

Hazelwell Lodge

Fund helps small business boost training strategy

Hazelwell Lodge is a privately run, 35-bedroom residential care home with some day care services. It specialises in care for residents suffering from dementia and associated behavioural issues that may cause challenges in an unsupervised setting.

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 distributed by Skills for Care. It is available to support employers to make an investment in learning and development that will benefit the organisation, its employees and those that are cared for and supported. The fund focuses on the achievement of qualification units and supports the ongoing professional development of staff across the adult social care sector within England.

Hazelwell lodge and the WDF

This case study examines how Hazelwell Lodge

has used the WDF in recent years to address its workforce development skill gaps and to improve access to higher level social care roles through specialist training, with the ultimate aim of providing residents with improved care.

What they wanted to achieve

Manager Claire Kingdon oversees 52 full and part-time care staff and has worked at Hazelwell Lodge for over 18 years, having started as an apprentice care worker. She has used the WDF with the main aim of continually developing her staff.

The operation of the home is designed to enable residents to resume a more appropriate and desirable way of living that deals with their individual needs on a personal level, so a fully trained workforce is essential.

“When you have 52 staff that all need skilling up it can be quite expensive, so the WDF has really helped us from a financial perspective. We simply wouldn’t be able to put on as much training as we do without the support of the Workforce Development Fund. It definitely creates an opportunity to further develop the team.”

What was done

Hazelwell Lodge has forged a working relationship with Care Focus, an employer-led partnership in the South West area that promotes excellence in care and raising standards. It shares best practice and offers advice and guidance to local care

providers on workforce planning, development and funding. Hazelwell has been directed by Care Focus and guided by Skills for Care, in terms of accessing the Workforce Development Fund.

Claire is very proactive and attends networking forums and events run by Care Focus and has been an iCare ambassador for Skills for Care for two years, promoting working in the social care sector. She is well supported by the owner of the business and two heads of care that already have the Level 4 Diploma in Health and Social Care. In the near future, Claire has plans to use the WDF to support their development further towards Level 5.

“It’s important that we have a fully trained team that will provide the best quality of care to every individual within our home. By continually developing the team, they can understand our residents’ needs and preserve their dignity, whilst respecting their independence.”

What was achieved

Hazelwell Lodge has a longstanding ethos for learning. It has made significant progress in training its workforce through the support of the Workforce Development Fund, from supporting its apprentices to care support workers. The care home has used the fund holistically across the business, being primarily used for staff to obtain credits towards their diplomas. Modules have included food hygiene, first aid and health and safety. Distance learning packages have also been completed by all employees for specialist areas like dementia care, including cleaning and kitchen staff.

“We are using the fund for continuous staff development. 99% of care-related staff at the home have achieved the Level 2 or 3 diplomas, as

a direct result of the Workforce Development Fund. It is supporting their professional development through the sector, even if they leave us to go into nursing. I know there are some excellent nurses out there because of the support we’ve given them through this fund.”

Claire states that the WDF has been used to benefit employees and in turn, Hazelwell’s residents. The funding has led to the greater personal development of staff, whilst building the knowledge and skills towards greater confidence and competence in their roles.

“Accessing this fund has been successful for everybody, without a doubt. It has supported the staff, and in turn, the running of the care home. It has also brought about considerable financial savings.”

What was learnt

The key challenge for Hazelwell Lodge has been tracking the units that have been obtained. Maintaining the NMDS-SC has been relatively straightforward due to the low turnover of staff and ease of data inputting.

For a smaller care business like Hazelwell Lodge, sometimes paying for the training upfront can impact the training budget. Over the medium to longer-term, however, the financial support from the Workforce Development Fund has been a huge boost to the training strategy and the positive outcomes that have arisen from that.

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Skills for Care Recommends

Our website hosts a range of information about the Workforce Development fund and how to access it.

Workforce Development Fund

This page gives a general overview of the WDF including what it is, what it can be used for and who is eligible.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/wdf

Workforce Development Fund for grant holders

The information on this page is for grant holders who are responsible for the disbursement of the Workforce Development Fund (WDF).

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/wdfgrantholders

Accessing the Workforce Development Fund

The information on this page provides an overview of how you can become eligible for WDF, how to make a claim for it and the terms employers will be bound by when accessing the fund.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/accessingWDF

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