

OUR RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

BE CARING - OCTOBER 2020 - TYNESIDE SERVICE





NEWCASTLE, GATESHEAD & NORTH TYNESIDE OVERVIEW

OUR RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
TYNESIDE SERVICE

Be Caring have been delivering care in Newcastle, Gateshead and North Tyneside for over 14 years. We have over 400 colleagues providing more than 11,000 weekly hours of care and support every week to 417 people in areas such as Fawdon, Gosforth, Kenton, Heaton, Walker, Throckley, West Denton, Denton Burn, Arthurs Hill, Benwell, Brunswick, Dinnington, Fenham, Elswick, Whitley Bay and Wallsend.

We provide a range of care and support service to people in their homes and in supported living settings. This includes care and support for adults who have personal care needs, those living with Dementia, those with more complex health conditions and supporting those with End of Life care. Our LIFE service supports adults and children diagnosed with Learning Disabilities or Autism.

As an employee-owned social enterprise; our culture and values are at the heart of everything we do. Our priority has been making sure our colleagues and Service users are safe.

Throughout the pandemic, our service has really pulled together, working as a strong, resilient team to support each other, and the people we provide care for. Some of our key strengths have been:

↳ **Going above and beyond** for our service users such as: deep cleaning homes, celebrating service users' birthdays, collecting shopping prescriptions.

↳ **Keeping people safe**, ensuring that our colleagues have the correct and right amount of PPE and that we kept individuals and families we support safe, minimising contact with service users. Ensuring our service users' safety in the face of Covid-19 was a particular challenge in our Dementia Care Bungalows and LIFE residential facility at Allendale Court.

↳ **Frequent communications and clear guidance** so Care and Support Workers understand the changing social distancing and PPE guidance, ensuring their wellbeing through more frequent contact with their teams and **promoting access to our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**.

↳ **Implementing new and scaling existing technologies** to enable home-working and putting social distancing measures in place across all four of our offices.



JACKIE GUNCAN
OPERATIONS
MANAGER

"I joined the Be Caring team in February 2020 and I can honestly say that it was the best move I have ever made. The senior management team are committed to ensuring the services we offer are the best that they can be, and share my belief that in order to do this that all our employees must be valued and each individual recognised for their achievements.

I have felt nothing but welcomed by all since working here and have great pride in all that we have achieved here in Newcastle. I have had the pleasure of seeing the Newcastle team go from strength to strength in working together to form a team that is committed to driving forward standards for the benefit of all. As for our branch and care team what can I say other than they never cease to amaze me, and I hope they realise how each and every one of them has made a difference in what has been an unprecedented time. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank their families who have supported them to continue to do what you do. These last few months have been challenging for us all, but by working together we have shown how committed we are. By supporting each other we will continue to make a difference to those who need us."

OUR COMMISSIONERS THANK YOU

OUR RESPONSE TO
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

TYNESIDE SERVICE

We'd really like to take this opportunity to **thank you** - our amazing commissioners - for your support in such challenging times.

We are truly grateful for the additional support you have given us; distributing PPE and implementing covid-19 measures to ease the financial pressures. You've supported us with daily and weekly calls, sharing guidance and setting up video calls for us and other providers. Your support over the last few months has been invaluable.

Importantly, the relationships and collaborative working, particularly in relation to providing additional care for those with Dementia, Learning Disabilities and Autism, has created a solid foundation for us to continue working in partnership to meet our shared goals of providing outstanding care in the community and transforming home care.





OUR CULTURE: GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

As an employee owned business, we empower colleagues to make a difference in the lives of our service users and be part of their communities – to live and breathe our values as well as achieving our mission **“To be care-giving day-makers, hope-builders, smile-givers, life-changers, community-warriors with the will to make a difference”**

Throughout the Covid-19 crisis, one of our largest strengths in Tyneside has been our hardworking, passionate team. There have been some truly incredible examples of Carers going above and beyond for the people we support, and their fellow colleagues:

- ↳ Supporting service users to **phone, video calling and write letters and cards** to relatives whilst they were shielding.
- ↳ **Covering shifts at short notice**, to protect and keep staffing ‘bubbles’ in place and to help out colleagues who needed to self-isolate or were struggling with childcare.
- ↳ Throwing **VE day celebrations and birthday parties** with those who were isolating from family and friends, making sure they weren’t alone on their birthday.
- ↳ Conducting **additional visits to service users’ homes**, keeping them company and making sure they were keeping well.

