

# Careline Support



Careline Support – part of Churchill Retirement Living’s Millstream Management Services business – provides monitoring services to 192 retirement developments and more than 6000 residents. The service was launched in September 2020 to bring Millstream’s call monitoring in-house and created a more personalised, responsive and efficient service with workforce training support from TSA Academy.



## OVERVIEW

Careline Support hired a team of 10 call handlers in July 2020. They were trained intensively over five weeks, and have since effectively delivered call handling whilst excelling on their set targets, and achieving QSF certification – a sign of high-quality.

We talked to James Knight – Careline Support’s Monitoring Services Manager – about their accomplishments, the challenges they have faced, and how TSA’s training helped accommodate their success.

## CHALLENGES

### *Limited Experience*

One of the biggest challenges James faced was the lack of TEC knowledge in his new team. Only one of his 10 new call handlers had direct experience in the sector, which meant that some important aspects of their new roles had to be learnt from scratch.

### *COVID-19 – meeting for the first time*

Establishing a service in the middle of a pandemic posed challenges; James was unable to meet nine out of 10 of his new call handlers face-to-face until their first day.

*“They all walked in on day one, meeting me for the first time, meeting each other for the first time, and knowing that in 5- or 6-weeks’ time, they were going to be taking calls.”*

**James Knight - Careline Support’s Monitoring Services Manager**

### *Starting from Scratch*

Since the service was brand new, there was no existing team nor work culture. This meant the new colleagues had to build it all themselves, instead of just fitting into a pre-existing model. This, combined with the team's varying levels of telecare skills and experience amounted to a huge task when everyone walked in on 27th July. Expectations were varied.

# APPROACH - the training

## **TSA Call Handling Provides Foundation**

Samantha Davies, TSA's Workforce Development Lead Consultant, led a 2-day Call Handling Course with the new team. This provided the integral background into TEC, explained the importance of Call Handling to the sector, and educated them around key skills, best practice and risk.

"TSA's training provided an in-depth understanding of the TEC sector, including all the types of equipment out there, how it looks at the service user's end, a lot of the soft skills required, and some stories of things that could go wrong. It really gave the team a detailed introduction and understanding of the industry, which we could not have achieved without TSA's help."

**James Knight - Careline Support's Monitoring Services Manager**

"This was training at its most comprehensive focussing on customer care. Delivered within an enjoyable team environment."

**Linda Davy – Careline Operator**

Once this knowledge base was developed, Careline Support's team could get more technical training on their specific call handling system, but also work on their culture and what values they would look to embody with their service.

## **Creating a Culture**

"We built up Careline Support's Mission & Vision with contributions from every member of the new team. Everyone had the opportunity to put forward what they felt was important to them and our customers, and we narrowed it down to a set of key words that define our culture - "Trust, openness, respect, communication, honesty". These are now displayed on our office walls."

**James Knight - Careline Support's Monitoring Services Manager**

James explained how one of the benefits of starting from scratch was the opportunity to model Careline Support's culture around its front-line staff. Within the first week, alongside TSA training, the team received inductions with senior managers at Millstream, including the Managing Director, HR Partner, and Commercial Director. This embedded an organisational foundation to go alongside the sector background that TSA provided. From here their culture, one of close communication and responsiveness with service users, could be properly developed.

[training@tsa-voice.org.uk](mailto:training@tsa-voice.org.uk)



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# OUTCOMES



**8383 calls taken in March 2021**



**6.5 seconds**

Average time to answer call



**98% of calls answered in under 2 minutes**



**Fully compliant QSF report**

## Customer Feedback

- 92% would recommend Careline Support's services to others
- 95% satisfied with speed of service
- 96% satisfied with ease of communication
- 98% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with 'friendliness'
- 96% were satisfied with how the situation was resolved

## CONCLUSION

Despite starting a service in the midst of a pandemic and having no existing business framework to slot into, Careline Support exceeded expectations and has delivered a top-quality service from the day its lines opened. With support from the wider sector, including TSA's Training, they quickly built the knowledge and foundations of their team and created a culture from the base up. This created an exceptional call handling environment that maintains a personal, highly responsive and effective service.

For more information on **Careline Support**:  
[www.carelinesl.co.uk](http://www.carelinesl.co.uk)  
or contact James.Knight@carelinesl.co.uk  
01425 888939

For information on **training** and **workforce** needs visit the **TSA Academy**: [www.tsa-voice.org.uk/tsa-training-service](http://www.tsa-voice.org.uk/tsa-training-service)  
or contact the Training team:  
training@tsa-voice.org.uk  
01625 520320