

Maristow House Nursing Home

Business Sector: Care

Business Size: 1-49

Region: South West

Business Profile: Established in 1999 by Lindsay and Martin Wallace the home is rated as excellent by the Commission for Social Care Inspection.



"Training is paramount to us. All our efforts are geared towards the care of our residents and developing and training our staff."

Martin Wallace
Finance Director

The challenge

Lindsey bought the home in 1999 as their first venture into the residential care industry – she was previously a nurse in Salisbury Spinal Unit while Martin was a care and therapist assistant with Scope, the disability organisation which focuses on people with cerebral palsy.

They now have a total staff of 23, including 11 care assistants. The home cares for 16 residents.

The recommended standard in the industry is 50 per cent of care assistants trained to Level 2.

The solution

The management team, which includes Lindsey's husband Martin, have been working closely with Train to Gain, the service that matches businesses' training needs with the most relevant training solutions. It is funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and delivered across the South West by Business Link.

What is the Skills Pledge?

The Skills Pledge is a voluntary, public commitment by the leadership of a company or organisation to support all its employees to develop their basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, and work towards relevant, valuable qualifications to at least Level 2 (equivalent to 5 good GCSES). The purpose is to ensure that all staff are skilled, competent and able to make a full contribution to the success of the company/organisation.

Some 75 per cent of the home's care assistants have gained an NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care or are working towards the qualification and a further 10 per cent are beginning their training this year.

The couple have signed the Government-initiated Skills Pledge to highlight their commitment to training and also have been accredited with Investors in People (IIP) for the past four years, a rarity for a nursing home.

The results

Their efforts in raising the level of training were recognised when they won the Training Excellence category in the 2008 South Wiltshire Business Awards.

Despite this success they are not resting on their laurels. Funding has been received from the Leadership & Management Advisory Service (LMAS) for Lindsey to undertake some leadership and management development.

This programme recognises the economic benefits of raising the leadership capabilities of the owner-manager in small and medium-sized enterprises in the region. Financial support goes first to the owner-manager to develop their skills. Any funding left over can then be used for other members of the management team.

Maristow House's care manager and training coordinator Mandy Barham also participated in some leadership and management development and found it very useful.

"I hadn't done anything like that before and it put a lot of things into perspective," said Mandy. "It was very, very useful. It showed us how to motivate staff to get the best out of them. Training is very important to us here in all aspects of what we do. We want to be the best and training is vital to that."

Train to Gain Business Link Adviser Karen Knight, who has worked with Lindsey and Martin, said: "Maristow House really is a great example of a business that puts training at the heart of the organisation. Lindsey and Martin realise that to be the best you have to have high standards, and that includes training."

What is Train to Gain?

Train to Gain is a service offering independent advice on improving the skills of your employees. The Service helps employers – of all sizes and in all sectors – to boost their business by training their staff.

Independent Business Link Advisers help you to find the right training and the right providers, and construct a training package tailored to each business.