



# ANNUAL REVIEW



2022/23



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FROM THE  
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AND CHIEF  
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## A MESSAGE FROM IAN GORDON, CHAIRMAN

Perhaps contrary to popular understanding, care provision goes through a continual process of reinvention.

It would be easy to think of care homes as places where people are placed, simply to go through the motions of being kept safe, fed, clean and medicated where necessary. I fear it's a widely held view.

I'm very proud to say that a Coverage Care residential home challenges such notions very directly and the developments seen in our settings in the year just gone would, I think, cause some very wide eyes from anyone who took the trouble to find out.

A range of initiatives are transforming our homes into places which exist at the leading edge of the sector, highly connected, efficiently run by staff who are empowered to continue their development, and always seeking new ways to advance the process of improvement.

Some of this ongoing progress comes from being inquisitive of new things and generally it requires financial investment. Often, though, it's about attitude and a willingness to try something different - and that comes directly from our staff.

They continue to build their skills using the tools we provide, which is how, for example, we are able to support our ever-developing focus on dementia care, now with dementia trainers based directly in each home, teaching and supporting their colleagues to ensure the best quality of life for those in our care who are living with the condition.

The willingness of our staff to welcome new initiatives is the only thing which makes such things possible and they have embraced our action plan to focus on inclusivity for everyone in our homes, which we have been working on with the Shropshire-based SAND (Safe Aging No Discrimination). This culminated in the celebration of Pride Month across our homes in June.

In a tough employment environment we need to work hard to attract and retain the most skilled and caring staff and this is an area where tremendous creativity and hard work has been deployed by our human resources team, as you will read in these pages.

Making life simpler and more efficient for all of our colleagues has also been a priority and technology we have put in place this year is transforming time management and resource planning.

For our residents and their families, digital technology is also spearheading improvements, with the implementation of a new electronic care planning and recording system underway and due to be complete before the end of the calendar year.

## A RANGE OF INITIATIVES ARE TRANSFORMING OUR HOMES INTO PLACES WHICH EXIST AT THE LEADING EDGE OF THE SECTOR



The networks to support all of this activity have been upgraded and expanded across our estate, also making our homes ready for any future initiatives, such as the remote patient monitoring scheme we successfully trialled with a GP practice.

Apart from the efficiency being achieved across the organisation, another benefit of this continued innovation is improved sustainability – another of the priorities we are progressing as part of our never-ending development.

We continue work to make our homes ever-more energy efficient and we are actively investigating the benefits we might be able to glean from solar energy on the numerous large roof spaces we possess.

All of this activity has kept our entire team extremely busy, but it creates a buzz and, I hope, demonstrates my point about the kinetic nature of providing care.

These things have all been achieved while ensuring market-leading remuneration for our staff (including special cost of living support) yet keeping the finances of our not-for-profit organisation robust and reassuring to all who rely on it for their livelihood or for their care.

Let us not forget that the challenges of Covid have not gone away and we should always spare a moment to remember the heroic work of our people in the teeth of that storm during the lockdowns.

In that vein I take this opportunity to offer the most profound thanks and appreciation to each and every one of our staff. I know our senior team and my fellow directors will echo that sentiment.

Please read on to learn more about everything I have referred to here and join us in looking forward to an exciting – and ever changing – next 12 months at Coverage Care Services.

**IAN GORDON**  
CHAIRMAN



## A MESSAGE FROM DEBBIE PRICE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There is a well-known and well acknowledged saying in business: that a company is as only as good as the people it keeps.

Nowhere could this be more true than for Coverage Care Services, so it will come as no surprise that I begin this year's report with a fresh tribute to the amazing, dedicated staff who continue to go above and beyond in helping us to deliver the very highest quality of care to the people of Shropshire.

You will see throughout this review how important our team is to those that we care for. They consistently demonstrate high levels of compassion and, often, go the extra mile to enhance the lives of the people they support. As ever, I cannot thank them enough for this.

In return, we continue to put an ever-increasing focus on staffing in the form of employee well-being, training, development and enhanced remuneration packages.

Whilst, thankfully, we have all moved beyond the day-to-day challenges that Covid presented in our homes, we are unfortunately, still having to deal with some of the longer-term impacts of the pandemic.

