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National Care Group transforms payroll and accounting processes with integrated solutions from Advanced

Leading care provider moves from smaller legacy systems to a single, integrated platform to enhance productivity and generate real-time data for effective decision-making.

National Care Group

National Care Group (NCG), which launched in March 2016 to address the lack of high quality supported living care in the UK, is a leading provider of care and support services to vulnerable adults throughout the United Kingdom. We work closely with the people we support, their family members, local authorities and care providers to deliver high quality, person-centred support to an ever-increasing number of people across the country. We specialise in supporting young individuals and adults with a wide range of disabilities and needs, and offer services including residential care, outreach and home support, supported living and day services.

Legacy systems operating in siloes

Our ambitious growth plans can only succeed with the right technology in place to help our workforce become more productive and, critically, to enable our senior management to have access to accurate, real-time data to support effective decision-making. We had inherited various smaller legacy systems, all of which operated in siloes and had serious consolidation implications. We needed to move these forward to a single platform, starting with payroll. It was important to improve our bottom line considerably by shortening response times and improving quality of data to pinpoint issues.

A standard platform for our whole group

Our Group Finance Director, David Rowe-Bewick, took up the initiative of creating a standard platform across the whole group. He commented, "The challenge with a business that is undertaking acquisitions is that you are not just bringing people on board, but technology too. The legacy technology we acquired wasn't suitable for our group needs, it was more appropriate for smaller organisations. We knew we needed to trade this technology for something more reliable, scalable and accessible or our business could be at risk. We are a growing organisation and we need a grown-up system that will cut out timely and costly processes, as well as give us a real-time view into how the business is performing. It had to be a user-friendly system that could easily be implemented with any future acquisitions of all sizes and types across the country, as quickly and painlessly as possible. We also wanted a solution that would enable us to reduce certain manual tasks, freeing staff up to focus on higher value activities."

The importance of the right technology

David continues, "Financial Directors spend too much time crunching numbers and entering data into spreadsheets. The more human input you have in the process, the more chance there is of errors. I have been a sponsor for a number of IT projects throughout my career, and I know the importance of getting technology right. Data is increasingly expensive, even when it is automated. Like many other organisations, we are good at creating data but have been bad at optimising the use of it."

Client >
National Care Group

Sector >
Health services

Project >
Suite of integrated software, including OpenPeople and OpenAccounts.

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David Rowe-Bewick > Group Finance Director > National Care Group

CASE STUDY

Powerful technology that can support and help integrate our growing business

A suite of integrated software

We selected a suite of integrated solutions from Advanced, including OpenPeople, OpenAccounts and Staffplan as we wanted to transform our financial accounting and payroll processes, as well as improve working practices for health and social care staff on the ground. We also decided to outsource the IT operations and utilise the managed services offering from Advanced, which meant we could remove the burden of managing our own IT infrastructure.

David adds, "I had worked with Advanced in a former role, and was familiar with the organisation and its solutions. The decision to work with Advanced was an obvious one. We want to be a market-leader in social care, so we need to work with a market-leader in technology. Advanced's range of products meet our specific needs, it's not just a one-size-fits-all solution. And like NCG, Advanced is a large and fast-growing business. We share the same passion and values, so it boded well for our partnership."

Going live

We had previously outsourced our payroll and wanted to bring it in-house. We went live with OpenPeople, the payroll solution from Advanced, across 26 different companies in April 2019. David comments, "Obviously this is a complex set-up, we have 26 payrolls and 2,000 staff. OpenPeople has streamlined our processes, as data is now easy to input and we can export it to relevant banking systems. The new solution reduces human error, it puts the onus on the people who provide the data to get it right from the start, removing that responsibility from those who work with this data internally."

We have also now gone live with OpenAccounts across multiple companies. OpenAccounts is a fully integrated suite of financial accounting modules which will help us deliver accurate management information across our entire organisation in real-time. It will enable us to reduce our costs, make more effective decisions and boost financial visibility.

The next focus for us is implementing Staffplan, the scheduling, rostering and billing solution which will also provide flexible mobile access for our care teams. The project could not be more important, as it will impact our two key stakeholders – our clients and our staff. We plan to go live with it by April this year.

Decisions now based on facts, not gut feelings

David comments, "With the implementation of OpenAccounts, we are anticipating that at the touch of a button we will now be able to see gross margin profitability, and can drive the business forward - based on facts not gut feelings. OpenAccounts enables us to look at profits and drill down to property and client level, so we can work out what needs refining, or potentially if we need to move on if something is not a good fit for the business. We were already aware that some elements of our business were not quite right for us as an organisation, but didn't have the evidence to back up these decisions. With this new solution we can pinpoint these areas, and move forward more productively."

Understanding data in a new way

Now that we are live with OpenAccounts and OpenPeople, we are starting to have discussions around the business about what people want us to deliver next, and how business intelligence will help them get the most from the real-time data they now have at their fingertips. We will be using Intuitive Dashboards, a business partner of Advanced, so that we can see the information we need to make informed decisions. Now we have access to the data, we can look at understanding it in a way that will add the maximum benefits to our business.

David sums up, "Working with Advanced means we have powerful technology that can support and help integrate our growing business, both now and in the future. It allows us to focus on what we do best, delivering outstanding care and support to vulnerable adults across the UK."

More information

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