- ↳ **Decorating rooms, doing minor repairs and gardening** for service users to ensure they had a pleasant and safe environment whilst shielding.
- ↳ **Shopping for essentials** such as groceries, medications and pet food - this was especially challenging for those with Learning Disabilities and Autism, as some of these people have strong preferences for particular products, so it meant going to several shops to obtain specific items to help maintain calm behaviours.
- ↳ We **coordinated and distributed supermarket donations** from Morrisons.
- ↳ **Participating in arts and craft projects** with service users.
- ↳ **Going for walks with services users**, encouraging them to enjoy the outdoors safely.
- ↳ Providing Covid-safe **beauty treatments** such as manicures, hand massages and facials.



BE PROUD: CASE STUDY SHIRLEY SUPPORT WORKER

Shirley has been a valued Care Worker at Be Caring for over 8 years and is adored by all – in the recent colleague survey, she got the most compliments and nominations. One colleague said: “Shirley is a selfless person who is always happy to help and goes the extra mile, without being asked”. Shirley has a son who is autistic and was instructed to shield when Covid-19 hit. Normally, she works part-time and cares for her son the remainder of the week. Instead, she declined the offer of being placed on furlough, and arranged for her son to shield at her mother’s house, so she could continue to support her service users at time she knew it was needed the most. This has meant she has been unable to see her son for over 3 months, her only contact being via video calls or through her mother’s living room window. In addition to this incredibly selfless act, she has put all her heart into supporting her service users and providing them with the highest standard of care. This has included buying food to give to a service user who had experienced a delay with a food bank parcel, and covering shifts for colleagues on the LIFE service at incredibly short notice without complaint. Shirley absolutely lives and breathes the Be Caring values, and we are so lucky to have her on our team, delivering amazing care to our service users.

“Don’t know if you could call it ‘Going above’ but to keep spirits up I learned to cook on a barbecue!!! Not one piece of burned food!! This gave lots of entertainment!!!”

PAUL - SUPPORT WORKER



KEY FINDINGS IN NEWCASTLE, GATESHEAD & NORTH TYNESIDE



On the 4th July 2020, we sent out a company-wide survey to all our colleagues. Of 325 respondents, 176 colleagues from Tyneside completed this survey. The headlines from this survey are:

KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

99%

of colleagues know and understand the additional infection control and social distancing measures that are in place.

95%

of colleagues know what level of PPE is required to their work.

83%

of colleagues had the right amount and correct PPE to do their role.

SUPPORT

93%

of colleagues felt supported by colleagues. **(2% higher than Be Caring average).**

84%

of colleagues have felt supported by their immediate manager.

83%

of colleagues who joined during Covid* think the induction and training provided was good enough for them to perform their role.
*18 respondents.

COMMUNICATION

92%

of colleagues agree the guidance and communications have been frequent and clear.

90%

of colleagues think that communications were clear, easily understood, and honest.

VALUES & CULTURE

98%

of colleagues believe their role has made a difference to the people they support.

95%

of colleagues said they were able to deliver the care they aspire to.

88%

of colleagues believe their work has been valued.



LEADERSHIP

Our new management structure in Tyneside has brought our services together, with a more joined-up and collaborative approach. The new team have provided have done an amazing job of keeping both staff morale high and ensuring high quality care across our Tyneside services throughout the pandemic.

As a senior leadership team, we wanted to cultivate a safe environment, in which all our leaders and office teams were able to share their challenges and promote any learning and scaling of best practice.

We increased and established new communications at all levels of the organisation, focusing on PPE guidance, Covid testing, social distancing, infection control measures and personal wellbeing. We rapidly implemented new processes and ways of working, this included:

- ↳ **Promoting colleague safety in the face of Covid-19** and ensuring they have enhanced PPE, support, and safety guidance.
- ↳ **Frequent communications and clear guidance** so Care Workers understood the changing guidance around PPE, infection prevention and control, and social distancing measures.
- ↳ **Recruiting and retaining our Care workforce** to meet the needs of those we support and simultaneously changing the interview and induction process to be virtual, wherever possible.

