

THE WAY FORWARD

**MANAGING THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE
FACED BY THE CARE SECTOR**



**An interview with
Clare Norris, Managing Director
The Contemplation Group**

Extract from a report commissioned by:



Powerful Accounting Software

Introduction

As yet, the digital revolution might not have taken hold across the care sector – but it's going to happen, probably sooner rather than later.

The impact of robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, the internet of things will be significant, and should improve both quality of life for those who are being cared for and the viability of the companies providing that care.

Coupled with technology which optimises operational and administrative tasks, providing information which is of value to the provision of services rather than simply score keeping.

Such change could be the biggest challenge the sector has ever had to address. As one CEO put it, managing technology could be like constantly pressing on the fast-forward button on the television remote and trying to make sense of what you're watching on the screen. But how do we synchronise technology with humanity, a question which is going to be mission critical.

In a report commissioned by iplicit, the cloud accounting software company, to be prepared and published by DECISION magazine later this year, owners and directors in the care sector will be talking about the issues and how they can be reconciled.

This is one of the interviews to be included.



How technology can be so enhancing

This isn't a scenario unique to any particular sector, but here it has more resonance than in most.

“Larger care home groups can have the resource and financial capacity to embrace technology more quickly, and there can be a natural resistance among smaller operators to introduce change, especially when the owners are of an age where they are not so comfortable with technology.

“They're not going to be so naturally inclined to want to look at the potential of technology, let alone have the appetite or passion for it. But regulation means smaller operators will be under greater pressure to meet data capture needs for compliance.”

Clare Norris is managing director of The Contemplation Group, which owns and operates eight residential nursing homes, four residential learning disability homes, plus a care staff and nursing employment agency.

“I wonder about the future of small operators,” she continues, “because operational pressures overlaid with increasing regulation, rising costs, and staff shortages mean technology





Clare Norris

isn't so likely to be high on their agenda." Norris debunks the notion that technology should result in dehumanising care.

"Quite the opposite," she asserts. "IT enables us to manage the sheer volume of information which has to be processed, and should take away the potential for human error.

"Our IT platform encompasses everything from digital care records, integrated payroll, e-learning, to providing a CQC (Care Quality Commission) portal, digital medication management systems, and direct links to GP surgeries.

"As a consequence, technology also frees up time which enables us to focus more on the actual provision of care.

"But it is about balance. What I can see coming down the path are co-bots, robots designed to support human interaction within a shared space, which means that tasks which require lifting a resident for example will need one carer rather than two.





One of The Contemplation Group care homes

“The deployment of co-bots mean there is less likely to be an injury risk to the resident or carer during a manoeuvre.

“Technology enables room and bed sensors generate the flag for intervention as soon as it is required rather than after an event has happened or when the resident or carer becomes aware of it.

“Yes, technology might enable a care home to operate with fewer staff or the same number meeting higher needs, but it allows more time in total to be spend with residents than would have been the case before.”



“The thinking about technology in a care home setting is that it has to be about enhancing the provision of care rather than providing the actual care,” Norris maintains.

“The dependency of residents is increasing and becoming more complicated. Technology can support the provision of care but we should always consider the point of direct contact with a resident. A person living with dementia for example could become anxious about the presence of something unfamiliar like a robot.”

But Norris is relaxed about the willingness of the care providers to utilise technology.

“How we communicate and engage with staff has had to keep pace with the smart phone enabled WhatsApp generation,” she points out. “So our work rotas are on a staff app, and holiday dates are booked through it.

“I think the key message is that on the whole, most people are comfortable with being prepared to engage with what will make life easier and better for them as carers, and for those we are looking after.”

contemplationhomes.co.uk



About iplicit

Providing a cloud-based finance and management software solution that allows the care sector to focus on what really matters.

Tailored for those frustrated by on-premise legacy software, iplicit provides greater flexibility and enhanced levels of reporting, integrating with other cloud applications for a seamless migration path from a user's existing system, enabling organisations to 'step up' to next generation finance software without losing the functionality they currently enjoy.

iplicit received the Accounting Excellence award for mid-market and enterprise software of the year in 2020, and the top product for enterprise accounting/ERP in the Accounting Web software awards, 2021.

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The interview with Clare Norris was undertaken with Tim Bryars, specialist at iplicit in working with the care sector.



About DECISION magazine

First published in 1988, DECISION magazine reflects the business lifestyle, the trials and tribulations, the hopes and aspirations of directors and managing partners responsible for businesses with a turnover of £5million and above.

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