

Compliance. Performance. Insight.

Case Study: Transforming Regal Care

Regal Care implementation of the Assured Compliance solution, with a focus on quality and leadership programmes, enables the organisation to be financially sound and fit for purpose to address the needs of high-dependency dementia residents.

With continuing pressure from regulation, reduced public funding and an endemic overhang of debt arising from inflated property values prior to 2008, the independent care home sector must improve quality to sustain viability. Regal, after significant financial issues brought the company to crisis point in 2012, has taken a root and branch approach to these issues under the leadership of CEO Geoff Lane.

On taking up management of the business in May 2012, Geoff identified that perceptions of poor quality were driving away the key customers – local authorities and privately funded residents – and tight control of non-pay costs was adversely affecting staff morale. Seemingly, there was little room for manoeuvre, but Geoff took a different view.

Getting Started – This is a Home

Says Geoff: “During my first few weeks with the Company I spoke with many of our residents and hundreds of relatives of our residents. The consistent feedback from them that singled out Regal Care from other providers was the homely feel of our Homes and the quality of care being delivered by our staff in the Homes.

We never forget that to our residents our Home is their Home. We work hard at creating a community of people who continue to enjoy life and the company of others. Other providers can show you larger homes and more modern premises but they cannot capture the homely feel so evident in our Homes.”

Act 1: Rebuilding the Reputation

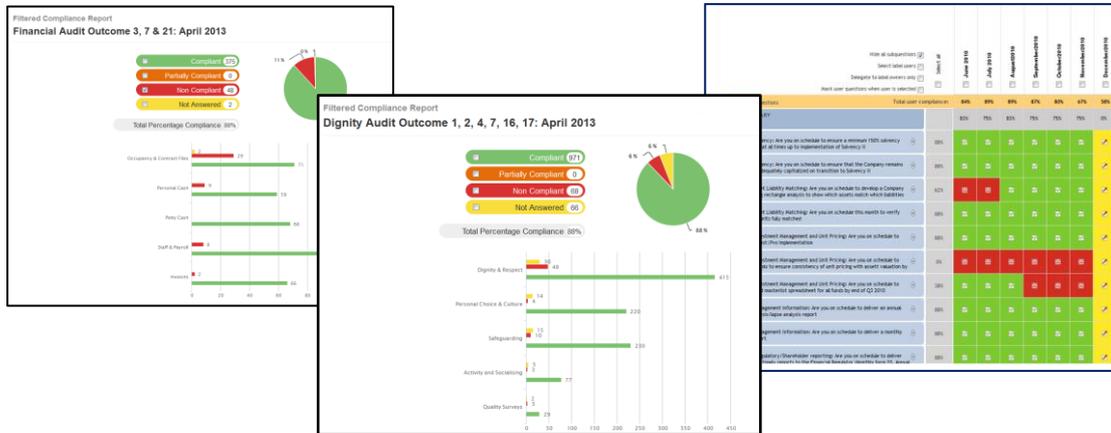
“It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it.”

- Benjamin Franklin

From the start, Geoff and his team identified that the reputation had to be rebuilt, and fast. Several local authorities had blocks on referrals, some homes were a little shabby and the Operations Managers spent their time on crisis management. Geoff quickly saw that, for the most part, home managers were keenly aware of what needed to be done and were enthusiastic and competent.

The approach to breaking the cycle of crisis management was to focus on the Home Managers: Strengthening the personnel, recruiting deputy managers in all homes, established senior carer pay structure and identifying care staff to fill these positions. The basic parameters were addressed such that all CQC inspections in May to September were fully compliant.

The next step was to focus the Operations Managers, Tony Thiru and Trish Kelly, to “hold up a mirror” to the Home Managers regarding performance and moreover to empower them to deliver on outcomes. The Assured Compliance software-based service from IPROS was selected to enable this, based on its adaptability, ease of use and ease of implementation.



Act 2: Sustainability – systems and transparency

“There are things that we know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know.” **Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of State**

The Assured Compliance service was deployed in September/October of 2012, with a focus on key aspects of delivery and quality: First Impressions, Infection Control, Medications Management, Care Documentation and Domestic Services.

This systematic approach ensures that Home Managers and their Deputies self-regulate their activities and are fully accountable for compliance. The system stores a fully documented audit history available for inspection at any time, enabling Regal to be confident in their ability to maintain quality across the business and to be ready for regulatory inspections at any time.

Project – System Design by the Home Managers

The project was kicked off with Tony and Trish and a core group of home managers. The flexibility of the Assured Compliance platform enabled the team to define their own rigorous quality management templates and deploy them in a way they were comfortable with. From an initial pilot run in September 2012 rules were adapted to fit from feedback and the primary set of quality management profiles deployed in October.