- ↳ **Ensuring employees' wellbeing** through more frequent contact with their teams and promoting access to our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- ↳ **Keeping the individuals and families we support safe**, many of whom are vulnerable.
- ↳ **Implementing new and scaling existing technologies** to enable home-working and putting office social distancing measures in place.
- ↳ Regular **check-in calls with colleagues who were isolating or furloughed**, ensuring people had the support they needed.



SHARON LOWRIE

CEO OF BE CARING

“Being employee owned and keeping our values at the heart of everything we do has been a key factor to the organisation thriving during this period of Covid-19. The dedication of colleagues across the organisation has ensured the safety of our service users and carers and we have continued to deliver high quality care and enhance the lives of our wonderful service users.

Our commissioners have been a great support over this Covid period and for this we would like to say a huge thank you.

We have significant ambition as an organisation to transform social care, to really value our carers who work tirelessly in our communities and to realise the benefits this will bring to the wider healthcare system. We look forward to working in partnership with our commissioners to achieve this ambition.”

“I would like to pass on my gratitude to the fabulous care he received during his time living there [Dementia Care Service - bungalows], and through his illness and passing. My father loved his new home and he always sang the praises of the colleagues-who went far beyond any expectations. Obviously, during such difficult times, and being unable to be with my father during his illness, it brought great comfort knowing he was in the care of such wonderful people. Please thank all the colleagues for their relentless efforts, and I know that many more residents will benefit from this fantastic place.”

DAUGHTER OF SERVICE USER WHO PASSED AWAY IN APRIL 2020



INDEPENDENT SUPPORTED LIVING & SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES

We provide supported living services to people in their homes and in residential settings. This includes care and support for adults who have personal care needs, those living with Dementia as well as adults and children with Learning Disabilities and Autism. As a result of the pandemic, many of the community services, groups and centres, café's and other activities had to close their doors. Additionally, some people and their families chose to isolate and shield. In response to this, we fundamentally changed how we supported people and their families, which included:

- 1** Reorganising working patterns and schedules **creating 'support bubbles'** to minimise the number of Support Workers that came into contact with each Service User.
- 2** Ensuring all Support Workers **had the right amount and correct PPE**, including masks, visors, gloves and aprons. James Lafferty, one of our Support Workers and VOICE Trustee, would come to the office to help our Team Leaders to collect and distribute PPE to Care and Support Workers whenever they needed it.
- 3** Reorganising furniture and **utilising spaces differently to create Covid-safe spaces** for those with symptoms so that they were able to isolate and have the support they needed.
- 4** Frequent and sometimes **daily welfare checks and pop-in calls**, both virtual and in person where people wanted their care and support to continue.
- 5** **Checking for symptoms and conducting temperature checks** on colleagues and service users every day.
- 6** **Shopping calls, collecting medications, and organising other essential items.** We organised and delivered food parcels from Morrisons.
- 7** **Organising non-direct contact with family members** using phone, video calls and writing cards.
- 8** Providing and **organising new activities** such as arts, crafting, card making, baking, playing games.
- 9** **Supporting people to be active and maintain their mental wellbeing** through daily walks while places were closed.
- 10** **Supporting people to understand social distancing rules** and practicing these whilst going to the supermarket for example.





LIFE

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES & AUTISM

We support 77 people through our LIFE, Learning Disabilities and Autism service, delivering over 2,400 weekly hours and care and support. Much of the support offered to people in **LIFE** is outreach work in the community.

We organised 28 Support Workers into 8 distinct 'support bubbles', with each 'bubble' supporting our service users in their Independent Supported Living (ISL) setting. The Support Workers organised themselves, covering for each other through absence periods, working additional hours, being flexible, and ensuring that only those in their 'bubble' worked and supported the individual.

Additionally, we made sure that no shadowing or outreach calls were included within the support for these individuals, any and all activity and support was delivered from those in the 'bubble'.

Despite the lockdown, many of our Service Users in LIFE responded remarkably well, maintaining their independence and continuing to learn new skills, for example:

↳ We support 3 women who live in a shared housing block, they learnt what 2 metres looked like using a stick, and when they went out for a walk, they stopped to talk to someone and told

them they couldn't come any closer as they needed to stay 2 metres away. We also had a VE celebration day with them at their shared home, which they decorated with their handmade bunting and everyone was fed with their home-baked cakes and buns.

