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Integrated Crosscare provides the best possible care

Demelza
Hospice Care for Children

Demelza Hospice Care for Children (Demelza) required a single IT system providing both hospice and clinical management functionality to support their existing and future operations. The system had to reflect the processes associated with the specialist care provided to children and their families typically over long periods of time, as well as enabling the organisation to achieve operational efficiencies.

Advanced Health & Care's Crosscare solution met Demelza's requirements for a purpose built but flexible system that would take their information systems to the next level and be the cornerstone for growth.

Established in 1994 by Derek and Jennifer Phillips, the inspiration behind the hospice was the untimely death of their daughter Demelza who had worked in a hospice. Demelza welcomes any child with a life-limiting or life-threatening condition, supporting them and their families at any stage of their illness or health. Annually they care for over 600 children across East Sussex, Kent and South East London providing short term respite, palliative care, bereavement support and community care services. The number of children and families receiving these services has steadily grown since Demelza opened its first hospice in 1998 and is set for further growth as the organisation continues to develop and promote its work.

Business challenge

Demelza first opened an eight bedded hospice in Sittingbourne in Kent providing respite, symptom control, end-of-life care and bereavement support. They then extended their reach with the opening of a new six bedded hospice in Eltham, South East London in late 2009. The care services provided by these sites are further complemented by a community team comprising specialist children's nurses who go into the family home to care for a child and give parents a much needed break.

This growth in care provision was a key driver for Demelza to review their information systems as they recognised the importance of a centralised system to support multiple sites and services. They already had in place an internally developed hospice management system providing bookings and referrals functionality but it lacked essential clinical

and care plan details. The option existed for Demelza to further develop their own access-based system however they acknowledged that software development was not a primary focus for the business and recognised that such a route would leave them dependent on limited resources to support their systems. Ultimately, Demelza acknowledged the need for a software package purpose built for clinical and hospice management and capable of supporting multiple sites.

Solution deployed

A proven and established package, Crosscare was selected and was soon delivering real benefits through its rich functionality and ease of use. Crosscare is extremely flexible, and the database was configured to closely match Demelza's business processes.

As Crosscare had only previously been implemented in adult hospices, specific extensions were required to provide functionality for child hospice care and an agreement was reached to create a product for Demelza that could also be made available to other children hospices.

Deployed over Demelza's own network, Crosscare more than met the needs to easily support multiple sites. Demelza was aware that there were several clinical packages available and researched the various options including Crosscare.

Sarah Ramsey, Finance & IT Director says, *"We chose Crosscare because we were looking for a development partner and Advanced were open to this approach. They were prepared to be*

flexible and consider product changes to meet our requirements. Furthermore Crosscare was much more user friendly compared to the other systems and we wanted a system that our users would find intuitive."

Demelza went live with Phase One of the project delivering Crosscare's Clinical and Rostering modules in March 2009, just before the opening their new Eltham hospice.

Ramsey explains, *"What could have been a challenging time was made more manageable as the ease of use and flexibility of Crosscare meant that it was quickly adopted by users."*

Demelza has a team of over 150 users, comprising both paid employees and volunteers spanning management, administration and clinical roles with variable computer exposure so a user-friendly system was paramount.

Phase Two of the project will see Demelza go live with Crosscare's Human Resources (HR) module. This will be deployed as an integrated module with Rostering however it can also be deployed as a standalone HR system. The module incorporates employee and volunteer data including basic information, annual leave, sick leave, skills, training, appraisals, emergency contacts and CRB checks. Demelza workers will be able to complete an electronic leave form and Crosscare will automatically forward it to their line manager via email for approval. It will also automatically make any adjustments to the rota further enhancing efficiency levels.

Benefits achieved

Demelza now has a single centralised system providing hospice and clinical management for its multiple sites and services.

Wendy Faulknall, Director of Care says, "We now have a central, holistic view of care plans incorporating clinical notes and family support which enhances our service."

Faulknall continues, "Note taking by staff has improved as Crosscare directs them to enter accurate data and as we provide multiple episodes of care over time we can easily access historical records to support continuity."

From a business management perspective, Crosscare's 'What's Going On' screen provides key staff with an overview of all activities incorporating a diary week view enabling them at a glance to identify, for example, staffing gaps and occupancy levels to maximise resources.

The majority of operating costs for hospices are attributable to staffing and Demelza constantly aims to make best use of its resources for children and families. For hospices, this has traditionally been measured by bed occupancy however as the scope and type of service has evolved to include more day care and outreach work the relevance of such a measure has declined. As a result Demelza has adopted a new measure which is starting to be used within the hospice community, a 'cost per care hour' model. Crosscare easily supports this utilisation model enabling Demelza to record, forecast, report and analyse operational performance and drive business efficiency.

Whilst Demelza was already using a hospice management solution prior to Crosscare, the combination of both hospice and clinical management delivers comprehensive functionality in important areas such as a safeguarding thread in clinical management to identify negative trends, an automatic output from rostering to payroll and computerised bed management.

Ramsey says, "*We have more than achieved our project objectives with the implementation of Crosscare. We work with children and their families over long periods of time and Crosscare supports us in providing the best possible care through providing an integrated approach to the different care provision from multiple sites and services. In the future we will be able to analyse patterns of care for our families based on the recording of clinical notes. Hopefully this venture will mean that many more child hospices will benefit from the extended product and see the benefits to the essential services that they deliver.*"

More information

w oneadvanced.com
t +44(0) 8451 605 555
e hello@oneadvanced.com

Ditton Park, Riding Court Road, Datchet, SL3 9LL