



CASE STUDY

Willowbrook Hospice: Leading the way in Gift Aid

Willowbrook Hospice is an Independent Charity established in 1993 by a group of local people to raise funds to build and run a Specialist Palliative Care Unit. Since the hospice opened in 1997, they have cared for over 6000 patients. During that time their services have grown so much that they now receive over 850 patient referrals each year.

The hospice currently operates 10 shops and a large donation Warehouse and Distribution centre covering St Helens and Knowsley. Their charity shops recycle or sell anything from furniture, books and clothes to electrical goods and children's toys. They also have an on-line shop selling new goods and an eBay shop selling good quality donated goods. All the money raised from their shops goes towards caring for local patients in need of the special care that they provide.

THE PROBLEM

Willowbrook Hospice, like many similar organisations, were aware that they needed to have the ability to better process Gift Aid through their stores. They had previously seen a Gift Aid system which had been adapted for purpose, rather than created entirely for the charity setting and were concerned that this would be costly and overcomplicated despite promises from the vendor that the solution would pay for itself within twelve months, which it turned out, it wouldn't have.

What Willowbrook Hospice really wanted was a basic system that held names, addresses and the sales figures. They also wanted to work with a company that was established enough to provide a solution that matched their needs perfectly, but was also small enough to deliver that all important personal experience. That's when they came across BMC Azurri.

THE BMC AZURRI SOLUTION

BMC Azurri specialises in the provision of Gift Aid solutions for the charity sector. The flexible solutions can be tailored to individual requirements and are totally scalable. One of the most popular options offered is the fully managed service which is cost effective and removes all of the administration workload from the charity.

Essentially the offer is a complete managed service, including the inputting of the donor detail and ending with the production of the R68 claim form, as well as advice and guidance with their choice of tillage equipment, either EPoS tills or touch-screens.

Following a detailed discussion and review with BMC Azurri, Willowbrook Hospice trialled the BMC Azurri Gift Aid solution in just a couple of shops initially, to see how volunteers coped with the new system. This was absolutely key to any future implementation as Carol Varey, Trading Company Manager at Willowbrook Hospice explains:

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TAKING GIFT AID TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The trial was successful and the system was then rolled out into all their shops, excluding their £1 stores. Once they had agreed on a system they took the bold step of appointing a Gift Aid co-ordinator whose primary role was to focus on the adoption and promotion of gift aid by the volunteers, training them on site, monitoring its effectiveness and taking overall responsibility for the charity's submission.

"Many charities fail to grasp just how crucial a role Gift Aid plays, so appointing a Gift Aid co-ordinator was a reflection of our commitment to ensuring that we really maximised it's potential throughout the organisation," explains Carol.

50% RETURNS FROM GIFT AID

Reports from Willowbrook's Gift Aid co-ordinator reveal that last year, since the new system was implemented, many of the stores are claiming gift aid on up to 50% of donations and the reaction from volunteers has been very positive.

These levels of Gift Aid are exceptional in the sector, explains Bob Morris, from BMC Azurri who comments:

"Many of the largest charities in the marketplace are currently only achieving 10-15% gift aid return on donations, so the levels achieved by Willowbrook Hospice are excellent and really reflect the commitment from the company as a whole, as well as the dedication of Jo (the Gift Aid co-ordinator) to making Gift Aid a core part of the day to day business operation and Carol the retail manager."

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

Willowbrook at some point will look to migrate from their Epos tills to touch screens as they realise that they need to keep their systems up to date and can benefit from new features of the solution. Further shop openings are also on the radar. Having formed a strong bond with the BMC Azurri team, it is expected that they will continue to play a key part in the future development and expansion of the Hospice.

Carol adds:

"Willowbrook Hospice chose BMC Azurri managed Gift Aid System because it was cost-effective in comparison to others. It is a simple, "volunteer friendly" system which is why we chose this company. The Hospice and BMC Azurri work well together – the service is efficient and the company responds well to any issues that we raise. We also love the fact that as BMC Azurri grows and update their offering; we will be able to develop alongside them, benefitting from advances and upgrades that are most relevant to us."

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