↳ **Catherine**, aged 66, lives on her own and in order to keep in contact with her sister, would craft handmade cards and write notes to send in the post.

↳ **William** was always active and loved getting out in the community. He didn't really like cooking or baking. During Covid, he's learnt how to make cookies and made a made bolognaise for the first time. He has learnt to enjoy baking and cooking and wants to continue.



KAREN FORD

SERVICE MANAGER - LIFE

The world has changed so much since we moved into the unknown territory of Covid-19, and it has changed the way everyone lives their lives. At LIFE by Be Caring, we have witnessed amazing dedication from our frontline colleagues for the support they have shown our service users, putting themselves at risk during this pandemic to make sure nobody went without support. Shopping was queued for and delivered to our service users in work time, and in our own time.

The message I got from our team was: **"whatever needs to be done, we will all jump and do it."** This has been the message from the beginning and is still happening today – the feedback has been amazing.

We have also made welfare phone calls, collected food for food parcels from Morrisons and got them out to our service users, and donated beauty products for a pamper pack for a service user. The **LIFE** Care and Support workers have been amazing, and I am so proud to say I'm part of this company. The whole team is truly working to Be Caring's vision and values. Thank you so much to all of the **LIFE** team who have made this possible.

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LIFE

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES & AUTISM CONTINUED...

Above and beyond this, our Support Workers and the wider team pulled together to make sure people were safe, that they were supported as best possible, whilst trying to bring as much joy as possible:

↳ **Sammy** was very anxious as she's a highly sociable person. She would normally visit a café each week and she knew everyone who worked there. She became much more anxious through lockdown, so we called her every day and changed her hours so that we were able to see her more frequently but for shorter periods. We continued to support her with her bills and correspondence as well as going on walks and providing reassurance. We donated beauty products to Sammy and helped her to make her home into a place of sanctuary with pamper packs and beauty products, as she loves the finer things in life.

↳ **Stacey** and her mum live together, but due to her health conditions, they cancelled their care service and shielded. Our Support Workers checked in daily and even went to the supermarket to buy some very specific lettuce for her tortoise.

↳ **Daniel** always visited the library to use the internet and research topics of interest such as bugs and insects. He was unable to use the internet unaided, but our Support Workers took a tablet to every call so he could continue his research and love of learning.



"I support a service user that is in a wheelchair and normally is out in his car a lot. However, with Covid he wasn't able to and he was getting sick and depressed with just going round the block with colleagues, so I brought my roller hockey boots with me. I told him I will skate instead of walking and he had a massive smile on his face, and when we went out he was laughing the whole time watching me skate by his side and we would go a lot further. Something so simple made his day and made him smile in this difficult time."

SIMON - SUPPORT WORKER



ALLENDALE COURT IN LOCKDOWN

CASE STUDY



14 young adults with Learning Disabilities or Autism live at Allendale Court. Every person living at Allendale Court has their own Individual Service Fund (ISF), co-designing their support to meet their own outcomes, goals, and ambitions, with the ultimate goal to move-on and live more independently within 2 years. Pre-Covid, much of their activity with our Support Workers is linked to community participation, employability learning and training, and independent living...

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ALLENDALE COURT IN LOCKDOWN

At the start of the pandemic, we carried out a thorough risk assessment to protect everyone who lives and works at Allendale. As soon as lockdown was announced, we acted swiftly to limit the number of people entering the building and made sure those who did complied with strict handwashing and sanitising rules. We limited the number of 1-to-1 sessions to 3 days per week instead of the usual 7, which reduced risk without eliminating people's support.

While people's safety continues to be paramount, it goes without saying the pandemic has massively affected everyone living and working at Allendale. Many of the people we support have experienced new or worsening mental health issues - most likely the result of losing access to community activities and contact with friends and family. Pre-Covid, these provided much needed stability, connection, and opportunities for personal growth.

For instance, two individuals took great pleasure in attending a local horse school, which because of Covid is now temporarily closed. They remain separated from the animals and stable staff who they saw most days and with whom they had formed close bonds.