Unsurprisingly, the care sector nationally has since lost a number of skilled professionals. Many of those who gave 110 per cent during the toughest and grimmest times of the pandemic came out the other side both emotionally and physically drained and in need of a career change.

Coverage Care has not been immune to this trend, so investment in more innovative recruitment and retention strategies to maintain a skilled and experienced workforce has been the number one priority throughout the last 12 months for the senior executive team.

On this note, I would personally like to extend my thanks to Samantha Woosnam for the strategic leadership she has demonstrated since stepping up to the role of HR Director some 12 months ago. Sam, with the support of her team, has taken the organisation's recruitment strategy to a completely new level and her management of our existing workforce has been exemplary.

It is the first year that Sam, Helen Woodvine, as the newly-appointed Finance Director, and myself, have worked closely as an executive team and I am very proud to say that we have formed a collegiate and highly effective leadership group.

It goes without saying that we are immensely grateful for the ongoing support and encouragement of the board for their experience, knowledge and expertise to ensure that we continue to make informed decisions about the strategic direction of the organisation.

Whilst the continued absence of any political progress on social care continues to present funding challenges, our not-for-profit status allows us to reinvest any profit we make.

## WE CONTINUE TO PUT AN EVER-INCREASING FOCUS ON STAFFING IN THE FORM OF EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING, TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCED REMUNERATION PACKAGES

This allows us to ensure our quality is consistently high and also gives us scope to make direct investment and spur development in areas we see as necessary and where it makes commercial sense.

You will see throughout the report that during the last 12 months as well as implementing improved recruitment strategies, investment has also focused on a rolling programme of much-needed maintenance schemes across homes, continued implementation of our three-year dementia strategy and the digitalisation of several core administrative processes.

The latter has been a hugely significant shift for Coverage Care Services and has seen the introduction of digital care plans, a new digital time and attendance and payroll system and the implementation of a new digital purchase order system – all of which are contributing to our longer-term commitment to become a more responsible and sustainable organisation.

You'll be able to read in more detail information on all these projects and initiatives later in the report, along with a selection of articles which continue to demonstrate the superb work of our people.

I hope you feel as proud and as humbled as I do to be surrounded on a daily basis by such caring, committed and compassionate people.

**DEBBIE PRICE**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE





## A JOURNEY TOWARDS SMART HEALTH

Digital technology now plays a significant role in everyday life for almost everybody. Individuals and businesses alike are harnessing the power of automated systems and artificial intelligence and there is no denying that digital transformation can improve the quality and safety of care.

As part of Coverage Care's commitment to continuous improvement in all areas of its work, the senior management team has made significant steps this year in implementing the first phase of its digital transformation plan.

A partnership with Care Vision has seen the introduction of a new electronic care planning and recording system in homes and by November this year the roll-out across all homes should be complete.

The investment is helping to significantly modernise our approach to care management by reducing the amount of paperwork and time carers are having to spend on completing hand-written notes.

Use of the technology means carers have more time and energy to spend interacting with residents and therefore helping them to live happier and more fulfilled lives.

Care planning is not the only process to have undergone a digital overhaul. The introduction of new SONA software is also helping to revolutionise our HR and payroll system.

With more than 1,000 people employed by the organisation, digital solutions which enable us to monitor staff absences and then make real-time decisions on how to fill gaps in the workforce are critical to ensure continuity of safe care.

Finally, the introduction of a new digital purchase order and procurement software system is currently underway which will help our finance team to streamline current processes.

## GREEN GROWTH

Harnessing digital technology in the ways outlined above and automating administrative processes is enabling our workforce to work smarter and more efficiently whilst at the same time accelerating our movement towards greater sustainability.

All businesses have a responsibility to think greener and where possible take steps to reduce their environmental impact.

The use of digital technology will undoubtedly have a positive impact on our current carbon footprint by reducing our reliance on paper documentation.

We continue to adopt a hybrid approach to team meetings using a mix of face-to-face and virtual. Online meetings have the benefit of being able to happen more frequently and at shorter notice and reduce our need for travel.

We continue to make use of the training portal ENID which stores all our employment policies and guidelines in electronic format and gives us the capability to deliver induction training and other training online and thus reducing further the need for hefty paper documents.

