

## Crosscare frees up more time for patient care at St. Margaret's Hospice

St. Margaret's Hospice implemented Crosscare, the clinical management system from Advanced eight years ago. The solution has evolved with us as we have made the transition from paper records to a more digital approach to managing patients. Before deploying the solution we had multiple paper records stored in different places. Now all patient information is captured in real-time and stored in one place and the number of sheets of paper per patient has drastically reduced from hundreds to half a dozen.

### Background

St. Margaret's Hospice was established in 1980 and is now one of the largest hospices in the UK, caring for over 3,200 people every year. We have two In-patient Units in Taunton and Yeovil, with the majority of our patients being cared for in their own home by our county-wide Community Care Team. We also have two Sunflower Centres either side of the county that provide respite day care. Our funding comes from a mixture of the NHS, individual donations, our 36 retail stores and a wide range of fundraising events and activities.

As well as providing medical and spiritual care for people with life-limiting illnesses, we offer support to families and carers of our patients too. Records of these people are also stored on our patient record system. The hospice employs over 350 staff in Somerset and is also assisted by around 1,200 volunteers.

### A flexible solution to meet our needs

We selected Crosscare from Advanced around eight years ago and went fully operational across our In-patient Units two years later. We previously stored patient information on paper records which was time consuming and open to error, so we were looking for an electronic solution to become more digital and efficient. We also wanted a system that we could tailor and customise whenever required.

Andy Dann, our Business Systems and Informatics Co-ordinator at St. Margaret's Hospice, explains, "When we were looking for a new provider we did not want to be restricted to a fixed set of data fields. Crosscare stood out among the other solutions we looked at because it is designed specifically for hospices and is completely customisable, so it had the flexibility to adapt to our changing needs."

We have 400 users including clinical teams, administrative staff and volunteers, and it is used for all aspects of managing the hospice, such as incoming referrals and concurrent episodes of care. It covers a range of settings from inpatients, outpatients, day care, home care, hospital care and bereavement counselling.

### From hundreds of pieces of paper to just a handful

Over time Crosscare has helped us to reduce the amount of paper we use and store. Going

### Client >

St. Margaret's Hospice

### Sector >

Care Provider

### Project >

Crosscare

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Business Systems and  
Information Co-ordinator >  
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paperless is a big part of the wider efficiency programme in the healthcare sector, and having an electronic patient record system has helped us to become a lot more efficient.

"We used to have potentially hundreds of pieces of paper per patient – now it is down to about half a dozen. When you consider we treated over 3,000 patients last year, that's a huge saving in total," says Andy.

## **Accurate, real-time information**

Having patient information stored electronically also means that the information is much easier to access. Previously we had a situation whereby clinicians had separate paper records in different offices with different information. Now all the information is in one place and is easily accessed by everyone who needs it.

"Rather than having to trawl through and compare paper records, we have instant access to real-time data with Crosscare. For example, if one of our community nurses updates something on a laptop, someone at one of our sites can see that update straight away. Recording accurate information is hugely important for governance, and Crosscare is vital in achieving that," Andy adds.

## **More than just a clinical system**

Primarily, Crosscare is a clinical system used for recording patient information, but we have managed to adapt it for other uses. The solution enables us to analyse data on our service

users, which can then be used to support more informed management decisions.

For example, we can look at demographics such as where our patients are located and compare it to where our fundraising takes place. Our donations tend to come from families who have been affected by the hospice in some way, so we can use the data on Crosscare to help us pick the best locations for our fundraising activity.

Andy comments, "The information that is stored in Crosscare is not only beneficial on the clinical side but also doubles up as a marketing tool, allowing us to see where our patients and our fundraising are coming from. Data is king these days, and the system provides us with comprehensive data on the people that use our services."

## **Always evolving**

Since we deployed the Advanced solution, it has been regularly developed and updated to meet our growing needs. In partnership with Advanced, we are always looking at how we can maximise our use of the system to provide the best care to our patients.

Going forward, we would like to integrate Crosscare with other IT systems to further improve efficiency and access to information. With Advanced's help we are currently looking at the possibility of connecting to GP surgeries in the area using the Medical Interoperability Gateway (MIG), so that GPs and district nurses can access our patient information.

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"The solution has evolved and developed a lot over the past eight years, and the Advanced team are always open to suggestions about how the product can be improved. We recently selected the SQL reporting add-on, which enables us to run automatic reports on specific metrics which can then be emailed to someone, saving us time when it comes to reporting," adds Andy.

"A number of other hospices in the South West also use Crosscare, making it easier for us to collaborate and share information and best practice."

## **A platform for further collaboration**

You cannot afford to stand still when it comes to technology. We are always looking at how we can become more efficient and improve the way we record information in order to provide the best

care possible. Advanced's solution gives us a great platform for further integration and sharing of information in the future - two of the biggest issues in the healthcare sector at the moment.

Andy concludes, "Crosscare really makes a difference to our staff and our patients. By having all our patient information electronically in one place, staff do not have to waste time going through paper records and looking for the information they need. For the back-office staff it makes reporting and auditing quicker and easier, while it gives clinicians more time to focus on caring for our patients."

## More information

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