While colleagues have experienced more challenging behaviours since the lockdown. Some residents had difficulties understanding why they could not leave the premises or see their families and would become angry or upset. We've communicated honestly, offering clear guidance and support to develop everyone's awareness of what's happening.

Where possible, we encouraged everyone at Allendale to attend Covid-safe social activities, such as group art sessions, where we made supportive posters for the communal spaces and windows.

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BE PROUD: CASE STUDY

ABBIE - TEAM MANAGER - ALLENDALE

Abbie joined Allendale Court as a Team Manager in November 2018. Since then, she has shown true dedication to both Be Caring and the people we support. She is consistent, reliable, and always wants to learn! She's well-liked, respected and trusted by both colleagues and service users. Abbie is friendly, and always makes herself available for support and advice whenever it is needed - everything she does promotes the values of Be Caring!

During Covid-19 Abbie has truly gone the extra mile. She has come into work at short notice, sourced alternative activities to enrich the lives of our service users and has even taken time out of her own personal time to run errands (sometimes completely out of our local area). She has acted selflessly without ever thinking about the potential risk to herself or her family in these unprecedented times. One colleague said "she is always happy and smiling! She tries her best to make sure that the service users are listened to and feel safe, it doesn't matter what you come to tell her about she'll sit and listen to you. There is no job that she wouldn't do - I've seen her literally run out of the building and into the community to help another support worker out.

She is truly amazing - thank you Abbie!



ALLENDALE COURT IN LOCKDOWN CONTINUED...



TRACY DOBSON

SERVICE MANAGER
LIFE AT ALLENDALE COURT

“Allendale Court is a supported living environment, we engage in lots of community activity, which stopped due to lockdown from Covid-19. I am immensely proud of the support team who became very creative at sourcing and encouraging in-house activities, which has helped a lot of the people we support. There has been a lot of challenges due to declining mental health, which are often outside the team’s usual remit, however they have dealt with these and remain very positive in their delivery of support.

I have to commend everyone in Allendale for following the Covid-19 guidance and being very vigilant around infection control.

The team have shown dedication to their role and the people we support throughout these unprecedented times and should be very proud of their conduct.”

Crafting materials, board games and puzzles were purchased, and residents helped liven the interior spaces by planting indoor flowerpots.

To compensate for fewer 1-2-1 sessions, an additional member of staff was available to residents each day; encouraging everyone to join them in 30 minutes of exercise, often leading a small group outside for a walk and some fresh air.

We employed a driver, so that once a week, everyone in each apartment had the opportunity of travelling further afield – we have heard wonderful stories of coastal expeditions and fish and chip suppers!

“I provide beauty treatments such as manicures and pedicures for service users at Allendale Court. This helped service users to feel that they’re valued and provides a level of normality during an abnormal time. The beauty treatments proved to be very popular with service users, it helped them feel relaxed and refreshed after a treatment. I think it helped not only with physical issues such as hard skin, but also can instil a sense of well-being, thus positively contributing to their mental health. One of the service users assists me in the treatments and always chats to those receiving a treatment. His sense of self-worth and confidence has increased, and I ensure that he knows that he’s absolutely vital to the Marilyn Beauty Salon experience.”

MARILYN - SUPPORT WORKER



DEMENTIA SERVICE BUNGALOWS IN LOCKDOWN

CASE STUDY

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We have 68 Care and Support Workers supporting 33 people with dementia across 2 sites, with 5 bungalows at each site, and up to 4 or 5 residents in each bungalow. Ordinarily, the individuals living in these bungalows are very sociable, making use of the extensive gardens (at one site) and participating in group activities, being involved in wider community activities such as day centres, luncheon clubs and going to a local café, and enjoying time with their families. Our Activity Workers would often organise birthday parties, walks and group activities on-site.



DEMENTIA SERVICE BUNGALOWS

We organised Care and Support Workers into 5 distinct 'support bubbles', with each 'bubble' supporting identified service users living in specific Bungalows. As with LIFE, the Care and Support Workers organised themselves, covering for each other through absence periods, working additional hours, being flexible, and ensuring that only those in their 'bubble' worked and supported those individuals.

Initially, due to panic buying and potential food shortages, ordering food shopping online became a real challenge. Food items were limited, and this meant multiple orders and shopping trips to ensure we were able to buy the food our residents wanted and needed.

