

Strengthening compliance around the AE audit

Building on success in delivering its 'acclaimed solution' for NHS Trusts to manage their PAM submissions, QuiqSolutions, in conjunction with IHEEM, is launching a suite of tools to assist in EFM governance and compliance. As the company's Sales director, Paul Kaye explains, the scope of the solution includes delivery of a digital solution around the AE auditing process, married to a new self-assessment tool for Trusts and Health Boards to manage year-round compliance with the relevant HTMs in each area.

Compliance in estates and facilities is attracting increasing attention in the wake of events at Grenfell. The consequences of non-compliance in large buildings are all too apparent, and there is now increasing pressure on the sector to bring more focus in this area.

Part of the reaction resulted in NHS England mandating that Trusts complete ongoing assessments and an annual submission of their compliance position via PAM (NHS Premises Assurance Model). PAM covers all aspects of estates and facilities management, with Estates teams grappling with the scope and the need to have input across multiple technical areas, potentially reflecting differences across many locations.

NHS England states in its guidance for PAM: "Assurance provides evidence and confidence for NHS Trust Boards and other interested parties that those actions needed to keep the NHS estate and facilities safe, effective, efficient and of high quality, will actually occur." Although Trusts have been provided with a spreadsheet template for gathering evidence of compliance with the questions in PAM, increasingly they are adopting digital solutions such as QuiqSolutions' QuiqCare software that makes the process much easier to manage.

Now attention has turned to some of the

other aspects of assurance and auditing of EFM operations, and in particular the auditing of Trusts by Authorising Engineers (AEs). IHEEM is the professional institute that accredits AEs, and has Technical Platforms of highly experienced professionals who develop standards that contribute to HTMs and other healthcare sector-specific guidance.

Up to now, IHEEM-accredited AEs have been largely using their own templates when carrying out audits across the technical areas such as Ventilation, Water, Decontamination, Electrical, and Medical Gases. These audits may be in digital format, but are more than likely undertaken via a spreadsheet or Word document, and frequently reference the relevant HTM for each area. IHEEM's Technical Platforms in all the key areas are now working to standardise the content of audits so that the quality can be assured and maintained in the future as guidance changes.

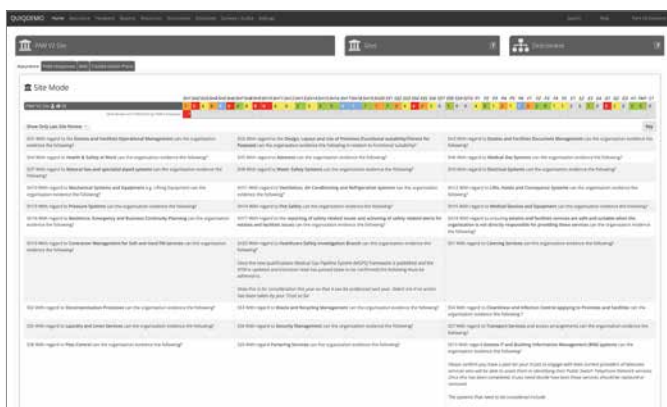
Opportunity to move to a digital platform

In addition to standardising the audits, IHEEM also recognised the opportunity to move to a digital platform, and take advantage of the additional functionality and efficiency savings that a purpose-made electronic quality management

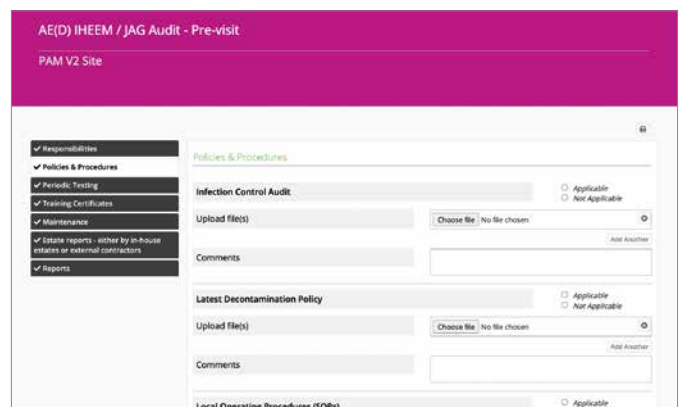


QuiqSolutions Sales director, Paul Kaye, said: "Up to now, IHEEM accredited AEs have been largely using their own templates when carrying out audits across the technical areas such as Ventilation, Water, Decontamination, Electrical, and Medical Gases."

