


 The logo for easyLog features the word "easy" in a green, lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by "Log" in a black, uppercase, sans-serif font. The "Log" is enclosed within a thin green square border.

A case study on the implementation of easyLog's staff scheduling and payroll analysis system into a care home group.

When Bristol-based Brunelcare decided to replace its staff scheduling and payroll analysis software for its three hundred staff across six care homes, two things were very clear. First, the product would be selected from a thorough review of available software in the market and second, the application would need to be implemented within a very short period of the choice being made. As the Project Manager Joel Anies explains, the group knew the functionality they were looking for, "We assembled a representative review team that consisted of care home managers, home administrators, the IT Manager and the Director responsible for the Care Home division. Most of this panel were users of the existing system and therefore very capable of comparing the functionality that was required with what they were being shown."



Brunelcare's Cowlin House in Bristol where the e-Log+S system was piloted

Electronic Attendance Recording

One of the key requirements was to have a system that integrated with an electronic method of recording staff attendance. The absence of this element within the old system meant that staff completed manual timesheets. These were entered into the software, for comparison with the shifts on the rota, to ensure that staff were paid at the correct rates for the hours that they worked. This output was then re-keyed into a spreadsheet and sent to the head office-based payroll function where the data was transferred again into the centralised payroll software.

The possibility for human error, and the volume of manual intervention, made it a relatively simple business decision to seek a new system when

the software licence for the product became due for renewal. This also provided a focus for the review group as both the selection process, and initial pilot to prove the chosen product, had to be completed within a three month window.

Eight suppliers were offered an individual two hour presentation slot during one week at which the selection team objectively scored each software product across a range of criteria. At the end of the week, the three highest scoring companies were invited to return and demonstrate their product against a 'script' consisting of a number of detailed scenarios; these reflected specific instances, such as recording sickness absence and holiday hours together with pay rate calculations, that the chosen product would need to perform in everyday operation.

As Joel Anies recalls, the e-Log+S system from easyLog consistently performed well under scrutiny, "The software was seen as flexible and able to adapt to Brunelcare's method of operating. We were particularly impressed that a member of easyLog's software development team attended the second demonstration to discuss the small bespoke development that would be required to exactly match our pay scheme calculation. For us, this highlighted the company's attention to detail and displayed their commitment to achieve the deadline that had been set."

Pilot System

A purchase order was placed for a pilot system including electronic attendance hardware and a day of training together with the identified bespoke software elements. This was installed in Cowlin House, one of the two smaller residential homes in the Group. The additional development was in two phases: The first covered some modifications required to calculate at the correct rate any additional hours worked over an employee's monthly contract and a points-based bonus scheme. The second phase was to provide an automated data transfer from each home to the centralised payroll software.

After a successful two month pilot period, the scheduling software and 'clocking' hardware was installed into the other five homes. This was done within a single week with, again, each home having an individual day of on-site training. This allowed each home in the second phase to have one month of overlap with the old system before going 'live' and producing payroll data entirely from the new easyLog system. As Tracy Watts, an administrator at one of the largest homes at the time (and now working in the Group's centralised Human Resource function) relays, the rapid implementation was initially a cause of apprehension for system users, "Understandably I was somewhat anxious because of how quickly the new system had to be operational. However, the training was very helpful and allowed me to understand both how to configure the software to fit our requirements and how easy it was to operate on a daily basis". The telephone support provided by easyLog following the training also wins praise from Tracy Watts, "I found their staff were always very helpful. The company had copies of each home's software configuration so the person I spoke with was able to understand what I was trying to achieve whenever I called for help."



Brunelcare's nursing home at Glastonbury

Instant Rota and Attendance Comparison

The change in timesheet recording method also produced significant benefits. Reports highlighted persistent lateness and the comparison of actual attendance against the shift times on the staff roster became instantaneous. "This saved me hours!", comments Tracy Watts. "The comparison can be viewed in a simple colour-coded representation per employee. This made it very visual and therefore easy to understand. It meant I didn't have to wade through lots of timesheets, rota printouts and report details to know what had happened on any day."

As in any organisation, personnel and their roles change over time and Brunelcare is no exception. Kirsty Hirst is an example of an employee

that has moved from a head office position to become the manager of the Group's Burnham-on-Sea home around a year after the initial implementation. As a 'second generation' user of the easyLog system, Kirsty is appreciative of how the e-Log+S software assists in her ever-increasing workload, "I manage to complete the monthly payroll run in less than two and a half hours, including all of the reports required by head office."

Powerful Reporting

Centralised reporting from a number of homes – so that the current position can be monitored and assessed – is a necessity for any care group. Brunelcare requires each home to produce a Daily Report. This, as the name suggests, is submitted each day and details the hours worked across the various job functions in the previous twenty-four hours. The Report includes any other costs incurred from paid employee sickness and holiday absence.

Kirsty Hirst also cites how she was asked in a CSCI inspection for the total number of hours that had been covered by agency staff in the previous six weeks and was able to answer the question immediately from the detail held in the software. "It is a very powerful tool and some elements of it, such as the training costs and holiday reports, are brilliant! The software certainly works for me and that, in turn, makes the scheduling and payroll function a hassle-free part of my job."

