



2Care

Assured Service Quality in the Care Industry

2Care was founded in 1929 as the SOS Society to provide shelter for the homeless during the great Depression. Today the organisation provides high quality, specialist, support and care, offering a range of rehabilitation services for adults who have experienced mental illness and specialist, person-centred care for older people with high mental and physical support needs.

2Care operates services nationwide. Five projects offer mental health care and Parkview House is a specialist provider of dementia care. All services are registered under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Care and support is provided within a model of care framework at all the services:

- Model of Care for Psychiatric Rehabilitation.
- Model of Care for Older People with Dementia.

2Care actively strives to provide the highest possible care for service users. In order to reach its goals it has advisory groups and quality programmes. 2Care's Quality Management system has not only been devised to meet the requirements of ISO 9001/2000 but has been designed to provide a comprehensive, clear system comprising high quality, user friendly, procedures and guidance covering all areas of activity.

2Care's Quality Initiative

2Care has a range of objectives for quality that are clearly stated on its web site and other corporate literature:

- to satisfy the individual care and/or rehabilitation needs of all service users receiving 2Care residential services.
- to provide comfortable, practical and well maintained accommodation for all service users.
- to provide a professional and consistently high level of service for all service users.

- to enable staff to develop the skills and qualities necessary to provide a high quality services for service users.
- to continually improve the quality of care or rehabilitation.

2Care achieved ISO 9001:2000 certification in 2003. The core components of its Quality System comprised:

- A planned, fully documented quality assurance programme to meet defined objectives
- Adequately trained staff
- Maintained and calibrated equipment and verification of work
- A structure for dealing with shortfalls in healthcare
- Corrective and preventive actions
- A means for monitoring and reviewing the quality system thus ensuring continuous improvement
- Full management support

Jason Little, Quality Development Manager at 2Care, is responsible for the organisation's quality initiatives. Jason had been instrumental throughout in defining quality objectives and developing the organisation's quality management systems. He recognised that the administrative effort required to manage the quality system and drive the continuous improvement of services was unsustainable. Jason urgently needed tools to minimise the effort required and simplify administration.

The 2Care Requirement

Jason decided that an electronic solution was essential to reduce duplication and speed up communication between all 2Care Residential Care Projects. He wanted real time communication between head office and all 6 locations across the UK. From a personal perspective, Jason also hoped he would find a solution that would facilitate his family's planned move to the South of France by allowing him to access and manage the system from his new home. A common system shared by all locations would also positively contribute to Jason's plan by:

- Standardising quality improvement processes
- Systematically disseminating innovation
- Detecting adverse events and learning from them
- Learning from complaints
- Recognising and managing poor performance
- Reflecting the above in professional development
- Developing high quality systems to support all clinical governance activity
- Involving service users in planning decisions

Jason's system had to address key issues and risks:

- The system had to make information instantly accessible, prompt regular update and record approval by appropriate staff.
- Delivery and acknowledgement of new or changed documents had to be fully traceable to reduce the risk of staff using out of date procedures or even ignoring procedures.
- The system had to underpin continuous improvement by prompting regular review and update of content. Analysis of improvement activity had to be automatically generated.
- The system had to reduce the risk of liability by automating the production of evidence to demonstrate compliance with due process and standard operating procedures.
- The system had to facilitate ISO9001:2000 and reduce the ongoing administrative and financial burden of compliance.

A key consideration for Jason was cost. "As a charitable organisation we do not have limitless budgets and we needed to be certain that an investment in technology would deliver tangible cost savings." said Jason. After a rigorous examination of the marketplace, Jason settled on myEQMS.com as the desired solution.

The myEQMS.com Solution

The myEQMS.com solution from Qualsys was selected as the product that best matched the 2Care requirement.

Robert Oakley, commercial director at myEQMS.com commented, *"myEQMS.com is used in a range of industries to support compliance with regulations and standards. We already work extensively with the NHS, connecting satellite operations with central offices to deliver standardised processes. This project was an exciting departure, allowing us to demonstrate how myEQMS.com can simplify administration and facilitate controlled communication of critical material for a multi-site care home operation. We were also able to clearly show how myEQMS.com delivers immediate cost savings to support 2Care's requirement for an immediate return on investment."*

The myEQMS.com system provides a repository for all types of computer files and applications, and has allowed Jason to load existing documentation (predominantly Microsoft Word documents) and providing scope for introducing alternative formats such as video and audio at a later stage. A hierarchical navigational structure has been tailored to allow users to browse relevant, 'live' documents. The search engine permits detailed search on the content of the repository.

The system incorporates document control and approval, versioning and archiving functionality. Definitive versions of files are accessible to end-users but only those staff with appropriate administrative permissions can make alterations. Security controls allows Jason and his small team of administrators to tailor the view of content down to an individual user level if necessary.

Additional functionality automates review and approval, prompting action by email and system messages. This means that Jason can introduce a new SOP that is only released by the system once it has been signed off by 2Care Managers. Members of staff at each Care Home are notified of the release of critical content and are asked to record their acknowledgement. The myEQMS.com database maintains comprehensive audit trails of all system activity, relieving Jason of much of the administrative effort that had been required to maintain his paper-based Quality System.

The Advantages of Web Services Deployment

A key advantage influencing selection was that myEQMS.com is deployed as a fully functional Web Service. This meant that system-use is instantaneously extended as widely as required across all 2Care projects. This complemented Jason's strategy of outsourcing 2Care's hardware, software and IT support services. 2Care did not want the expense or the overhead of maintaining its own IT resource and saw significant savings in taking on web service solutions.

Jason said, *"We had already utilised the Web Service concept as a cost-effective way of introducing new solutions quickly and efficiently. Simply turning the system on gave immediate access to critical content to all our staff at all our sites. No more manila envelope, licking of stamps and worrying if everyone has received and read critical information."* The my.EQMS.com Web Service platform proved an ideal fit, improving communication, automating administration and cutting costs.

The Benefits to 2Care

All 2Care's staff now have access to online Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), policies, forms and reports. All content is now in a controlled environment where it cannot be amended without the approval of the appropriate manager. All superceded versions are auto-archived providing a complete audit trail for external assessors. Users have confidence that they are always using the right policy, SOP or form and the scope for error has been significantly reduced.

Jason is able to administer and maintain his system from his new home in France, completely independently with no need to draw on costly IT support. The system has reduced paper usage and the effort expended in making sure staff are up to date with latest SOPs. All appropriate staff are notified via email of a new SOP. The system records acknowledgements for each new SOP. This provides complete traceability and removes a huge amount of unproductive work associated with the ISO9001:2000 compliance effort.

"We had to work very hard to achieve ISO9001:2000. Without myEQMS.com the ongoing effort required would restrict our ability to look creatively at how we can improve the services 2Care provides. MyEQMS.com has released us from the administrative burden and has provided management information that allows us to easily track our quality management processes." says Jason.

The Next Steps

Jason has extended the relationship by asking the myEQMS.com team to provide Active Forms to automate the tracking and management of Service Delivery and Development. These are forms that are delivered through myEQMS.com for online completion by 2Care staff, providing instantaneous collation of data and real-time access to management information. The forms are managed by myEQMS.com to ensure the right forms are completed by the right staff. All data is managed in a central database allowing for online tracking and analysis of performance against targets. Jason sees this as a logical step for the development of 2Care's Quality System. "Introducing the forms will guarantee a standardised approach to the delivery of our services, minimising the scope for error and providing a platform for continuous improvement." Said Jason.

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