



## A case study on the implementation of easyLog's carer record and administration system at a residential care home

The decision by Michael and Pat Banks to implement the care-Log+ system at their twenty-six bed Care Home was not as the result of an exhaustive review of available solutions; more through recognition of a good idea and its potential to solve a problem that they foresaw would only increase. As Pat Banks, a former NHS Nurse, recalls, "We wished to move away from paper-based systems. We saw the volume of recording that we were now being asked to maintain and identified that this could only diminish the time Care staff could spend with our Residents. Looking ahead, we also realised that finding information on paper would become more difficult as the number of files grew and, yet further into the future, we would ultimately be confronted with the practical issue of storage!"



Above: The Chestnuts Residential Care Home, Meopham, Kent

The arrival of a mailshot from easyLog on their palmtop (PDA) computer-based care record management system, care-Log+, was timely. Michael Banks remembers his thoughts at the time, "The idea of using a palmtop computer exactly matched what we wished to achieve; our Carers could record information as they went about their job, wherever that may be, without any reliance

on memory or having relevant documentation to hand or asking another Carer to make notes. It seemed like the answer!"

### A Good Idea

A demonstration was arranged with the software authors, easyLog. This confirmed the suitability of the system to The Chestnuts' management team. However, concerns remained about the care staff accepting and using a new system. These were quickly dispelled when, after a period of consultation, very positive feedback was received. As Senior Carer Leah Burnham comments, "We all felt it was a good idea and would make our jobs easier."

An order was placed for the software and two palmtop computers; one to be located on each floor of the home. Following the installation and training from easyLog, the system was gradually assimilated into the Carers' daily routines. The first phase involved the introduction of the palmtop computer for recording daily notes. Staff were given time to familiarise themselves with the PDA when not on the care floor. A 'crib sheet' was drawn up that documented the functions on the handheld specific to their usage at The Chestnuts. Pleasingly, all staff became competent users of the palmtop devices very quickly.

### Resident Day Book

The second phase covered the processing of the information gathered on the palmtop computers after it is downloaded into the care-Log+ application running on the computer. The software operates with an Alarm Panel that automatically flags on-screen if any

recorded note requires following up. These 'alarms' are reported in the Day Book which is a feature that receives particular praise from Leah Burnham, "Handovers have become more focused since the introduction of care-Log+. It is easy to view just the relevant information and is especially useful after absence through holiday or simply change in shift patterns. I can look back over the period I have been away and bring myself up-to-date very quickly."

The role of care-Log+ has now been extended into virtually every area of record keeping within The Chestnuts; Resident details, care plans, risk assessments, staff information and health and safety records have all been moved onto the system. As Care Home Manager Brenda Turley proudly relays, only three pieces of written documentation remain in the home, "We have retained the admissions sheet which is completed when a Resident first enters the home. This is because we find this a more personal approach than entering their

details directly into the computer as we ask questions.

Additionally, we keep any care plan documents that are sent from hospital with a Resident on admission and carry on with these. For legal reasons we also maintain an Accident Book. However all of these are typed into care-Log+ when it is convenient so that we operate with one central record source."

### CSCI Inspection

Indeed, pride in what has been achieved with the implementation of care-Log+ is a theme that Michael Banks picks up on, "Around five months after we had begun implementing the software, our

home had an announced CSCI inspection and I asked for a representative from easyLog to attend. This was not because I had any concerns, but I wished to show the inspectors how good the system is and recognise easyLog in that process." Clearly they were impressed as one of the inspectors asked for a brochure!

Interestingly some unexpected, and positive benefits, have been highlighted from the night care staff. The system enables care 'check lists' to be defined for each Resident. These are both prompted and recorded on the palmtop computer and are performed on a two hourly basis; a process that is seen to safeguard the interests of both Residents and staff.

care-Log+ is now viewed as an integral part of working at The Chestnuts. Any new care staff are trained on the system and readily accept it as part of their job function. The management team have seen great improvement in the quality of Resident records and daily notes.

### "Saving Time All The Time"

As a carer that has been much involved in the transition from the paper to computer-based system, Leah Burnham is well-placed to summarise the practical benefits gained, "care-Log+ is saving time all the time. Dealing with queries from Residents' relatives, answering questions from GPs on the course dates of medications, providing details to paramedics when a Resident is being taken to hospital; all now take less time and can be answered with more confidence because the records are easier to find and more accurate."



Above: The new wing at The Chestnuts