As a temporary measure, we employed Dennis for 10 hours a week, to co-ordinate this task. Despite being temporary, his service has proved to be invaluable and Dennis is still working for us.

Above and beyond this, our team implemented additional measures to make sure people were safe and had time for fun and enjoyment by:

- ↳ Celebrating special occasions Day separately in each bungalow including birthdays and VE, decorating homes with bunting
- ↳ Purchasing large 'garden games' including Connect 4, Coits, Skittles and dominoes
- ↳ Organised contact with families through windows as well as phone calls

"I have never cared for someone at End of Life before, but I did it for the first time. Knowing that the family said how happy their father was in his new home and thanked us for looking after him, makes all the extra shifts and being away from your own family worthwhile. Knowing he went with the dignity he deserved makes me proud as I know I have done my job properly."

ANNEMARIE - CARE WORKER



MEG HALLIWELL
SERVICE MANAGER
DEMENTIA BUNGALOWS SERVICE

"I'd like to give a big shout out to all of the fantastic colleagues who work in the Dementia Bungalows Service - they are a truly amazing team."

During Covid-19, colleagues from both Augusta Close and Holmes Close have cared for and supported all service users, and each other. At the beginning of the outbreak, one gentleman was suspected of having the virus but was not admitted into hospital. Throughout the pandemic, our Care Workers have worked tirelessly and sacrificed their family lives to ensure he, and the rest of our service users, were cared for with compassion and dignity.

Throughout Covid-19 we have developed good communication through all levels. Outside of the branch, the Directors have supported us by ensuring PPE and other equipment has been delivered as needed."



KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

As an organisation, our Care and Support Workers use PPE for almost all direct care and support, but medical-grade masks were only used by exception before the Covid pandemic.

In the first few months of the pandemic, our existing supply chain for PPE was re-directed to the NHS, which meant working tirelessly to procure supplies through other channels, including importation.

Our Local Authorities, have been fantastic in updating us and sharing the latest guidance, communicating daily, and supplying us with PPE, particularly the fluid resistant (IIR). Although we had to ration the supply, often limited to day-by-day need, we were never without PPE. Although it was a challenge sourcing masks in March and April in particular, **only 7% of our colleagues in Tyneside** disagreed with the statement **“I’ve had the right amount and correct PPE and equipment to do my work.”**

82%



of Tyneside colleagues said they had felt safe at work over the Covid-19 period.

Our Team Leaders delivered PPE and other equipment to colleagues, reducing travel and contact with the office, preventing exposure to, and spread of the virus.



“I helped a Service User’s family by helping them with shopping and making them safe by protecting them when out in the community and on public transport by wearing face coverings.”

MICHAEL - SUPPORT WORKER



NICOLE LANCASTER

SERVICE MANAGER,
COMPLEX AND PALLIATIVE CARE

“The Complex and Palliative team provide care for the most vulnerable, complex and end of life service users. Our care team are dedicated, hardworking, compassionate and caring. Each and every care worker puts 100% into their job role. The care workers had extra responsibility to make sure that they kept the service users as safe as possible during Covid-19 due to their particular vulnerability. Colleagues have gone the extra mile working extra days and shifts so that we could keep the least amount of care workers attending a care call as possible, lowering the risk of contracting Covid-19 resulting in no confirmed cases from service users. As the new Service Manager for C&P and coming into the service at such a challenging time, I can only commend the full team on their outstanding care, dedication and approach to the challenging situation that is Covid-19. I feel privileged to be part of such a great team and hope that each and every person is proud of the great work they do, because I am”



ATTRACTING & RETAINING TALENT

We made our interview and induction process virtual, moving to video-based interviews and online learning units to replace approximately half of our classroom delivery. Learning units such as Manual Handling and Emergency Aid continued to be classroom-based. To maintain social distancing, we halved the number of attendees in every induction.

83%

of colleagues who joined during Covid* think the induction and training provided was good enough for them to perform their role.

*18 respondents.



children are now older too. I worked as a team leader for 8 weeks, and then applied for the Co-ordinator role - I didn't think I would get the job but applied anyways - I was totally gob smacked when they said yes. I cried with joy. I am now 5 weeks in learning a brand-new role plus, it is in an area where I have never lived, but I am loving my new role. I never thought about working for Be Caring, but in just 15 months and I have progressed so much and I am quite proud of myself. I am so grateful for this amazing opportunity."