A pilot remote patient monitoring scheme which was implemented on a trial basis by our Montgomery House care teams in partnership with GP practice, Severnfields, proved a huge success. The system enables care notes for patients to be digitalised and shared in real-time with clinicians so that more speedy and efficient medical intervention can be implemented when required. Use of the technology is currently being reviewed but we hope to be in a position to roll-out an enhanced scheme to all homes during 2024.

## THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR CURRENT CARBON FOOTPRINT

Moving forward, we aim to continue our commitment to more sustainable practices and to achieving a greener environment. When it comes to renewing and/or purchasing new products and equipment for homes, we are making great efforts to look for and source greener alternatives.

And, as we progress with our home improvements, we are also looking to invest in more efficient LED lighting, which can be a source of tremendous savings in energy costs, as well as being more environmentally beneficial due to their lower power demand.

Assessing the potential benefits of solar energy is also at the top of our priority list and we are currently exploring what options there might be for installing solar panels at one of our properties on a pilot basis.



## CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Creating safe, welcoming and inclusive communities across our organisation has been a long-standing priority for Coverage Care Services. This year, we are very proud to have formalised this approach working in partnership with Shropshire-based organisation SAND (Safe Aging No Discrimination).

We have signed the SAND Covenant and in doing so have pledged to commit to providing quality, accessible services for older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transexual (LGBT+) people and raising greater awareness.

Working with SAND we have developed an action plan and have appointed LGBT+ champions to work across homes to help educate and encourage greater community participation in events. June was a particularly busy month with all our homes hosting a range of events from coffee mornings to carnivals to celebrate Pride Month.

We have also been actively participating in the WAVE project – a campaign led by SAND to increase the visibility and profile of older LGBT+ people and as you read this report, we are preparing to showcase all our efforts at the Small Steps Big Difference event in Shropshire.



## CHAMPIONS OF DEMENTIA CARE

Research suggests there are now more than 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK and this figure is set to rise further over the next few years.

As such increasing our home capacity to support people with dementia remains a top priority. More than half our beds are now occupied by individuals with dementia and most people coming into our homes are on the dementia spectrum.

Unfortunately, we cannot see this situation changing and as Shropshire's largest not-for-profit care provider we have an ongoing commitment to supporting people living with this condition.

Our three-year dementia strategy – a two-pronged approach to developing our service through investment in home improvements and training – is now nearing its second year.

The 2021/22 annual review covered details on our investment at Briarfields home in Shrewsbury to create a dedicated dementia unit for up to 12 residents; the purchase of interactive digital technology to assist residents; and the success of our partnership with Train 2 Care to deliver trailblazing dementia training to all our employees.

Our commitment to dementia care has continued throughout the 2022/23 period with further investment at Innage Grange, in Bridgnorth, and Barclay Gardens, in Donnington, for a programme of works to convert residential beds to dedicated dementia beds.

We have continued to deliver enhanced training programmes to upskill employees to ensure they feel confident and capable of supporting residents with dementia and we have appointed dementia trainers in all homes.

As we continue to invest in homes, we are continuously thinking about enhancements to living environments to best suit those living with dementia.

## HOME FOCUS

Investing in our homes and their environment is crucial to ensuring our residents live as independently as possible in a safe and supportive setting. The Covid-19 pandemic, however, brought with it a new set of restrictions and regulations which made it difficult for us to implement a scheduled programme of improvements at our home sites.

This period has therefore been a year of 'catch-up' with around £800k being spent on home improvements.

## CHANGING PLACES

We said farewell in the year just gone to long-standing employee Julie Stevenson, who retired from her role as home manager at Cottage Christian in Newport. In turn, we have promoted Paulette Morgan to the role of manager at Cottage Christian, with nurse Kerry Plant-Smith appointed to take on the role of deputy.

Michelle Yates, who has a distinguished and long-standing career with us, has been promoted from home manager at Lightmoor View to Operations Manager. She shares this role with new appointment, Julie Wilmoth.

Meanwhile, Charlie Bradley, who started her career with us 19 years ago as a support worker, has transitioned through the ranks to replace Michelle as the new manager at Lightmoor View. Former apprentice Mischa Marshall has also stepped up to the role of deputy manager. Both Charlie and Mischa are shining examples of how committed, passionate and dedicated individuals can build a successful and rewarding career in the care sector.

