PULSE stays ahead of the curve

With powerful clinical governance infrastructure and Datix patient safety software

Datix®
Software for Patient Safety

PULSE is a leading health and social care staffing and services business providing a broad range of specialist health and social care professionals to some of the largest NHS trusts, private hospitals, social service departments and local authorities nationwide.

Through dedicated divisions, PULSE provides outsourced bank management services to large NHS Trusts and delivers care and nursing support to people with complex conditions in their own homes. It prides itself on helping healthcare organisations to save management time and money without compromising the quality of patient care.

Established nearly 25 years ago, PULSE has moved with the times, responding to the fast-growing demand for care outside hospital by investing heavily in the development of specialist care packages for community healthcare operations.

In 2010, for the second year running, PULSE was named Staffing Agency of the Year by the respected industry publication, Health Investor. With over 400 staff, it also ranks in the Sunday Times '100 Best Companies to work for'.

A new approach to patient safety, risk management and reporting

Like many organisations that have grown quickly and responded successfully to changes in the marketplace, PULSE recognised the need to introduce consistent processes and effective ways of working to manage its diversifying business portfolio and comply with the mandates of external regulators.

Katie Hall, Quality and Compliance Manager at PULSE, takes up the story, "Up until a year ago, we had a very one dimensional database that offered limited strategic or management information. It was purely a repository for logging the number and type of incidents we received across the whole organisation. There was no differentiation between incidents and complaints let alone a meaningful process for reviewing trends taking place and how incidents were investigated or responded to.

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Katie Hall
Quality and Compliance
Manager at PULSE

Working with a trusted technology partner

Karen Matthews-Shard was appointed as PULSE's Clinical Director in March 2010. Karen was hired to head up clinical governance and spear-head a radical new programme aimed at developing a consistent framework for analysing and reporting risk, adverse events and complaints group wide.

Critical to the success of the project was working with a strong technology partner, a pioneer in the field of patient safety who could build a sophisticated incident reporting and risk management platform. Karen had already implemented Datix patient safety software successfully at Vanguard Healthcare that was subsequently acquired by Nuffield Health. Her previous positive experience of the solution together with her ability to present a sound business case to the Board of Directors at PULSE that Datix was flexible, could easily be adapted to their needs and would yield beneficial results secured Datix as the system of choice.

Presenting the true picture

All healthcare organisations must report complaints to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the health and social care regulator for England, when requested. However, after careful analysis of PULSE's own reporting, Karen discovered that PULSE was at risk of over-reporting. Karen explained, "By its very nature, community care is a high risk area for incidents and complaints but only real complaints should be reported to the CQC and because the previous system was unable to differentiate between adverse events, incidents and complaints, we were potentially over-reporting. In fact, true complaints represented only a small proportion of the total number being recorded. Datix enables us to reflect an accurate situation and provides far more control over the incidents and complaints process."

The ability of Datix to partition information quickly and accurately has helped PULSE to transfer the value of the solution to other parts of the business and overcome the challenge of monitoring the activities of people on client sites. For example, PULSE is responsible for a large number of temporary doctors, nurses, social workers and other allied health professionals in addition to its community healthcare staff. Datix is flexible enough to cover all eventualities and accurately track the exact number and nature of incidents or complaints by division and this is a real bonus for PULSE.

Karen Matthews-Shard, Clinical Director at PULSE continued, "Our requirements are very diverse but Datix has enabled us to prove that PULSE is in control of what is happening across the organisation. This makes it a powerful business tool and gives us distinct competitive advantage. Thanks to Datix, we have a high impact governance structure that helps us monitor, investigate and take appropriate action. Most importantly, we can now share lessons learnt and best practice organisation wide."

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> Clinical Director at PULSE

Rapid results inspire confidence and trust

The deployment of Datix has yielded a range of significant benefits for PULSE, not least client confidence and employee morale.   Increased visibility within the Datix system of all incidents, adverse events and complaints has led to a build up of trust with clients who have proof that PULSE has effective measures in place to deal with issues efficiently and quickly. At the same time, employees and agency workers know that when they report something it will be dealt with and the outcome, with any associated feedback, communicated back to them.

By instigating true clinical governance, PULSE has increased the awareness of risk across the organisation and the need for thorough reporting to a consistent set of people. The transparency that Datix provides now means that senior management have a clear and single view of the risks and outcomes of patient safety throughout the group. Datix has given the Clinical Governance team the evidence they need to demonstrate to the Board and to external auditors, how technology plays an intrinsic role in underpinning processes that improve patient safety and deliver excellent patient care.

"PULSE can be a demanding and fast-paced environment but Datix rose to the challenge, listened to our needs and adapted the solution to match our requirements completely. The expertise and knowledge of the people at Datix coupled with excellent training and ongoing support makes it an outstanding partner," concluded Karen.

Future plans

Karen and her team have ambitious plans for the future to use Datix to identify trends and areas for improvement and to scope out a rigorous training programme for 2011 and beyond, all part of the company's commitment to continuous improvement.

About PULSE Healthcare

PULSE is a leading health and social care staffing and services business with a 2010 turnover of £168 million. PULSE provides a broad range of specialist health and social care professionals to customers in the UK and abroad in both temporary and permanent jobs. Through dedicated divisions, PULSE provides outsourced bank management services to large NHS Trusts and delivers care and nursing support to people with complex conditions in their own homes.

Established nearly 25 years ago, PULSE has moved with the times, responding to the fast-growing demand for care outside hospital by investing heavily in the development of specialist care packages in the home and in the community.

In 2010, for the second year running, PULSE was named Staffing Agency of the Year by the respected industry publication, Health Investor. With over 400 staff, it also ranks in the top 50 of the Sunday Times '100 Best Companies to work for'.

For more information, please visit: www.pulsejobs.com

Fast Facts

- Appointment of Clinical Director instigates change with Clinical Governance lying at the heart of PULSE's corporate strategy

- Datix provides total visibility of incidents and complaints from initial reception through to final resolution and closure

- Success of Datix implementation in Community Health Care division encourages adoption to other parts of the business

- Greater awareness of risk across the organisation has led to better reporting and tighter compliance with external legislation

- Datix is a strategic business tool - senior management now have a clear view of risks and take proactive action to ensure high quality patient care

About Datix

Datix has been a pioneer in the field of patient safety since 1986 and is today the leading supplier of software for patient safety, risk management, incident and adverse event reporting. Datix aims to help healthcare organisations build a culture and practice that drives excellence in patient safety. Datix recruits and retains people committed to the healthcare sector and continually invests in its software and services to ensure that it integrates best practice and learning.

Datix is focused on the health and social care sector - customers include public and private hospitals, primary care providers, GP surgeries, mental health and ambulance service providers. Datix clients also include organisations delivering care home and domiciliary care services. Within the UK this includes more than 70% of the National Health Service. Internationally the Datix client base is growing rapidly and includes large scale deployments in Canada and the USA as well as clients in Europe and Australia.