In the 5 months from March to July 2020, we recruited 68 new Care and Support Workers in Tyneside who are providing 11,200 hours of essential care and support to 349 people.

To ensure the welfare of new starters, we refined our onboarding process to include a Welcome Call from the Service Manager after their first day and our Recruitment Officer or Co-

ordinator conducts check-in calls at week 1, 2, 4, 8 and 12 - until their first "Be Supported" session, which is then conducted quarterly.

50%

We've reduced our onboarding time across Be Caring by 50%, from 38 days to 19 days.



"I have delivered induction training and refresher training back to back since covid-19, measuring the whole room and arranging for new starters and staff to complete all their training."

MARK - TRAINER



PROTECTING LIVELIHOODS

Whilst many companies saw vast levels of redundancies, closures and colleagues being furloughed, we saw a sustained rise in recruitment. We've made zero redundancies and the average income of our Care and Support Workers has increased by 3 hours per week through more effective co-ordination and rota management.

We offered employees who needed to shield the opportunity to be placed on furlough until they were safe to return to work. We placed 45 colleagues across Be Caring, on the furlough scheme for shielding purposes, this includes some people who are living with someone who is shielding. We are expecting all colleagues to return to work. This meant these employees did not have to risk exposing themselves to Covid-19 at work or sustain a substantial loss of income.

18

We placed 18 colleagues in Tyneside on the furlough scheme.



With the support of the Covid-19 measures implemented by our Local Authorities, we've supplemented the income of Care and Support Workers who've lost working hours (income) due to service users shielding or temporarily ceasing their care service.

Across Be Caring, in the 5 months from April to August, we made 357 Covid Top Up Payments at an average of 15 hours per payment, protecting the income, and minimising the impact on our Care and Support Workers. This was vital for Care Workers in the Complex and Palliative Care service, where 10% of Service Users decided to shield and suspend their services.

224

We made 224 Covid Top Up payments to Care Workers in Tyneside, at an average of 15 hours per payment (April to August 2020).



BILLINDA RANSOME

SERVICE MANAGER, HOMECARE

"I moved to Be Caring in February 2020, and I can honestly say I have never been made to feel more comfortable and valued at work. When the news of the Covid-19 pandemic came through, everyone in Newcastle and North Tyneside came together to ensure that in that time of crisis, all service users still received the care and support they needed. We were given ample information from senior leaders regarding the government guidelines, which helped me feel assured I was giving the correct advice to our care colleagues and service users. I am proud to be part of the Be Caring family and would like to thank our amazing care workers for their hard work and commitment during such uncertain and scary times."

"After being on furlough, I got back to work last week and the team that I work with are supportive, the communication is good. We work well together and help with any problems or questions that need to be answered."

ANONYMOUS - SUPPORT WORKER

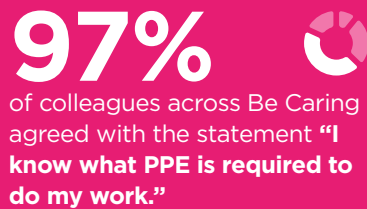


OUR PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

As a result of our analysis (including the Covid-19 survey feedback), as a company Be Caring are moving to the following outcomes (with some slight variations within each service, depending on their individual circumstances, strengths and needs):

We will continue to support culture change, instil Covid-safe guidance, and improve colleague wellbeing through effective communication and access to mental health and financial support

As a company, we have created an environment where all employees feel protected and safe at work. Throughout the pandemic we have communicated clear guidance around PPE (including how to access supplies) and the latest government guidelines and have regularly sent out messages of support and gratitude to our colleagues. In our recent colleague survey:



During the Covid-19 period, we employed two part-time Digital Content Creators to help the business to continue to improve internal engagement and external communications.



We will continue our digital recruitment and induction process

Those who had started working at Be Caring during the Covid-19 period were asked if the induction and training provided was good enough for them to perform their role:



This is a fantastic achievement given the scale and pace of change, and that new starters were entering their role at such an uncertain time. As a result of working digitally, and with the temporary changes to the DBS process, our onboarding time halved.