The most notable work has taken place at the Cottage Christian home in Newport, which was purchased by Coverage Care in the 2021/22 period. Here work has been carried out to freshen up the communal areas including the lounge and corridor and improvements have been made to the medication room. Significant clearance, maintenance and landscaping work has also been carried out in the gardens to create a more appealing outside space for residents and staff.

Woodcroft has also undergone a makeover with new flooring, general redecoration and work to freshen up the kitchenette areas. New kitchenettes have also been installed at Lightmoor View and Greenfields.

Beth Newton has recently joined the organisation and has taken up the position of Management Accountant within the finance team. We hope she enjoys a wonderful career with us.

Our appointments and promotions only serve to strengthen the leadership of our homes and our essential back-office functions and it goes without saying that we are grateful for all their hard work and dedication.



**MICHELLE YATES**  
OPERATIONS MANAGER

# NEWS ROUND UP



Shropshire Live - November 2022

## SUE CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS CARE

A dedicated care worker is celebrating after completing 40 years' service at the same Shropshire home.

Sue Morris said she had seen many changes since starting a full-time job at Stone House in Bishop's Castle in 1982 – but her love of looking after the elderly residents meant it was still hugely enjoyable...

## CARE HOME HOSTS COLOURFUL CARNIVAL FOR PRIDE MONTH

A Shropshire care home has celebrated Pride Month with its very own carnival.

Staff and residents at Innage Grange care home in Bridgnorth dressed up to take part in the colourful parade to demonstrate their commitment to driving greater inclusivity in the care sector.

The event, which also included dancing, games and party food, was attended by family members and other guests from the Bridgnorth community.

# KEEP UP TO DATE

TO READ MORE AND KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH OUR LATEST NEWS AND EVENTS VISIT

[COVERAGECARESERVICES.CO.UK/NEWS](https://www.coveragecareservices.co.uk/news)

shropshirelive

## NATASHA COOKS UP RECIPE FOR LONG SERVICE

The lead catering manager for Shropshire's biggest not-for-profit care home provider is celebrating 20 years' service with the company.

Natasha Williams, 44, joined Coverage Care Services in 2002 as catering manager at Fairholme in Oswestry, a role she had for 15 years before becoming lead catering manager for the whole Coverage Care group.

She said: "I go around all the 12 homes carrying out the kitchen audits, supporting catering staff and home managers, carrying out inductions for new catering staff and helping out covering a home in the absence of the catering manager when short staffed due to holidays or sickness"



## RESIDENTS SHARE MEMORIES OF ROYAL CELEBRATION AHEAD OF KING'S CORONATION

Residents across our care homes have been reminiscing about the Queen's coronation ahead of this week's royal celebration.

Joan Ryder, a resident at The Cottage Christian care home in Newport, was in her early 20s when the coronation of Queen Elizabeth took place in 1953. At the time, she lived in Donnington and remembers fondly celebrating the occasion with neighbours from morning until night.



## INVESTMENT BOOST FOR CARE LEADERS

A year of huge investment in care, staffing and sustainability is set to continue into 2023 for Coverage Care Services.

In 2022, we made considerable progress with our three-year dementia strategy, invested in the region of £2.5 million into staff pay and continued with improvements which will reduce the company's carbon footprint.

Chief executive Debbie Price said: "Times are very hard for many people at the moment, so I am delighted that we have been able to boost the pay of our staff to help support them through the ongoing cost of living crisis. "Our staff are our biggest asset, and we want to keep them!"



# 2022/23

## FINANCE REPORT

**It is a key responsibility of the Board of Directors to ensure that the organisation remains on a solid financial footing so that Coverage Care can sustainably provide the expected service and quality to those who rely upon it.**

Managing cost pressures linked to high levels of inflation has been an important factor this year, making financial planning difficult. However, a cautious approach, regular financial review and flexing of budgets, where appropriate, has meant we have been in a strong position to respond to challenges as they have arisen.

