

Commercial in Confidence

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

REVIEW REPORT

for

Oakview Care Ltd Llandeilo

Prepared by:

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Investors in People Assessor

On behalf of:

Investors in People Wales

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Report date:

April 2014

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1. Introduction

This report has been produced following the Investors in People Review of **Oakview Care Ltd (Llandeilo)**, carried out on behalf of the Wales Investors in People Quality Centre. The report reflects on the findings of the assessment and highlights areas of good practice identified, in addition to those areas recommended for further development.

I would like to thank the Manager, **Isabel Robinson**, for helping to arrange the review and all the employees at the organisation for their openness and co-operation during the interview process.

2. Objectives of the Review

The agreed objectives for the Review were:

- To suggest continuous improvement/development areas within the context of the Standard, to help the organisation improve performance.
- To identify particular strengths and/or good practice, demonstrated by the organisation.
- To review the evidence requirements of the Investors in People Framework to establish whether or not the company meets Gold status.

We agreed that your assessment will provide feedback on the appropriate aspects of the Investors in People Standard and Framework that relate to the company's over-arching priorities. The main priorities of the company are; **providing a homely environment for clients, retaining the ethos of a family run company, recruiting and developing quality staff who are dedicated, motivated and enthusiastic, encouraging learning and development through regular supervision and good communication, stimulating clients with interesting and varied activities and evaluating practices to maintain quality standards and diversity.**

We also agreed that specific feedback will be provided on the following;

- **The impact of staff development activities on performance improvement;**
- **Whether or not communication has improved between the directors of company and staff and the level of understanding employees have of the general direction of the business;**
- **How well staff maintaining high standards of care in a climate where costs are raising and funding could be effectively reduced;**
- **How effective is recruitment and do new recruits embrace the company's core values?**
- **Does the organisation foster a culture of continuous learning?**

3. Methodology

A planning meeting was held on **6th November 2013**

The on-site assessment took place on **1st April 2014**, where interviews were conducted with a total of **12** people.

4. Executive Summary

This is a homely and friendly working environment where employees are happy, fulfilled and valued. Leaders have placed an emphasis on team working which is seen as central to business efficiency and the provision of quality care. People work well together. They have shared values and a common sense of purpose that ensures that the service user is at the heart of all activities.

Leaders have created an open culture where all employees feel comfortable to make contributions at meetings and ad-hoc discussions. New ideas are welcomed and there is a corporate approach to improving the quality and range of services.

The company's commitment to staff training and development continues and often goes above and beyond mandatory requirements. As a result, employees are skilled, motivated and well equipped to meet the challenge of continuing to provide a quality service in an increasingly difficult economic climate.

5. Findings against the organisation's priorities and objectives

The Company's over-arching priorities:

The Manager at Oakview Care has endeavoured to build a team of staff who's skills and personal qualities are well matched. On the whole, her recruitment strategy has been very effective and the organisation benefits from a dedicated team of employees committed to providing the best quality of care for service users. The staff development strategy has also ensured that people are competent and confident to carry-out their duties. An excellent induction programme enables those new to Oakview Care to settle quickly and to be productively engaged in team-working from the outset. Supervisions and the appraisal process provide a focus on continuous improvement.

Good leadership and effective people management processes have created a happy, stable work environment and staff turnover is low. The family ethos has been maintained and employees feel a strong sense of belonging.

Quality Assurance audits are a useful process for evaluating all care activities and arrangements, monitoring performance against set targets and identifying priorities. The frequency and format of these audits has made external inspections less daunting. Standards have improved and the involvement of everyone in planning innovative, cost effective activities has helped the business to manage well on less funding.

Some of the comments made at interview include:

"The Manager has done well to recruit the right people"

"Clients are involved in the recruitment process and we now have a stable staff group."

“I came here because I wanted a challenge and to be involved. I feel as if I can make a difference.”

“It is a home not an institution. It is has a lovely atmosphere and it is lovely to work here.”

“This is a client focused, family driven place with happy residents and a supportive network”

The impact of staff development activities on performance improvement:

Training and development activities are well planned to meet both individual and corporate needs. Leaders understand the importance of continuously monitoring the effectiveness of training outcomes to ensure that their investment has a positive impact on business improvement. Staff spoke about the range of training they had participated in and how it had improved skills and confidence. Programmes such as Positive Behaviour Management have had a huge impact on how staff deal with more challenging clients and unforeseen situations. All staff interviewed were able to confirm how the training had prompted a change of approach and how beneficial this has been for service users.

High quality trainers have been engaged to ensure that programmes are relevant and stimulating. Staff report that training activities challenge methodology, create opportunities to reflect on what works and what needs to improve, provide reassurance that important competencies have been met and promote productive discussion.

The Directors and Manager exercise a good deal of flexibility in planning staff training, allowing and supporting staff to select programmes that enhance personal skills as well as those designed to meet work related development needs. Shift patterns are organised to accommodate study time. Employees are very keen to learn and develop new skills. A few would like to attend additional courses on caring for residents who have specific ailments.