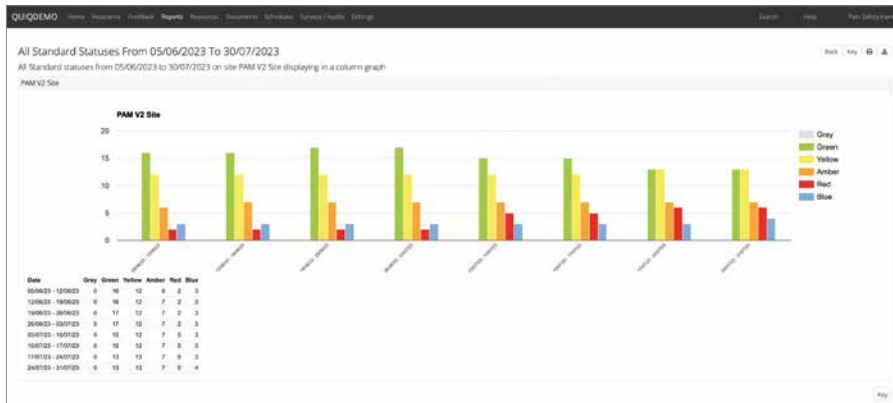
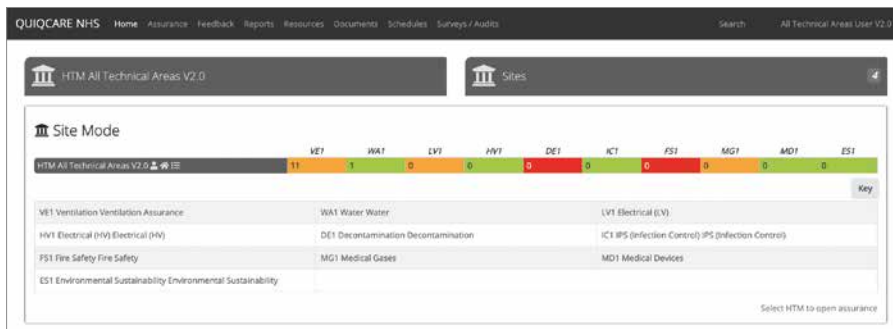
system (QMS) might bring when married with the right content. Indeed, this piece of work is one of the deliverables against the IHEEM 2023 published Business Priorities, namely 'Strengthen commitment to support the professional development of



The PAM home screen dashboard; a view across all domains.



Screenshot from the IHEEM / JAG Decontamination audit form.



From the top: An HTM audit form – home screen / dashboard; a compliance status report – date range; a compliance status report – grid view.

all IHEEM members’.

IHEEM CEO, Pete Sellars, says: “IHEEM is committed to raising the bar in terms of governance and assurance for patient safety and compliance, and we are delighted to be involved in the development of innovative digital solutions in the partnership with QuiqSolutions to support the healthcare estates and facilities sector in better managing its day-day operational activities. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the Institute’s Technical Platforms and Boards of Registration (AE) who are providing their considerable knowledge and expertise to support and ensure the success of this programme.”

QuiqSolutions is a leading player in this field, and as well as supporting many NHS Trusts with their PAM submissions, we have also supported national roll-outs in aseptic pharmacies to over 150 Trusts across all NHS regions, and are working with over 600 other health and social care organisations and every ICS (Integrated Care System) who use the software platform.

Three key elements

IHEEM and QuiqSolutions are now working together to offer a digital

solution for AEs, Trusts, and Health Boards. The IHEEM / QuiqCare package incorporates three elements, with pre-audit questionnaires allowing a provider to share key information and

documentation with their AE prior to the audit itself. This is then followed up by the AE Audit itself, with a standardised format accessible across multiple electronic devices, including mobiles, tablets, or laptops, depending on the preference of the AE. The findings are then shared with the provider – including all the recommendations for actions required in any non-compliant operations in each technical area. Finally, a third aspect of the package is based on the HTMs and other guidance to create a self-assessment capability for the provider, with the ability to record evidence statements, attach supporting documentation, and, where appropriate, action plans that can be used for the provider’s own compliance monitoring.

All information will be available for review by the AEs to satisfy themselves that appropriate responses to their audit findings have been enacted. Providers will be able to access dashboards across all EFM technical areas, and view real-time reports on the compliance position and ongoing action plans.

Freedom for individual AEs

While there will be a standardised audit form, there will be freedom for individual AEs to assess risks, apply their knowledge, and delve deeper into issues they might uncover. Preparing audit data in advance will help condition the provider to the information that their AE is going to need, and will save time looking for information on the day of the audit itself.

While use of the system is entirely optional for providers, having a standardised set of audit and compliance criteria underpinned by IHEEM’s technical expertise is expected to prove a highly compelling proposition.



QuiqSolutions and Paul Kaye

QuiqSolutions was founded in 2011 by entrepreneurs ‘with a highly successful business background’ in software and technology. Based in Shropshire, it delivers ‘unique software solutions’, primarily in health and social care, and ‘has established a reputation for offering innovative, yet user-friendly, solutions with high-quality support at affordable prices’.

Quality frameworks delivered using the proven QuiqCare QMS (Quality Management System) and audit platform are already used ‘by hundreds of health and social care providers’ – including over 150 NHS Trusts, as well as all ICBs and NHS England, ‘in multiple settings’. QuiqSolutions currently helps over 30 NHS Trusts manage their annual PAM (Premises Assurance Management) submissions, with what it says is ‘superior functionality compared with using the standard NHS spreadsheet, supporting continuous improvement and real-time reporting’.

Paul Kaye is ‘a highly successful entrepreneur with a 35-year career delivering innovative software solutions in commercial, health, and social care settings’. As QuiqSolutions’ Sales director, he has been behind quality improvement and data analysis projects implemented ‘at all levels of the NHS’. He said: “I have a wealth of experience designing software solutions that introduce efficiencies while delivering continuous improvement, visibility, and control.” Focusing on healthcare estates and FM personnel, he is working with IHEEM ‘supporting NHS Trusts to transition their compliance and governance from paper to digital’.