pays' model for entertainment and calls.

It also features new SPARK Horizon bedside terminals and a refreshed SPARK Media package, with an improved user interface and better integration with a store of time and cost saving apps.

Matt O'Donovan, founder and chief executive of WiFi SPARK, said: "When we took over the management of Hospedia, we said our ambition was to change its business model from 'patient pays' to 'free at the point of use'.

"The creation of SPARK TSL delivers on that ambition, while enabling trusts to roll-out modernised bedside units, and media and communications packages that will deliver for their organisation, staff and patients alike."

Volaris Group, the parent company of WiFi SPARK acquired Hospedia in November last year. WiFi SPARK took over the management of the company, which had installed 56,500 bedside terminals at 160 hospitals.

Bedside terminals were first rolled out in the early 2000s to replace TV sets on ward trolleys and payphones in hospital corridors. But the high charges for entertainment and calls were always controversial.

Under the SPARK TSL model, the cost of upgrading the terminals and running SPARK Media would be met by trusts, health boards or their charities.

O'Donovan added: "We know that the NHS is facing unprecedented demand and significant financial challenges right now. However, as concern mounts about the cost of living crisis, asking patients to pay for news and information, and to keep in touch with their loved-ones, is no longer tenable.

"Instead, trusts should be thinking about how they can fund these services themselves; not least by making better use of their bedside infrastructure to give staff access to the digital tools that can help them to deliver better services while making worthwhile time and cost savings."

The new SPARK Horizon terminals can be mounted on walls or on wheeled trolleys and workstations. The lightweight and flexible units have been chosen to make the best use of hospitals' existing infrastructure and to be quick and easy to install.

The latest SPARK Media package is available for the bedside units or as a bring your own device or BYOD solution.

SPARK Media gives users access to news, hospital information, charity links, and a library of apps, which WiFi SPARK is looking to expand, to give app developers a new option for getting cutting edge ideas into the hands of clinicians and healthcare professionals.

Ends

Notes for editors

About WiFi SPARK

WiFi SPARK is the main provider of wi-fi and media services to the NHS in the UK. In 2021, its parent company, Volaris Group, acquired Hospedia and its installed base of bedside patient communications and entertainment units.

Since then, WiFi SPARK's vision has been to ensure that no patient pays for entertainment by 2024, and that hospitals can make the best use of both their bedside infrastructure and the SPARK Media platform, which can be used to deliver entertainment and information services to patients and staff.

To support its vision, WiFi SPARK has developed SPARK TSL, a package to enable trusts to exit their Hospedia deals with a new business model, new bedside units and an updated SPARK Media package. This includes a catalogue of specialist clinical and patient-focused apps that is being constantly expanded to enable trusts to fully customise their solution, drive efficiency, and improve user satisfaction.