

HTS rises to meet hospital medical gases crisis

When we talk of frontline staff in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, we obviously think of doctors, nurses and other patient carers. However, those providing support to medical care facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes are also frontline personnel.

Indeed, the building services sector has really stepped up to the plate as the supply, installation and maintenance of medical gases became critical in combating the impact of the virus on patients.

Few companies in Ireland were as prepared to rise to this challenge than Hospital Technical Services (HTS). Part of the T Bourke Group, HTS is a leader in the supply, installation and maintenance of medical and process gases for Ireland's hospitals, pharma, food and process industries. Established in 1990, it was acquired by T Bourke in 2017 but continues to operate as a separate entity.

HTS personnel have a proven track record in the design, installation and maintenance of medical gas pipeline systems, modular operating theatres,

One of the HTS project services teams on active duty throughout the Covid crisis – James Cunningham, Eugene Ryan and Des Brady.



theatre pendants and bedhead trunking in hospitals throughout Ireland. It has successfully completed and certified hundreds of installations and is fully resourced to offer full service and maintenance packages in accordance with HTM 02-01 to hospitals anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Despite our vast experience in the sector, what we have been dealing with over the last 10 weeks is unprecedented," says HTS Director David Doherty. "The hospital environment is challenging at the best of times but the additional health and safety requirements, social distancing and the presence of live Covid cases made it far more difficult. Thankfully, apart from the professionalism of the HTS team, there is a very strong social ethic as everyone understands the importance and critical nature of the services we provide. In fact, we're very proud of the manner in which everyone at HTS has stepped up to the plate.

HTS has been involved in specific Covid-related problem-solving for hospitals

all over Ireland in recent weeks, in addition to providing technical assistance and design support for oxygen and gas facilities for step-down and so-called field hospitals. It also helped fast-track already-planned upgrading and maintenance of oxygen systems at various hospitals, and to upgrade and bring into use hospital wards that had been closed off.

One of the primary treatments for Covid patients is oxygen and ventilators. Hospital gas networks were never designed for usage on this unprecedented scale. The challenge was to get oxygen into as many hospitals and wards as possible, and to ensure that the networks were able to cope with the demand. These works had to be executed as a matter of urgency before the predicted spike in cases and the arrival of patients at the hospitals.

This sudden demand on resources was supported by T Bourke. At a time when construction sites were closing we in HTS were ramping up. The situation was compounded by a worldwide increase in the demand for pipework and materials, along of course with medical gases.

"With regard to products and equipment, we already had large quantities of stock bought in as part of our Brexit strategy. In addition, our regular suppliers were very accommodating. Indeed, I think building services as a whole deserves great credit for the manner of its very positive response to this crisis, and particularly for being flexible, creative and inventive in the face of previously-unencountered scenarios," concluded Doherty. ■



HTS were extensively involved in the planning, design and installation of services for the field hospital at the UL Arena in the University of Limerick.