We're continuing our digital/virtual recruitment process and will retain online learning units for more experienced Care and Support Workers.



OUR PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

We'll continue to establish and promote opportunities for teamwork and recognise colleagues' good work

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we've developed greater team working through virtual team meetings and homeworking. Some colleagues will continue homeworking, retaining flexibility, while continuing to maintain or increase productivity levels.

As an employee owned social enterprise, we recognise the importance of our colleagues in the lives of those we support. Alongside better terms and conditions for those working in the care sector, we want to protect the wellbeing of our employees, and retain them. The respect and care we offer our colleagues, is then passed on to our service users. We're launching a new colleague recognition scheme - the Above and Bee-yond Award and will launch a local Voice initiative in the new year.

98%



of colleagues across Be Caring agreed with the statement **"My work has made a difference to those I support."**

89%



of colleagues across Be Caring agreed with the statement **"My work has been valued."**

Newcastle & North Tyneside Service Priority: Embedding the new management structure, becoming the local provider of choice and a Community Anchor

Over the past 5 months and more, we've undergone a significant re-structure of our Tyneside leadership and management team. which has seen us welcome some exceptional and experienced people, including Operations Manager, Jackie Guncan. This team is settled and is working hard to ensure the highest standards, applying and embedding rigour to our co-ordination and quality.

Our key priorities over the next 6-8 months lie in maximising existing opportunities within our current contracts, building and developing stronger relationships with Social Workers, Case Managers and our commissioners. We want those working with us to view us as a trusted provider and that those who receive services know they'll get the best care and support that is co-designed and outcomes focused from the start. We already know we're doing this in schemes such as Allendale and in our LIFE services. We want to bring that approach to home support, through our 7 Ways to Being Well model. Our commitment in Tyneside is to make sure we truly are the number one provider for the people we support, our colleagues and our commissioners.



SUMMARY

When interviewed and surveyed about the Covid-19 outbreak, employees across the company have said they have felt more bonded and closer-knit during this time, and that Be Caring have promoted an open culture where the employees feel valued and safe at work.

We focused our efforts on sourcing the correct PPE and keeping colleagues updated with changing guidance and practices. We acted quickly and implemented processes needed to ensure we kept our colleagues safe and protected those we provide care and support for. We've continued to go above and beyond for the people we support, with inspirational stories and examples of colleagues doing the smallest things to improve the lives and wellbeing of those we support.

During the pandemic, we've been able to protect all our employees' jobs and offered them financial stability via the furlough scheme and wage top-ups for those who would otherwise have suffered a loss of income as a result of Covid-19.

Throughout the pandemic, our colleagues have been a credit to us. Their hard work has resulted in stability and growth across the business. As a result, we are delighted that we were

able to reward every employee with a £30 or £50 bonus in July, and plan to offer a larger bonus at Christmas.

"I was surprised and completely overwhelmed to receive my card and gift voucher through the post. It's an extreme kindness to say these things about me and give me the very generous gift voucher. Thank you for your continued help and kindness."

DAVID - SUPPORT WORKER

We'll continue to work collaboratively with our commissioners and system partners so that we can be the Provider of choice for everyone, making a real difference to the lives of those we support and having a positive impact on the communities we serve - becoming a community asset and integrating with volunteers and voluntary sector groups.



Throughout Covid-19, decisions have needed to be made quickly, and we have provided a safe space to learn from successes and failures, understanding what worked, what didn't and why.

Our leaders are supported to make timely and informed decisions - having access to information and data - and being transparent about our vision and ambitions.

Throughout this difficult time, our Senior Management Team have remained visible, and open to communication from all colleagues across Be Caring. They have communicated frequently with employees at all levels, sending email messages of sincere gratitude, and handwritten "Thank You" cards to every employee. These actions have really boosted morale and have been received well by all.

Our Operations Managers, Team Leaders and office team reviewed our rotas and care plans and have been working with our recruitment team to reduce colleaguesing gaps. With this, we have been able to put robust contingencies in place. Since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, we have been working closely with our service users' families, supporting and drawing on them to provide care to their loved ones if needed. This has ensured our service users are receiving safe, stable and effective care.

"I have worked for Be Caring since October 2013 and I still love every part of my job and what I do."

LISA - CARE WORKER