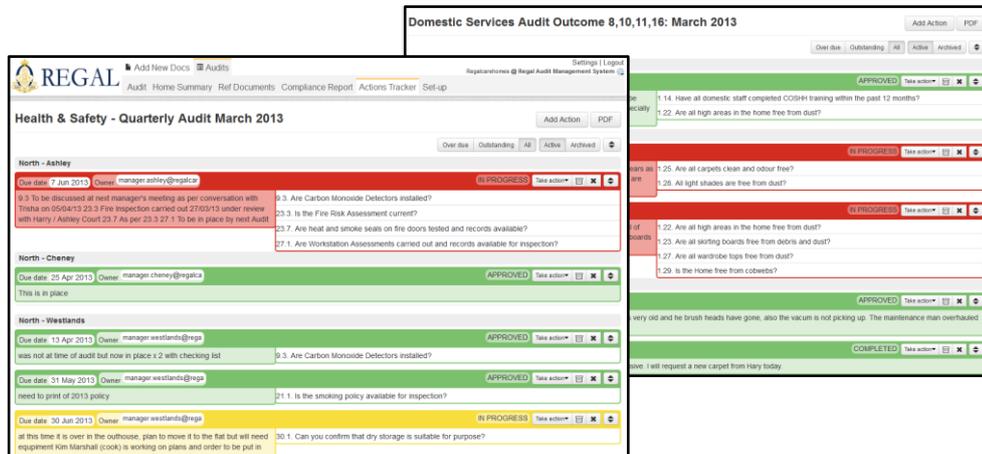
The team focused on making the system easy to use and respond; but with mandatory action plans in place and manageable from within the system.

From March 2013 other aspects – Health & Safety, Personnel, Financial and other key factors were added. In general the system is used to assess up to 5 key areas each month on a rotating basis.



Tracking Actions - Improving performance

One of the key aspects the home management team wanted to focus on was to use the Actions Management facility to ensure that not only were issues being highlighted, but that it was clear what was being done to fix them and to aim higher.



Act 3: It's not about Compliance - improving performance trends

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle 384-322 BC

From September 2012 to March 2013, occupancy across the business improved by more than 14%. In the previously worst-performing homes, improvements were more than 20%. This was done with little re-marketing and quality factors were the paramount aspect of improvement, particularly in the "first impressions" area. Ensuring that clinical compliance is significantly and consistently ahead of the CQC minimum standards means that everyone has confidence that there will be no avoidable crises.

The management team focuses consistently, and relentlessly, on quality and on improving performance month on month. The team reviews quality reports from the Assured Compliance system in monthly management meeting and shares best practice proactively:



Act 4: My Home Life - in shape for the future of Elder Care

"I've totally changed the ethos of the home from one that was predominantly task driven to one that is more focused on what our residents want and need in the here and now - it's not been easy but the changes have been positive for everyone." Care Home Manager

The team at Regal is now focusing on the future: ensuring that leaders and care workers are equipped to provide a consistent and excellent level of care for residents. The [My Home Life](#) programme focuses on a vision of best practice is underpinned by an evidence base developed by more than 60 researchers from Universities across the UK. Its eight themes identify what best practice in care homes looks like in the 21st century.

Key Lessons

Quality is paramount in any healthcare business. Notwithstanding the moral and legal duty to residents there is a clear benefit in terms of business performance. This should not be a surprise to anyone – businesses delivering poor quality generally do not last.

A critical factor is engaging managers and the whole workforce in the process of quality. In particular, Regal has found that engaging in the My Home Life programme has brought many benefits: giving staff increased resilience, meaning they are less at risk of burn-out. All of this enables reduced staff turnover and sickness with care homes' staff driving forward their own quality agenda resulting in improved relationships with external agencies. There are some key messages:

Case Study: Assured Compliance

- ④ There is no magic silver bullet to improving performance or short cuts.
- ④ Short term cost cutting to improve the numbers inevitably results in deterioration in the quality of service which hits occupancy and costs more to fix.
- ④ A focus on quality and training is the key factor in performance.
- ④ Maintain open communication with key stakeholders – residents/relatives, employees, commissioners, CQC.
- ④ Leadership and ownership of quality is a critical enabler of change both at Company and Home level. Management needs to be flattened with very small central team.
- ④ Keep it Simple – focus on Quality, Occupancy and Financial measures in all meetings.
- ④ Find smarter ways to spend money especially on the Estate.

Benefits of the Assured Compliance approach

The system automatically requests information on key compliance and performance of activities from the individuals responsible on a weekly, monthly or quarterly (or in fact any period you care to specify) basis and enforces the level of verification need. Its interactive settings also manage the corrective process where non-compliance is identified.

The system is self-managed by the care provider at the “coal face”. Should documentation not be submitted, or the service fall below the required standard, the activity is ‘red flagged’. The real power is in how easy it is to use and how it stores a total record of all documentation and responses. If you need to manage activities at multiple regions, or simply have a system in place to manage your regulatory requirements, you will not find an easier, more flexible and scalable, or more cost effective solution anywhere.

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