

THE WAY FORWARD

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



**An interview with Jay Patel
Director
Minster Care 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.



Win-win version of technology

“There is so much new technology, which is great, but it can be extremely overwhelming,” says Jay Patel, business development director of family-owned Minster Care Group with some sixty-five care homes across the country.

Which is why he believes it’s important to cut to the chase about its purpose. “Care should always be a personal matter, so it’s about human interaction, which means choosing technology should be on the basis of what enriches that, to enable carers to devote themselves to the caring aspects of their job,” asserts Patel. “Nobody decides to work in the care sector because they want to spend as much time as possible on admin, whether or not it’s tech enabled.”

With that in mind, technology can be a win-win version of a double-edged sword for the care sector.

Explains Patel: “We are rolling out a new time and attendance system, but it’s more than an administrative aid. It’s an effective communication tool. Because it’s on an app it means as well as providing what we have found to be more constructive feedback, it allows better employee engagement by involving





Jay Patel

night and weekend staff who can be harder to reach. With our care planning portal, our whole estate is covered. I can see data on each resident and that enables us to have KPIs in the system focusing on potential risk factors such as accidents, infections, pressure sores.

“And artificial intelligence will enable us to have an immediate analysis of the data. The system also enables us to demonstrate governance because it flags up Care Quality Commission notifications and that they have been followed correctly.



“Artificial intelligence is going to be interesting because while traditionally, compared to other sectors, care homes had been archaic when it came to technology, if you think about it we collect more personal data from any other service provider, down to how much an individual resident has had to eat for breakfast, what they had to drink, and how much they consumed. As AI becomes more sophisticated, including more granular detail in its analysis, it will provide us with further insights which will drive more targeted individual interventions proactively.

“Harnessing artificial intelligence means we can make care much more forward thinking. From the data, it can flag if a resident is likely to stumble, at what time of day, and why.

“The danger is that we come to rely on the computer, so we don’t think to do anything unless prompted by it. If artificial intelligence tells us someone will have a good night because of an analysis of their food and fluid intake, and with acoustic monitoring picking up something out of the ordinary, is that what the provision of care in the future will completely rely on?”

“Robots,” says Patel, “can perform certain repetitive functions, lifting a resident in and out of bed, serving tea and coffee, for example. But as a companion for residents? Our homes will already have Alexa type devices which can be asked by a resident to read them a story. We don’t need robotics for that to happen.

“I was impressed though by a demonstration of a smart cup which registers not only how much liquid has been put into it but





One of the Minster Care Group homes

how much a resident actually consumes, with the information automatically loaded into the system. Today it's probably prohibitively expensive for wide adoption but five years down the line, the cost will have had to come down."

What has really surprised Patel is the reaction of carers to change brought about by technology. "We have a senior carer who is seventy-two and works four shifts a week. She's a champion of electronic medication management because she can see the positive advantages," he reveals.

That particular process is an example of how technology can provide seamless automation, but Patel adds a caveat. "It makes sense that a GP will send a digital prescription to the pharmacist,



with the data automatically updating the patient's record at the care home. When the medication is delivered, the system prompts the care home when it is time for the resident to take it. It all makes the dispensation as safe as possible.

“But a single care home operator would find it difficult to meet the cost of all this because they can't leverage it across other locations. What would address that is having a government list of say five approved suppliers who would provide a discounted price for the care sector because of that status.”

There's something else which troubles him. “Now if you ask me the question could technology reduce the dependence on carers, my response would be if the purpose of introducing technology is to replace people, you'll get found out,” he muses. “When family members visit, they will pick up the vibe.”

But it's not just technology which is having an impact. “The introduction of private equity investment into the care sector has resulted in the development of luxury care homes which are like five star hotels,” says Patel, “and that has brought an extra level of sophistication and choice.”

minstercaregroup.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 Jay Patel was undertaken with Tim Bryars, a 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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