The trading surplus for the year was £1,974k. The occupancy levels and operational performance of the Society is considered to be good. There are always challenges, notwithstanding living with Covid 19, in maintaining the highest care standards. The good occupancy levels have meant that the Society has been able to meet the additional inflationary cost increases and continue to invest in its staff through improved pay structures and supporting them with increased living costs through one-off payments.

Should it be required, we have enough liquidity to support trading for several months. As a result of the prudent approach taken by the board, Coverage Care continues to maintain its stability in these challenging times.

The board receives regular developing financial indicators where it considers the information is most valuable and useful, which means the Society can react quickly if needed.

The organisation's capital reserve remains stable and healthy. The Final Accounts Net Surplus increased from a surplus of £1,672k in 2021 to £1,974k in 2022. This represents a 94% investment of Coverage Care's total income on providing its services. It is the not-for-profit nature of the organisation that allows such a high proportion of income to be put straight back into service delivery.

Coverage Care's homes are its main asset and during the year significant investment was made in the Cottage Christian Nursing home (purchased last financial year, previously leased). Furthermore, we have a rolling property maintenance plan in order to ensure that homes are maintained at the highest standard, including kitchen refurbishments in several homes this year.

Looking ahead there will be further investment into our homes through some specific refurbishment projects and investment in sustainability. Significant further investment is also being made in our IT systems, following on from the homes' networking infrastructure improvements completed this year, upgrading central systems and digitalising current manual systems, improving both support services and our frontline carers' IT experience.

Recruitment is a challenge for the sector nationally, and remains a key challenge for the Society. Improving staff remuneration and supporting staff has contributed to improved recruitment and retention over the year. This year we have focused on staff recruitment, which has extended to overseas sponsorships, and retention, including the introduction of Mental Health First Aiders into our homes.



- STAFFING COSTS**  
● 77.6%
- RENTS & DEPRECIATION**  
● 5.6%
- PROPERTY EXPENSES**  
● 5.6%
- HOUSEKEEPING**  
● 5.9%
- ADMINISTRATION**  
● 3.6%
- NET INTEREST**  
● 1.6%

### CARE & OCCUPANCY

	2021/22	2022/23
Occupancy	92.75%	95.15%
Residential	322	308
Nursing	299	313
LD	7	7
Extra Care	62	62
No. of staff	1,009	998

**95.15%**  
OCCUPANCY

UP FROM 92.75%  
IN 21/22

**£183 THOUSAND**  
GRANT INCOME

DOWN FROM  
£1.25M IN 2021/22

**£25.8 MILLION**

OUTGOING  
ON RESIDENTS

UP FROM  
£22.1M IN 2021/22

### INCOME

£	2021/22	2022/23
Residential Care Fees	28,493,000	34,088,000
Grant Income	1,253,000	183,000
Other Income*	1,575,000	1,086,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,321,000</b>	<b>35,357,000</b>

### EXPENDITURE

£	2021/22	2022/23
Outgoings on Residents	22,134,000	25,870,000
Outgoings on Property	3,623,000	3,733,000
Management and Admin	3,302,000	3,240,000
Net Interest	591,000	539,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,649,000</b>	<b>33,383,000</b>

Surplus (deficit) for years	1,672	1,974
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\* Other income for 21/22 includes a £433k profit on disposal of the Cottage Christian Nursing home realised upon the purchase of the freehold.



# HR REPORT

## INVESTING IN OUR WORKFORCE

**Recruitment has been our single biggest focus throughout the last 12 months. Attracting and retaining an experienced and skilled workforce remains a serious and ongoing challenge for our organisation and the care sector nationally.**

Competition is fierce between providers – made worse by the diminishing pool of talent locally as individuals re-consider career options and look to other sectors such as hospitality and retail for employment.

However, we remain convinced that a career in care is a career for life and continue to fly the flag for this notion through our recruitment strategy and wider organisational communications.

We are fortunate to have an experienced and talented HR Director in Samantha Woosnam whose strategic direction and leadership over the last 12 months has enabled us to adapt to the changing landscape and implement a number of key initiatives to ensure staffing levels have remained safe across all our homes.



We also have a very successful 24-hour employee assistance programme in place to support all care staff.

