

## Bluebird Care

# Fond hel mall gani a i n main ain aff de et men

This care is designed to help Bluebird Care in Central Bedfordshire help the Wiltshire Deaf men find employment, training, financial support, housing, health care and education. Bluebird Care is a national charity providing care, support and training for deaf people in their homes. Services range from residential care, day care, hearing, hearing aids, counselling, daily and evening care, health, friends, family and community.

### Background to the WDF

Skills for Care believes that all staff working in adult social care should be able to access and participate in learning and development, in order to carry out their roles effectively and deliver high quality care.

The WDF supports this ethos. It is a funding stream from the Department of Health and is

and high quality learning for our employees. This is where the WDF has really supported us.”

## What was done

Bluebird Care has worked in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council’s Learning and Development representatives to access the WDF and has found the support proactive and very useful from the outset. The council had proactively approached the care organisation about applying for the WDF for the ongoing development of its care workers, so the funding was accessed in late 2013.

Emma Stimson at Bluebird Care has used a local learning provider to coordinate the learning needs of her staff. The provider has also supported her to access further funding for the Level 3 Health and Social Care Diploma from additional sources.

“We’ve worked closely with the council and Skills for Care to understand, apply for and access the fund to support our learning environment. Being part of a local forum that helps us to network and learn about new training and funding developments is really useful as it offers a wider perspective.”

## What was achieved

Bluebird Care fully supports its team’s learning and development needs. Team members range from those recently joining the organisation at the age of 18 to staff that have been established in the social care workforce for over thirty years.

To date, the WDF has funded three care workers to complete the Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care, with another seven studying and working towards their Level 2 and 3 qualifications. There is also scope within the funding for another

three care workers to start working towards qualifications in the near future.

“Without securing the Workforce Development Fund, as a small business we wouldn’t be able to afford to pay for everyone to undertake qualifications. It supports us to move our training schedule forward.”

As an employer, Bluebird Care is experiencing a number of direct benefits from the fund. The ongoing training programme is allowing Bluebird Care’s staff to continue earning, whilst learning and gaining the required skills and knowledge of the sector. Ultimately, the WDF is helping to retain a good team of qualified staff and supporting the company’s aim to promote and maintain quality care across the business.

Training assessors have been impressed with all employees, particularly whilst shadowing them in the community and making observations during home visits. A recent social services compliance audit resulted in a ‘Very Good’ status.

## What was learnt

Bluebird Care has accessed the WDF for the second time and has found no barriers or challenges to the process. By partnering with the council and a local learning provider, the process has been simple and hassle-free.

“I would definitely recommend any care organisation to go through this funding channel. The continued support through our local council and external learning provider has made things much simpler for us.”

“The training, funded through the WDF, offers positive steps forward and gives our employees a real sense of achievement and progression onto the next level. Some of Bluebird Care employees have moved into nursing and physiotherapy roles. Even if they move into another area of social care, their skills and qualifications are transferable and still support the sector’s needs.”

Skills for Care  
West Gate

