

Health Centre's Bluebird Care Franchise... A Flying Start!



With a demanding need for Health Centres to increase the range of services they provide to accommodate the growing needs of the local community, Bradford on Avon & Melksham Health Partnership have been revolutionary in their approach.

To add to their ever expanding range of services, another significant step was recently taken by the Partnership with the purchase of a Bluebird Care franchise, to provide care to local people in their own home.

Bluebird Care operates in one of the most vibrant, growing business sectors and is Britain's fastest growing care at home franchise. With more than 175 franchise offices across the UK and Ireland, Bluebird Care provides over £75 million worth of care at home in the UK every year.



Angie Benford, Managing Partner, Bradford on Avon & Melksham Health Partnership

Health Partnership Managing Partner Angie Benford was instrumental to the whole process. Angie has worked for the practice for 15 years, originally as Practice Manager and talks here about their experiences.

What were your reasons for this diversification with the practice?

With NHS budgets being cut year on year and the need to find alternative opportunities to enhance our income, we felt provision of care in the home fitted perfectly alongside the caring profession of general practice.

In addition, there was an increasing need locally for home care and we felt well-positioned to fulfil that role, as part of our overall plan for the practice.

How has the Bluebird Care business been integrated into the practice?

It hasn't been integrated into the practice, it sits alongside the practice with all nine partners as shareholders and some are involved more than others. However, the partners are completely transparent about their involvement in Bluebird Care when referrals to the service are made.

Who is responsible for developing the business?

Having met with Bluebird Care, we realised that we weren't able to follow our initial thoughts of the Managing Partner being Franchise Principal in the early days due to a recent merger and a need to stabilise the expanded practice. However, we were fortunate that two of the wives of the GP Partners Lesley Gough and Kate Chisnall, were willing to set up the business. With the support of Bluebird Care's Regional Business Development Manager we have recruited a Care Manager, Co-ordinator and Supervisor who have settled into their roles, Lesley and Kate are able to concentrate on developing the business further.

How is the business performing?

We have achieved monthly break even after 8 months of trading and, with an initial investment of just over £100K, we are on target to reach overall profitability within 18 months.

What appealed to you most about Bluebird Care?

The business is tried and tested and has a good, solid structure, with strong leadership to encourage development. This was very much part of our criteria when we were looking to join a care franchise. Bluebird Care assigns targets which each franchise is expected to achieve and there is healthy competition to be at the top of the leader boards! It is also in our own interests to achieve those targets as we're working within a realistic 2-year business plan, which Bluebird Care use as their template for success.



Bluebird Care (Wiltshire North) Franchise Principals Kate Chisnall and Lesley Gough at their opening event

What level of support have you experienced from Bluebird Care to get your business up and running?

Excellent support from Bluebird Care's Regional Business Development Manager who visits us on a regular basis and Head Office who responds promptly to any calls for help. There are also great networking opportunities with other franchise owners who themselves are willing to share their experiences of setting up and gaining lots of promotional ideas.

What are your future plans for the business?

We're hoping in the not-too-distant future to open a second office within the territory to expand our business further. There is always a chance that we may consider another territory in the fullness of time. We will be considering development of specialisms in due course, particularly in view of the increased incidence of dementia and other chronic diseases as the elderly population continues to expand.

Simon Dalziel, Bluebird Care Franchise Director said "We were delighted when Angie and the Team wanted to join us. They have a first class Health Partnership and with Bluebird Care's high standards, the fit is excellent. We are very pleased that our joint decision for them to join our successful franchise network is working so well".

Bluebird Care

To request further details and an information pack call: 01730 26 00 26 or email: franchises@bluebirdcare.co.uk
www.bluebirdcare.co.uk