## OVERSEAS RECRUITMENT

**Expanding the geographical area of our recruitment campaigns has been an absolute necessity over this 12-month period and investment in recruiting from overseas has enabled us to tap into an extensive pool of talent which we were struggling to find more locally.**

We have sponsored in excess of 25 new employees to the organisation and individuals have joined us from a range of different cultures including India, the Philippines and Africa.

The new recruits come with experience (often from hospital settings), a desire to work and an extremely high level of compassion and we are delighted to welcome them and their families to Shropshire.

It goes without saying that extensive work has gone into developing the success of our overseas recruitment programme, but it has not been without challenge. The HR team has had to build new partnerships with private landlords and work with other outside organisations to ensure the new recruits are ready to hit the ground running. This has required significant time and resource from a HR perspective as well as ongoing commitment and support from our home managers.

Our “on-boarders” are a first point of contact for all new Coverage Care employees and are in place to offer support, advice, answer any questions and ensure that people transition into their new roles comfortably.

Their role this year has developed further to provide induction training to our overseas recruits and to help with any cultural differences such as language, reading and listening skills. They’ve also played a significant and important role in helping new employees settle into their communities.

Without a doubt overseas recruitment is helping us to manage day to day staffing levels within homes and there is scope for us to recruit further through investment in this kind of initiative. We are aware that other providers are recruiting significant numbers of people from overseas, but we are confident that a slower, more measured approach will yield better results when it comes to longer-term retention of employees.

As an organisation, we know from experience that if new recruits have an immediate positive experience of working with us, they are more likely to stay within our organisation for longer, develop their skills and have a long and successful career in care.

Recruiting smaller numbers from overseas enables us to provide dedicated and committed support without risking the quality of our care provision.

## PAY RATES/ COST OF LIVING

**Coverage Care Services has always offered competitive pay rates and often higher salaries than our competitors to attract the right skills, experience and talent into our homes.**

As an organisation, we are pleased to have been able to respond to the ongoing recruitment challenges and rising cost of living with not just one but two pay reviews.

Coverage Care’s status as a not-for-profit company is one of its strengths in this regard as there are no shareholders expecting a return.

Following an interim pay review in September 2022, as well as an increase awarded in January in the same year, the company invested £2 million in workforce pay.

Further to this, in April 2023 we were able to pay a 5% increase to all staff - an investment of £1m.

An additional £400,000 in cost-of-living support payments were also made to all employees between January and March 2023 to help them with the pressure of the cost-of-living crisis.

We have been very keen to ensure that we maintain higher rates of pay in comparison to the National Living Wage and we are pleased to report that all our rates of pay exceed the £10.42 per hour level.

The latest pay packages and restructuring will continue to contribute to the success of our business and ensure we continue to attract the right talent and expertise.

During the last 12 months we have awarded an average of 13.5% pay increase across all our posts:

Qualified care assistants have seen a 16.4% increase in pay whilst qualified night care assistants have had a 15.7% rise, day shift leaders 19.2% and night shift leaders 28.9%.

## MOVE TO SHROPSHIRE

As well as looking abroad to recruit, we have also developed initiatives which aim to attract workers from elsewhere in the UK and in particular London and the home counties.

Our Move to Shropshire campaign highlighted the benefits of living in Shropshire – affordable house prices, inclusive communities, good connectivity – alongside the benefits of working for Coverage Care – attractive salary, training and development and flexible hours.

The initiative was executed using several tools but with a significant focus on harnessing the power of our digital social media channels.

Trained nurses and those already on sponsorship were targeted and the campaign resulted in us recruiting highly-trained nurses who have all since re-located to Shropshire.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of our strategic recruitment efforts, we have made further strides to raise the profile of our career opportunities within local communities both through attendance at school career fairs and working directly with schools.

We have also strengthened our partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and local job centres and we are currently involved in discussions with partner organisations about how we can offer employment and training to displaced refugees.

## APPRENTICESHIPS

We are delighted that our apprenticeship programme is once again fully up-and-running following a period of inactivity due to the Covid pandemic.

Apprentices have always been integral to our recruitment processes at Coverage Care and often the scheme has enabled us to train a mix of school and college leavers, many of whom have had long and successful careers with us.

This year has seen Coverage Care Services work in partnership with Shropshire-based apprenticeship provider SBC Training to improve our apprenticeship offer and this autumn we welcome a number of Level 2 care apprentices to the organisation.

