Shaw Healthcare Case Study
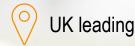
📅 Established in 1986   🏠 Over 60 care homes   📍 UK leading

Shaw Healthcare has over 60 homes across the UK providing a wide range of care options to residents. In April 2020 Shaw Healthcare started to work with e-f Healthcare and CaterCloud to make better use of technology in its catering operation. Consistency across all its homes was vital to professionalise the service that it offers to its residents. When looking for a system to help achieve this, Gavin Henderson, Head of Facilities Management Services from Shaw Healthcare , was also mindful that he wanted to provide the kitchen staff at each of the homes with a degree of flexibility due to the complex nature of residential care. In this case study Gavin outlines the reason for choosing CaterCloud and the benefits that Shaw Healthcare is already seeing.

When we started to look at food service software packages it was clear that the vast majority of these had been designed with the retail food industry in mind. Catering in residential care is very different and requires a much less comprehensive system. Many of these packages were over-engineered for our requirements and the corresponding costs put them out of our price range. When we found CaterCloud we were delighted to discover a system that had been designed with our industry in mind – a system that allowed us to create consistency in our service offering whilst also allowing our catering staff the freedom and flexibility to cater for specific requirements within the individual homes.

The first step after choosing CaterCloud was to invest in computers for every kitchen and then educate all the kitchen staff on how to use the system. This has been a challenge as many of the head cooks were not completely comfortable using an online planning system. However, once they had been shown the benefits of the system and had time to understand how it worked, they were able to see the benefits that it offered to them in terms of menu planning.

Because the CaterCloud system automatically provides you with nutritional and allergen information it helps with menu planning to ensure that all the requirements are being met. The searchable database of recipes also enables the cooks to search according to their requirements for example, the database can be searched for meals of 1000 calories and over or for meals that are suitable for diabetics. There are so many different variations that our kitchen staff really do get a huge amount of choice, even within the parameters that we have set across the whole company.

At a management level the system has provided us with some great insight across the whole estate. We can see spend per home, what meals are being chosen and keep an eye on budgets. For the individual home managers, it is a great way of ensuring that they are budgeting correctly. Food is not an area where we are looking to save money, but it is important that managers have the ability to check that they are not overspending according to occupancy and that any savings are held back for a big celebration at Christmas.

One of the real benefits of the system are the photographs that it enables the homes to use to aid with menu selection. For some of our residents who suffer with dementia, showing them a picture of the food choices is a much simpler way to help them understand than giving them a written menu. The CaterCloud system allows us to do this quickly and simply.

The final key aspect of CaterCloud that is a benefit now but will becoming increasingly valuable to us as a business moving forward, is the allergen information it provides us with. When Natasha's Law comes into force next year it is going to throw a real spotlight on this issue again. Trading Standards, Environmental Health and the CQC will all be keen to understand how we are complying with the requirements. CaterCloud takes any of the guesswork out of this and ensures that all our meals are compliant. We will be supplementing this with in-house training for all our staff so that they fully understand the reasoning behind the allergen information and why this is important to our residents.

Overall, even though we have only been using the system for a relatively short period of time, we are very pleased by how it is working for us. It is a food service software system that has been designed with the needs of residential homes in mind and I would recommend it to other homes who are looking to achieve consistency, flexibility and compliance in one simple solution."