

Ray Booth, Select Medical: celebrating 20 years in pressure care

If you have been involved in pressure care for any length of time, you may have heard the name Ray Booth mentioned. Ray is currently the MD of Select Medical and this year he celebrated 20 years working in the pressure care industry.

Ray arrived into the health-care industry in April 1991 at the tender age of 19 years, joining Bullen Healthcare as a service engineer. He recalls: 'Bullen's were appointed official distributors for Huntleigh Healthcare and operated across the north west of England and north Wales. It was a time long before Huntleigh had anywhere near the national presence that they have today. What they have achieved in pressure care has been inspiring and I learned a great deal working with them in those early years.'

During the mid-1990s Karomed approached Bullen's with a view to working together to launch a new range of mattress support surfaces across the north west. The partnership proved a successful one and it provided Ray with a further opportunity to develop his technical knowledge of dynamic pressure relief support surfaces. 'On reflection, the eight or so years I spent at Bullen's was a real education and provided me with a good grounding in pressure care,' he commented.

Throughout his time at Bullen's Ray worked alongside Karl Hansen (Lisclare) and Steve Buckland (Karomed), both part of the Bullen's pressure care team. While at Bullen's, Karl would later become involved in launching the Tempur brand into the UK. Ray pointed out: 'Karl is a great guy and has worked wonders during his time at Lisclare to establish them as a preferred supplier to many NHS trusts. Steve has proved to be a loyal servant continuing Karomed's success.'

In 1999 Ray joined Park House Healthcare as a regional sales representative. 'I joined Park House at the right time; both for me and the company. Stephen Owens and John Locker had built up a very successful business that was ready to explode,' commented Ray. During his 2 years at Park House Ray claims that he learned a great deal about the commercial side of business and it was while working at Park House he made up his mind he wanted to start and run his own business. 'Stephen Owens is a great character; prudent and single-minded. His sales director of the

time, Steve Tetlow (Ultimate Healthcare) is the hardest working sales person I have met in this industry. Together they complimented each other and it was a joy to work with them,' remarked Ray.

In September 2001, Ray started Select Medical, a man and van company repairing dynamic support surfaces and operating out of modest premises in Blackburn, Lancashire. 'It was a tough decision to quit a good job and start my own business. I had recently married in the July; also Emma and I had just purchased our first house together. At the same time, it was a very exciting period in my working life. I remember we invoiced £900 in our first month,' recalls Ray.

Now approaching 10 years old, Select Medical has grown to become a leading supplier of pressure care support surfaces, manual handling equipment and electric profiling nursing beds to the acute and community NHS, private care homes and hospitals. Operating from new 20 000 sq ft premises on the M65 in Lancashire; the company continues along a steady course with plans to further develop its product range throughout 2011.

'To be honest, I don't know where the time has gone. The past 10 years have been a terrific experience and proved to be extremely satisfying. I'm proud to see our support surfaces competing in the marketplace alongside the likes of Huntleigh, Karomed and Park House. It's something I could only dream of 20 years ago,' Ray beamed!

Ray Booth, MD, Select Medical

