

# easy Log

## Spectrum ASD: Customising software to meet the unique needs of an autism services provider – and earn the praise of industry inspectors

What started as a search for off-the-shelf software to replace an outdated intranet-based timesheet and incident log “held together with string and foil” has resulted in autism service provider Spectrum ASD implementing a constantly evolving record-keeping, attendance and data logging system that easyLog has tailored to the organisation's precise requirements.

Nearly all of Truro-based Spectrum's 500 team members – the charity is one of Cornwall's largest employers – use easyLog software in some way, from clocking-in with a biometric hand-scanner and checking the rota or requesting holiday online to keeping detailed, up-to-the-minute notes in one of Spectrum's 24 residential homes for adults and children with autism.

“About 98 per cent of our team members use the easyLog system – we do a roll-out per house and there are just two houses that need to come online fully. It's been part of our induction for about the last year,” explains Spectrum's head of developments, Robin Gunson.

“Basically everyone in the organisation in some way, shape or form touches easyLog, apart from maybe the gardener – although even the maintenance team use it now. So that's support workers, training leads, behavioural specialists through to managers and the people who repair the buildings all working with the software.”

### Starting the easyLog journey

Spectrum delivers a range of specialist autism-related services alongside the residential homes, including outreach support and a 16-pupil school. The charity also runs the Pearl Centre in Truro, which provides information and advice on autism spectrum disorders.

In late 2015, the organisation decided to update its very basic timesheet and incident logging system and began the process of searching for a suitable software provider.

“We had our own intranet on which we were hosting a timesheet system and incident sheet log, plus a few other internal things. But basically that was held together with hairy string and foil and was about to fall over. So we were seeking a replacement timesheet system initially,” says Robin.



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“One of my colleagues went to look at easyLog timesheet software that was being used in a care home locally and that was where the journey started.”

Spectrum liked what they saw and decided to install easyLog's Home Care Studio package, chiefly because it was the most economical way of combining the features they wanted most – staff scheduling and timesheet software with a module for including client information on rotas. They also purchased biometric hand-scanners to register employees' attendance.

As they were already keen to enhance data handling and connectivity across the houses, however, Robin and his team soon began wondering what else they could do with their new software.

“I had a look at the care package and thought that elements of it would be very useful to us for daily notes, which was an area we needed to improve. All that was paper-based at the time so it was essentially redundant data because you couldn't analyse it easily,” Robin explains.

“Another colleague began fiddling with the system and she realised how adaptable it was, in terms of being able to create and change the field boxes, and how, because it's cloud based, other admins could see it quickly and easily. This was very useful feature for us as a multi-service organisation operating across Cornwall.”

The team also tried out easyLog's Carer App on a tablet and saw how simply support workers could record and view information. A light bulb moment occurred as they realised this was the key to delivering the online information system they wanted across the services.

### Tailoring the system to meet Spectrum's needs

With easyLog's support, Spectrum started a customisation process that has turned the standard software into a bespoke system. And the process is still going on.



The first customisation was an incident monitoring function, using the employee database provided by the hand-scanner attendance system.

“We were pretty clear about what we wanted it to do because we'd had previous iterations in other forms. So it was built to our specification and it works really well,” says Robin.

“What we particularly like is the ability to get e-mail alerts to smartphones, giving a slice of the incident sheet that's posted. Virtually in live time, people can see

an occurrence and give feedback on the form itself so there is a record. And there's a follow up alert seven days later if it's not been signed off by a manager.”

Robin adds that a lot of honing has been involved – “not because the software wasn't fit for purpose in the first place but to make it even better”. Much of this has been done by Spectrum's easyLog manager, Beckie Kershaw, who has worked with easyLog on two other major



customisations – a staff portal, where team members can check their shifts, request leave and so on, and a buildings maintenance log.

“I usually start by talking to whichever department it is that wants the development and pencil together a proposal for easyLog,” says Beckie.

“We discuss how it will work and they say how long it will take and what it will cost. They then do the work and we install it and test it out. I ring easyLog if we need to change anything slightly and that's it really. It's fairly straightforward and there's always someone on hand to answer any question I may have.”

Beckie is also responsible for training team members to use the easyLog system and has written a series of in-house guides.

“We've got a huge range of technological abilities among our staff,” she says. “There are quite a lot who are like, oh yes, we can do this, and it's pretty straightforward. And quite a few that are a bit technophobic and need some extra help. But on the whole people seem to be getting on with the software well.”

### **Earning compliments from CQC and Ofsted**

Robin and Beckie are extremely pleased with both the user-friendliness and the functionality of their easyLog software, which has led to significant improvements in record-keeping. In particular, the ability of team members to record a range of information in detail and act on it quickly when required has received praise from Ofsted and CQC inspectors.

“We have some very complex people in our care and the easyLog software has allowed us to do highly focused yet very straight forward record keeping that is extremely person-centred,” says Robin.

“It's allowed us to pick up certain behaviours, really focus on them and find out about them, and make tweaks to the care system quickly. This has brought great pay-offs for the individuals themselves.”

He adds that Ofsted were very impressed by a pilot care record for one child that involved a team of 20-plus individual agencies.

“The care record was an individualised, bespoke response to his needs and Ofsted were hugely complimentary about it – the type of record-keeping, the quality of it, the ability to slice out certain fields of information and show it to them and the other agencies involved,” he says.

“They also liked the e-mail alerts for the incident sheet for the same reason and suggested some tweaks to record keeping, which we were able to put into the software easily.”

It has been a similar story with CQC inspections, with Spectrum adjusting the free text entry fields at the CQC's request so an individual's mood can be noted.

“One of our houses got an outstanding rating from CQC in one particular area because the software enabled us to notice something was wrong and correct it quickly,” Beckie says.

### **More customisations on the horizon**

The ability to view and share important information easily, and respond to it fast when necessary, have been significant benefits of the easyLog system for Spectrum. The organisation has also noticed improved punctuality as a result of managers checking clockings and considerable time being freed up as a result of paper-based tasks moving to the software. And they are using less paper too.

Robin says that they are so pleased with the system that they are planning to roll out more functions on the platform now it is firmly established. These include medication management, learning logs to enhance staff performance and more complex alarms.

“Once we really began to unpack what was in the easyLog cupboard we were pleasantly surprised,” he concludes.

“Even though it's not a bespoke system for autism services, the flexibility of the front end of it is absolutely great and has allowed us to develop something that really works for us and our individual needs.”