Some of the comments made at interview include:

“The Induction programme was great. The shadowing part was really useful and I was given time to read through care plans so I was able to get to know the background information on each client. I was encouraged to ask loads of questions.”

“The training makes you think – it questions moral issues such as using your club card when you are shopping with clients. It deals with things that never occurred to you before.”

“The First Aid Training was good as it reassured you that you know what you are doing.”

“They are very keen on training. It gives you the skills you need and techniques to protect yourself and the residents.”

“I was allowed time off to do a GCSE”

“The Positive Behaviour Management Training was great. It taught me to try another way of dealing with things. It was a two day course, the trainers and venue were fantastic!”

The effectiveness of communication and understanding of general business direction:

The Directors of the company visit frequently and this ensures that all employees are kept up-to-date of developments and have the opportunity to discuss ideas and concerns at the highest level. The Director's one-to-one meeting with the Manager at each visit is a productive way of monitoring progress and setting new targets as well as providing on-going support. Staff meetings, shift hand-over discussions and the message book are all effective in ensuring important information is communicated, enabling the home to operate smoothly. More formal people management systems such as the regular supervisions and annual appraisal also provide employees with an opportunity to air concerns, discuss issues and make suggestions for improvement.

All the employees interviewed spoke about the culture of openness at the home and how they are involved in meetings. People feel that senior staff are both accessible and approachable. Everyone is aware of the general business direction and understand the importance of maintaining quality standards. Employees believe that communication is very much a two-way process at Oakview Care. They are confident to express their views in the knowledge that they will be listened to and that their contribution to development initiatives are always valued.

The company newsletter is well received. It is a useful mechanism for summarising business direction for employees, residents and other stakeholders.

Some of the comments made at interview include:

"The Director came to the staff meeting and explained everything. She spoke about the budget and why things are happening."

"They always listen. I am still learning but we talk about things all the time and they value your in-put."

"I feel comfortable to talk about things in a hand-over meeting. We talk about everything here and I never have a problem about raising a concern."

"I suggested keeping a food chart for a resident who had tummy problems and I was told to go ahead and give it a try. They welcome good ideas and we have loads of opportunity to talk to our Manager."

"The Newsletter is good. It comes out regularly and provides a nice overview of where we are and what we are doing."

"The meetings have been good and helped me to understand the funding issues. They explained things well and emphasised that nothing has changed for the residents."

"They are very clear on business direction. There are no barriers to communication here."

"The Managers are willing to listen and approachable. We all work well together."

Maintaining high standards of care:

Maintaining high standards of care and striving to constantly develop the service for residents are the organisation's main priorities and these have been communicated very clearly to employees. Regular and effective Supervisions have been beneficial in driving improvements.

All team members are actively involved in developing new ideas, while thinking of ways of reducing costs. Key workers are pro-active and often come up with innovative ways to improve services based on feedback from residents. Making more use of public transport for outings was one example. Support workers explained that savings were made and service users found the trips to be more exciting than travelling by car. Other employees spoke about "shopping around" for good deals when purchasing resources and reducing group sizes in craft sessions to provide more support time for individual service users. Everyone has same central aim which is the provision of excellence in care, putting the needs of each individual client first and making the organisation as homely as possible.

The Quality Assurance Audit is an effective evaluation process that keeps the focus on standards and continuous improvement. The fact that the audit is carried out by a Director and includes direct feedback from residents, demonstrates the importance placed on the process and its outcomes. While the audit is already comprehensive, taking account of on-going staff supervisions, for example, the process could be further strengthened by peer review. This might be worth considering in the future.

Some of the comments made at interview include:

"It is important to keep ideas fresh"

"It is so important that we do a good job, that we are taking into account what the client wants as well as needs."

"The team generates a lot of new ideas and it's great that the Manager comes into so many handover meetings as that's where most of the ideas are discussed."

"I think we have a flexible approach and we are always trying out new things."

"Ten heads are better than one."

"We all get on, we work as a team and we all have the residents needs at the heart of what we do. It is a very caring place and we all love working here!"

Recruitment and ensuring staff embrace the company's core values:

The Manager knows her team and residents very well and has a "knack" for selecting new employees that have the skills and qualities to fit in. It was a great idea to involve residents in the selection procedure.

Recent recruits who were interviewed as part of the Review sample, spoke about the recruitment process and how they had an opportunity to meet residents and under-take a

“taster” session. They were made aware of the core values of the organisation and what was expected of them at the interview stage.

A more formal recruitment strategy together with a comprehensive selection criteria and supporting checklists might help to ensure that the odd “rogue” recruit does not slip the net.

Some of the comments made at interview include:

“Isabel has done well to recruit the right people.”

“We are quite picky. We need the right sort of person. The residents come first and making a wrong choice causes huge problems.”

Fostering a culture of continuous learning:

The volume and diverse range of training and development provision available to all employees promotes a culture of continuous learning. Everyone is supported and encouraged to progress. Opportunities for learning are very good and people benefit from well delivered formal courses, and the more informal coaching and mentoring sessions that take place on a daily basis. Employees are happy to learn from one another and are so keen to develop that they are more than willing to attend in-house training sessions on their day off.

