

Helping Merseycare Julie Ann adapt to the changing compliance needs of providing domiciliary care

A Quality Compliance Systems case study

Background

Merseycare Julie Ann (MCJA) is a Liverpool based company providing home care and support services to adults in Liverpool and St Helens. Senior management are dedicated to the social care profession and bring a wealth of experience that stretches back 25 years.

The organisation aims to provide high quality, reliable domiciliary services that meet the needs of individuals and are effective in enabling service users to remain in their own home.

In Liverpool, MCJA also manages the day-to-day running of a 58 unit extra care housing scheme called Lathom Court.

The company is an approved provider to both Liverpool City and St Helens councils as well as providing care on a private basis. From two sites around 300 staff, of which 90% are carers, currently provide up to 9,000 hours of care per week in Liverpool and St Helens. MCJA is registered with and regulated by The Care Quality Commission. Consequently, the organisation is closely focused on meeting its compliance requirements and ensuring that quarterly inspections are passed.

The Challenge

In 2001 Merseycare and Julie Ann merged to create a single organisation providing around 500 hours of care. However, since then, the health and social care sector has undergone enormous change. "Over the years there has been a shift to keep people out of residential care and support them in their own homes with domiciliary care," says Rosie Robinson, Registered Manager at MCJA.

In that time there has been a significant emphasis on regulation. Rosie Robinson comments: "When you look at the main things involved - Outcomes, Best Practice, Health and Safety, the Department of Health and the CQC for example - there are so many information streams that have to be brought together to successfully manage compliance."

The job requirement of carers has also changed. "It used to be more of a need for home help with domestic tasks. Now it's very much about providing care for service users. Essentially, there are times when a carer may have to perform some of the tasks that were traditionally carried out by a District Nurse," Rosie Robinson says.

Meeting all compliance requirements is a necessity, but this makes Medications one of the most sensitive and important areas. The risks that may result from incorrectly administered medication make it a prime compliance area of which MCJA and all domiciliary care organisations need to take control.

Key Facts

Quality Care (EM) Ltd

- Leading Merseyside domiciliary care provider
- Providing up to 9,000 care hours per week with approximately 270 care workers
- Approved provider to Liverpool City and St Helens councils, provides private care and manages a 58 unit extra care housing scheme

The Challenges

- Adapt to changing domiciliary care compliance requirements that result from the centralised policy of keeping service users out of residential care
- Ensuring domiciliary care workers follow compliant processes and procedures
- Take control of compliance requirements in higher risk areas such as Medications

The Solution

- Modular, printed reference manuals available to all carers
- Online system for management use
- Comprehensive set of policies and procedures eliminate compliance loopholes
- Policies and procedures customised for MCJA

Key Results

- Compliance embedded in MCJA's culture
- Provided the framework to rapid ISO 9001:2008 quality award accreditation
- Supports growth and success of the organisation, shown through contract wins and staff attraction and retention because of higher care standards
- Buttons down compliance requirements in higher risk areas such as Medications
- Access to every policy and procedure required to run a quality care organisation

The Solution

The QCS compliance management system comes in two parts. The first consists of a series of printed resources which are organised as modular manuals for easy updating. Extensive use is made of the printed copies that are freely available to all staff. "We have some well thumbed pages as carers have full access to them in the offices if they want to see any particular policy," says Rosie Robinson.

The second part of the system is online, and at MCJA this side of the system is reserved for managerial use. This provides a comprehensive digital library of policies and procedures. These are updated by QCS compliance experts every time there is a change in the regulatory requirement and are customised for the specific needs of MCJA. The attention to detail of the system is exacting. This ensures that there are no compliance loopholes and nothing is left to chance.

Rosie Robinson says, "For example, in December we circulate a memo to all staff so that they are all aware of the policy regarding Christmas gifts. We simply copy the QCS policy from the system and circulate it as part of a memo to all staff."

The system is also there for when staff fail to act in line with regulations by supporting the disciplinary process. "If we have to take disciplinary action we print out the appropriate QCS policy to clearly show the specific policy breach in question," Rosie Robinson says.

The Results

MCJA has come a long way using QCS compliance management, adapting to the changes that have raised standards of care and professionalism across the health and social care sector.

"Compliance is completely embedded in our culture. Liverpool City Council inspects all service providers quarterly and we come out on top, achieving up to 86% compliance."

Recently MCJA has won some significant contracts in a crowded and highly competitive marketplace. Consequently, the explosion of work in the last 12 months means that MCJA is one of the leading domiciliary care providers in Liverpool. QCS compliance management strongly supports this success in a number of ways.

Rosie Robinson says: "One of the reasons we win these contracts is because we hold the ISO 9001:2008 quality award mark. We were expecting to have to work towards this for up to 18 months. The assessor looked very thoroughly at the how we worked with the QCS compliance management system. As a result there were no recommendations for any revisions to how we do things and we were awarded the ISO quality mark very quickly."

The system has also been a highly influential factor in the selection process and the retention of employees. "We have used QCS Recruitment, Induction and Training policies to grow our HR to meet our commitments. The care standards that the system allows us to achieve means that we have attracted and kept hold of some really fantastic people," says Rosie Robinson.

The QCS Medications Policy and Procedure is totally comprehensive. "It makes sure you can be CQC compliant while letting you get on with the other side of the job. We have access to every policy and procedure that we need to run a quality care organisation from start to finish, and we would not be where we are today without QCS compliance management," Rosie Robinson says.

About QCS

Quality Compliance Systems (QCS) offers a unique approach to CQC Compliance with an online and paper based service specifically tailored to the individual needs of your organisation.

Whether you are an established Care Provider, Dental Practice, GP Surgery or a start-up organisation, our service is provided with the aim of ensuring that all aspects of compliance are being attended to.

Our industry experts continually update existing policies and procedures, whilst introducing new ones in response to the latest changes issued by the Care Quality Commission (England) and the SCSWIS (Scotland).

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