Driving digital improvements in hospice care

End-of-life hospice care is not the most obvious place to discover a digital champion, but this is where we found Ian Ashton, Catering Services Manager for Pilgrims Hospices. An ex-military man of 14 years, Ian understands the importance of good organisational skills. He also understands the value of cloud-based digital checklists.

Ian was first introduced to digital process checks when working at the production site for LEON restaurants. He has since applied this forward-thinking to his current role with Pilgrims Hospices and can often be found on the Hospice IQ forum, championing his vision of paper-free, cloud-based work management.

Pilgrims Hospices

About Pilgrims Hospices:

Pilgrims helps people facing a terminal diagnosis, and their families, to live well in every moment. Pilgrims is east Kent's largest hospice charity, with three hospices in Ashford, Canterbury and Thanet. With over 200 Pilgrims nurses and therapists, the charity believes in quality care and support that's tailored to the needs of the patient and their family.

Pilgrims is at the cutting edge of using technology in its work processes, driving improvements in health and risk management. Its digital champion, Ian Ashton, Catering Services Manager has the challenge of over-seeing catering services across multiple locations.

Applying digital work processes:

Ian Ashton started work with Pilgrims Hospices in 2008, initially based at its Canterbury site. He was quick to bring in digital tools to help manage the catering facilities. The benefit of this forward thinking means that today Ian is tasked with managing all four sites within the hospice group, this includes four kitchens feeding day visitors, in-patients and staff across three sites. His championing of digital tools in the workplace has shown how you can bring greater visibility and insight with real-time connectivity, as opposed to slow paper-driven checklists.

What was needed:

Healthcare is driven by quality checklists. When running a hospice there are also facilities checklists and food preparation standards to maintain; a management challenge, particularly when spread across numerous locations. Ian was keen to implement a digitised solution that would save time and money, whilst also improving operational efficiency, using technology to make his management task easier.

The solution:

To streamline operational processes Ian and his team chose the Checkit work management platform. The use of these customisable digital checklists helps them uphold high standards.

It enables him and his team to have greater visibility of outstanding tasks in real-time. It saves paper as checklists no longer need printing. It also saves fuel and travel time between sites.

The digital checklists completed via the Checkit platform make sure day to day tasks are managed efficiently. These checks include:

- Cleaning checks
- Daily diary tasks
- Delivery checks
- Food preparation checks

Having remote real-time access to these check processes provides Ian greater visibility of operations. It allows him to monitor the smooth running of the group of hospices, regardless of his location.

"With no printed paper checklists or travel emissions, Checkit has helped me save time, paper and fuel. I have better visibility of the business without harming the environment. This visibility also makes my team more efficient."

Having a cloud-based checklist also means alerts can be sent in real-time when something has been overlooked or out of parameters. Ian goes on to explain:

"The Checkit Work Management app allows me to have 'eyes on' even when I am not physically on site. For example, I can fire up my Tablet whilst eating breakfast and even before I have left my house, I know if one of the sites is short staffed. I am then able to call the site manager and schedule my day accordingly."

Future plans for digital working:

Checkit is customisable, cloud-based and proven for food and facility checks. It has enabled Pilgrims to maintain a 5-star food hygiene rating. Having used the digitised checklists for three years, it is fully supportive of the value it brings to the charity.

"EHO (Environmental Health Officers) can see the investment in time and money to automate the system, which gives a great first impression when inspections are taking place."

Working with Checkit, Pilgrims Hospices is now looking to expand its use of digital checklists across its working practices. Ian is considering how to incorporate temperature monitoring of catering fridges and freezers. He is also liaising with colleagues and exploring the use of Checkit for tasks such as legionella checks, asset lists and facility checks.

Ian often posts to the Hospice IQ forum, sharing his experience. Recently he was happy to host a visitor from the nearby Ellenor Hospice group, to demonstrate how Pilgrims operates, sharing with them how the Checkit memo can streamline operations. The Checkit Memo has also had a good reception with work placement students from local colleges, a younger generation surprised at how forward-thinking Pilgrims Hospices is in its approach.

About Checkit

Checkit's real-time operations management software makes organisations smart, safe and efficient. Our products use Internet of Things ("IoT"), mobile and cloud technologies to ensure our customers get the best out of their mobile teams, processes and buildings. Checkit users operate in many sectors including retail, hospitality, healthcare, real estate management and manufacturing. Checkit is headquartered in Cambridge, UK with its operations centre in Fleet, UK and a sales and service office in California, USA. www.checkit.net

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