## TRAINING

Staff training and personal development remains a key priority for Coverage Care and we are always looking at new and innovative ways to support our people in always being able to do their best work.

We continue to invest heavily in training programmes and this year we have introduced a new shift leader programme to help our senior staff improve their leadership skills.

The programme has been developed in-house with the support of an external trainer and the focus has been on helping our shift leaders to understand their responsibilities better, become more aspirational, improve their communication skills, and become better all-round leaders.

Significant investment in this scheme has enabled us to deliver training to all 70 plus shift leaders currently in post with us and we are already seeing the benefit of this training with a more consistent leadership approach being adopted across all homes.

## CELEBRATING LONG SERVICE

Whilst recruitment remains an ongoing challenge for the reasons above, it would be remiss of us to let this year's report pass without commenting on some of those within our organisation who have dedicated considerable service to us.

This year has seen us celebrate the dedication of Sue Morris, a care assistant at Stone House in Bishop's Castle, who has completed 40 years' service at the home.

Lead catering manager with our Home Support team, Natasha Williams, who supports our catering facilities across all our homes, has marked 20 years with the company whilst Chris Fair has clocked up an astonishing 45 years working at our Woodcroft home in Market Drayton.

Chris started working at the home as an assistant cook a month before his 18th birthday. He later progressed to catering manager, a role he filled for more than 30 years, and now he is responsible for maintenance of the home.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to Sue, Natasha and Chris for all their hard work and commitment over the years.

Without doubt our workforce is our biggest asset and we continue to take pride in nurturing a skilled, talented and experienced workforce.

## INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY

We have continued to invest in new technology and the introduction of Sona which is a live rota system enabling us to become more efficient in managing staffing levels and absence.

With just under a 1,000 people employed by the organisation, there has become a growing need for greater oversight of our rota system at central office. The newly rolled-out system will enable us to monitor staff absences and give us capacity to make better real-time decisions on how to fill gaps in the workforce so that we can ensure continuity of safe care.

The application-based software means that at a press of a button, employees can book extra shifts and annual leave and review their own rota.

In addition, the digital system will give us the scope to pay staff over-time in the same month as they have worked it rather than in arrears. A system which will be of considerable benefit to our workforce particularly during the ongoing cost of living crisis.



## CARE PLANNING

**As we continue to distance ourselves from the pandemic and the uncertainty that it brought to our homes, our staff and residents on a daily basis, we feel far more able to plan for the future of our organisation.**

During covid, our operational approach was very much built around flexibility and the need to be able to respond quickly to fast-changing government guidelines and policies. This made strategic planning for any length of time extremely difficult and as such we have been working to 12-monthly plans since 2019.

However, as we fast approach 2024, we are looking forward to setting the longer-term direction of travel for the organisation. We maintain a relentless focus on quality with continuous improvement and our commitments and priorities for the next three years will be set out in our upcoming strategy.

## CQC REPORTS

**The Care Quality Commission paused all home inspections throughout the Covid pandemic and although these have now been resumed, we have only had one inspection take place in the last 12 months and this was at our Barleyfield respite facility in Shrewsbury.**

The CQC is currently carrying out a review of the way it conducts inspections, and we anticipate they will want to start inspecting against their new system in April next year. We are therefore anticipating further service reviews during the 2023/24 period and we look forward to showcasing our continued quality of care.



This plan will continue to build on many of the developments and successes outlined in this report in particular our drive towards becoming a sustainable organisation; further implementation of new technologies; training and development to support our hard-working employees and continued investment in recruitment to ensure we are equipped to address the needs of those we care for.

As has been the case in previous years, we continue to look to the government to show greater support for the social care sector. Investment is needed now more than ever and with a general election looming, there is once again opportunity for the sector to seek the recognition it so richly deserves. We will continue to look for ways to work alongside partner organisations to keep the pressure on.

We need our local authorities to be paid enough to maintain and sustain viable social care markets and we need nationwide investment to support the training, recruitment and retention of skilled professionals within our sector.





01743 283 200

[enquiry@coveragecareservices.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@coveragecareservices.co.uk)

Allison House,  
Oxon Business Park,  
Shrewsbury SY3 5HJ

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