



### At a Glance:

#### Industry

- Military Charity

#### Challenge

- More than 250 staff working at three treatment centres and in the field on outreach programmes requiring access to consistent policies and procedures

#### Solution

CONFORM, tailored and rebranded to deliver:

- Consistent, centralised management of policies and procedures
- A compliance audit trail to prove staff keep up to date with changes in policy
- More efficient policy review process
- Evidence of best practice and good governance
- Reduced risk of reputational damage or financial loss through legal action or regulatory fines



## CONFORM™ eases policy strain for Combat Stress

**Combat Stress is a much-valued charity that has provided specialist medical treatment and support to Armed Forces veterans suffering from trauma-related mental health issues since its foundation in 1919. Its services include short-stay clinical treatment, offered at three residential treatment centres in Surrey, Shropshire and Ayrshire; and community outreach services, delivered throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland by welfare officers, mental health practitioners and psychiatric nurses.**

### The Challenge

Any organisation delivering residential and outreach services needs carefully defined, first-class operational procedures, to cover activities including everything from the storage of medication to the complaint-handling process. To maintain consistent standards of service across the organisation it's important that management of these policies is coordinated and centralised; and there is also a need to review policies regularly and alter them where necessary.

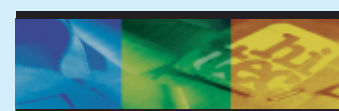
But this is not easy to do with such a geographically dispersed organisation. Each treatment centre is staffed by between 50 and 60 employees, many of whom work on a shift basis, and policy guidelines and changes also need to be communicated to the welfare officers and practitioners working on outreach services throughout the country. Most of these staff visit the treatment centre's headquarters regularly, but not usually at the same time.

"We could never have a meeting where we got all our staff together," says Major Malcolm Bellwood, director of service quality at Combat Stress. Up to now, news of any changes in policy could take some time to get around."

With a paper-based policy management system, minor administrative errors or delays could mean that paper records of policies kept in the treatment centres or used by outreach staff ended up out of date. There was a clear need for more effective policy management.

### The Solution

Combat Stress first came across Conform, Hitec Laboratories' policies, procedures and compliance solution, at an IT trade show. Once they saw it they realised the technology could do a useful job for the organisation.



**HITEC (LABORATORIES) LTD.**

Conform stood out among the software packages they considered as the most user-friendly solution, even though its reporting capabilities were more sophisticated than those of other potential solutions. Hitec was also able to rebrand the software for Combat Stress, helping to promote the organisation's corporate identity.

The system removes the old problem of there being more than one version of a policy in paper form and makes it easier for staff to search and access policies quickly through a computer, than from a paper file.

Major Bellwood reveals "If you imagine a member of staff working on a night shift who has a problem with a difficult admission or a client, and needs to refer to a policy quickly, he or she can immediately get to those policies through the computer, rather than searching through a big book". Conform's search function assists in this with keywords used to bring up every policy related to a particular subject, rather than forcing staff to search manually through paper records for the relevant document.

The solution also provides an audit trail that demonstrates if staff are keeping up to date with policy changes. "I need some kind of confirmation that the people who need to read the policies are actually reading them," Major Bellwood explains. "This means we can make sure everybody's up to date." The technology also makes the process of reviewing and rewriting the policies more straightforward and less time-consuming.

So far, implementation and training has all gone according to plan. "When we deployed this to our clinical managers I think it took us about ten minutes over the telephone," says the Major. "And none of them have come back saying they can't use it. It is fairly self-explanatory. Our only dilemma now is whether we should spend money on going and training people on the system, or do it all over the telephone."

## The Future

At the time of writing, following extensive testing and preparation, Combat Stress has rolled out the solution to cover its clinical policies – the most important of its policies. The next phase is to roll-out operational procedures and policies relating to finance, IT, HR, fundraising and welfare. About 80 Combat Stress staff, mostly working on the clinical side, already have access to the solution, but this number will rise as more staff are granted access.

"Conform gives us a manageable system that is easily updated," says Major Bellwood. "Staff have immediate access to up to date policies and we have an audit trail of policy management and staff compliance." The solution should continue to help the charity maintain the exceptionally high standards of service and care it delivers to the people it serves for years to come.

[www.hiteclabs.com](http://www.hiteclabs.com)

Hitec (Laboratories) Limited

UK & EMEA:

Slough:

Tel: +44 (0)1628 600900

Towcester:

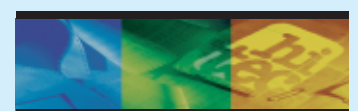
Tel: +44 (0)1327 811199

US, Canada & Caribbean:

Tel: +1 (508) 620 5372

Email: [sales@hiteclabs.com](mailto:sales@hiteclabs.com)

Conform™ is a trademark of Hitec (Laboratories) Ltd.



**HITEC (LABORATORIES) LTD.**