

CASE STUDY

HOSPICE IN THE WEALD

Summary

Needs

- To provide a framework and discipline for managing sensitive information across the whole of the hospice organization and ensure that systems are safe and protected
- To be able to connect to the NHS Net/N3 – a secure system that allows sharing of patient information with NHS hospitals and GP surgeries
- To become the first hospice in the UK to achieve ISO 27001 registration, thereby enforcing the hospice's commitment to excellence in all areas of management

Benefits

- Demonstrated to patients and donors that information is treated confidentially and securely
- Funding was received to provide a secure Cisco Wireless ICT open internet network for patients and families as a result of having ISO 27001 registration and the security procedures in place
- A full recovery system is now in place should records be lost or damaged
- To be ready to meet government funding initiatives, i.e. payment by results

Background

Hospice in the Weald was established in 1980 as a home care service, and in 1998 a purpose-built hospice was opened in Pembury. The hospice provides specialist palliative care services to support people with life-limiting illness, and their families and carers.

In addition to its 17-bed in-patient unit, it provides a Day Therapy Centre offering a whole range of treatments and complimentary therapies to about 15 patients a day. The hospice also provides community nursing to more than 600 patients each year with 24-hour telephone support. The specialist palliative care nursing and medical services are backed up with family support and bereavement counselors and health information services and spiritual care.

The hospice serves an area of 400 square miles in West Kent and East Sussex with a population of approximately 280,000. The organization employs around 130 people and has the support of more than 700 trained volunteers working in all areas of the hospice. As a charity, all its services are provided free and it is dependent on the support of donations, corporate businesses and fundraising activities to raise the annual £3m required to fund the vital services; only a small percentage of its running costs comes from the NHS.

Hospice in the Weald is the first hospice in the UK to achieve the internationally recognized Information Security Management Systems ISO 27001 registration.



Customer Needs

Accurate and secure data is crucial to the running of the hospice. As well as needing to keep up-to-date confidential medical records on patients' care, the hospice also relies heavily on secure databases to keep in touch with relatives, individuals making donations, corporate donors and volunteers. Financial information must also be protected.

Initially the hospice wanted to achieve ISO 27001 to ensure a framework was in place to manage and safeguard medical information. By becoming certified the hospice would then be entitled to connect to NHS Net – which allows the sharing of patient data with primary health care trusts.

"In order to join the NHS Net/N3 the criteria for a third party like us is to have this kind of security infrastructure in place," explained Mark Lillie, ICT/Information Security Manager.

"We wanted to prove that a small organization like ours was treating information with the highest degree of security and integrity. It is also very important from a commercial aspect that we are seen to be taking this seriously."

"It was decided that the ISMS framework would be implemented across the whole organization to include the hospice's subsidiary companies which successfully manage 13 charity shops, a fundraising lottery and a travel club."

"Our relationship with donors and supporters is of paramount importance. We provide a

very confidential and personalized service and we must be certain that the right information is being sent and that their details are secure. For example some donors may not wish to receive information from us, or we may wish to correspond with a relative regarding a remembrance service for a loved one." commented John Ashelford, Chief Executive.

Community nurses using laptops, who work in real time to edit patients' records, were also assessed to ensure effective security systems were in place.

Benefits

The hospice has seen a number of benefits of achieving Information Security Management Systems. The most obvious one is that it is now eligible to connect to the NHS Net/N3 with all security procedures and infrastructure measures in place.

However, there have been other benefits too. Having ISO 27001 registration has enabled the hospice to secure donations for ICT projects, specifically funding for wireless public/private Internet services for patients and families. This project has been procured from Stoneleigh Consultancy (Cisco Premier Partner) who showed that they met all Information Security controls which are now in place throughout the hospice.

"Without registration we may not have been granted the money on this type of project which has several risks associated with security," said Mark Lillie, "Controls are now in place to benefit security across the whole of the hospice community."

"The risk analysis we carried out really made us notice every aspect of our security, even down to simple things like locking cabinets and considering the consequences of leaving a door open. If a security incident was to occur we now have strict procedures in place to deal with it."

"We also now have a full recovery system in place. For example should there be a fire in the ICT/IS department, I know that by following our plan we could recover the business and data quickly and easily. It's very reassuring."

BSI's Role

BSI was selected as the preferred certification body because of its global reputation.

"On a commercial level we feel BSI has the largest name for ISO certification," said Mr Lillie, "Our assessor was brilliant. He worked with us and had an excellent understanding of our systems and what we wanted to achieve. Our auditor was very knowledgeable and also worked well with us. Everything is ongoing and we continue to review procedures. It is a major accomplishment for us to be the first hospice in the UK to achieve this standard. We have proved to the hospice community that this is achievable."