Leaders encourage employees to gain additional and more advanced qualifications, provide study time, make good use of supervisions to support specific learning needs and organise in-house training days that stimulate, and motivate people to develop new skills.

Some of the comments made at interview include:

“There is always some training going on. I have been encouraged to go on to a level 3 and there is flexibility around my shifts to be able to do this.”

“There is good support for NVQs, mentoring in the work place and encouragement to progress to a higher level.”

“There is always something new going on training wise.”

“We often train in groups so it is not daunting to go on courses. They select good people to deliver and so it is nearly always an amazingly good experience.”

6. Identified Strengths and/or Areas of Good Practice

The key strengths and/or points of good practice, highlighted by the review were:

Core Values : - have been communicated well and embraced by all employees. Oakview Care is a good place to work. Staff are loyal and have the interests of the service user at heart.

Leadership: - is good. Leaders are pro-active, good communicators, visible, accessible, approachable, fully engaged and engaging. Employees have respect for them.

Team working: - people work well together and are dedicated and hardworking.

Training and Development :- volume and range of programmes and the general support for learning of all kinds is impressive. The organisation goes far beyond what is mandatory and selects stimulating and relevant courses that develop skills in excess of the basics that people need to be competent in their roles. The courses that are organised to bring both care homes in the company together have been particularly successful at fostering networking, peer support and the sharing of best practice. Employees value the commitment to personal development and the opportunities it has created for career progression.

Quality Assurance Process: - is robust and ensures that the organisation maintains and constantly develops standards. All employees are comfortable with the process, understand its importance and are happy to participate.

7. A summary of some suggestions that you might like to consider as part of continuous improvement.

Recruitment and Selection: - a more structured process for recruiting, selecting and checking references may be a useful addition to your people management procedures. Although Isabel clearly has very good instincts when it comes to choosing the right people, a more formal procedure would be an additional safe-guard. The company relies heavily on its personnel to have the right attitude and personal qualities as well as the necessary skills and qualifications to be effective in the care of a vulnerable client group. As you are aware, failure in this important area is costly, time consuming and most of all, highly disruptive to service users. You may want to consider using products such as the Thomas International Personal Profiling Analysis which provides instant feedback on a candidate's likely behavioural characteristics from the completion of a 3 minute questionnaire. Examples of outcome reports can be seen at www.thomasinternational.com . At the very least, it would be useful to have set criteria for recruitment and a written procedure for chasing references etc. A longer assessed "taster" session might also be of benefit.

The Welsh Government has in place a number of initiatives to aid recruitment. It may be advantageous to consider the Young Recruits Programme if and when you employ someone aged between 16 and 24, for example. This is operated as part of an Apprenticeship programme and provides a wage subsidy to the employer. The initiative is designed to create more apprenticeship opportunities. You should speak to your representative at the college to gain more information and to check eligibility criteria.

The Quality Assurance Process: - is already very effective. It might be strengthened by adding an element of employee self-assessment and peer review. By encouraging staff to evaluate their own work and peer assess a colleague; you would be adding an additional layer of assessment, ensuring a completely robust process of identifying strengths and weaknesses. It would also be a useful learning experience for staff, allowing them to be even more involved in the quality development process.

You might also want to consider introducing focus groups with specific remits for improving various parts of the service you provide, based on feedback from residents, social services and other stake-holders. Managed well, forums can be productive and a good way of engaging and empowering employees in planning and decision making.

The Investors in People Framework – you may want to consider a joint review next time around with your sister home, especially if your core values and business strategy are the same. It may save time and costs.

Making good use of the Framework as part of your business improvement strategy will help you going forward as you manage change and face new challenges. You might also want to consider a higher level review aiming at Bronze, Silver or Gold.

8. Outcome

Having carried out the Review process in line with the quality assurance guidelines monitored by Investors in People Wales, I recommend that **Oakview Care Ltd** should continue to be accredited as an Investor in People.

Assessor: **Rosemary Grimshaw**

On behalf of the Wales Investors in People Quality Centre

Date: **1st April 2014**

Date of interim Review: **October 2015**

Date of three year Review: **April 2017**

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE - CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Organisation Name:	Oakview Care Ltd	Date of interim Review:	October 2015	
Areas for Development (as identified in the Assessor's report)	Action Proposed		By When	By Whom
Recruitment & Selection	Consider introducing a more formal and robust structure.		July 2014	Director and Manager
The Quality Assessment Process	Consider strengthening the process by introducing self-assessment, peer review and focus groups.		Jan 2015	Director and Manager
Investors in People Framework	Continue to make good use of the IIP Framework as part of your business improvement strategy. Consider a project leading to a joint review with your sister home and a higher level assessment.		Oct 2015	Director and Manager

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Appendix A: Assessment/Review Evidence Requirements Results

Please use the key to refer to all the evidence requirements addressed by this assessment/review.

39= the Standard
 Additional 26 = Bronze
 Additional 76 = Silver
 Additional 126 = Gold

- Key:**
- ✓ Met – shaded areas
 - Not applicable
 - X Not Met
 - Not assessed

