

Terra

BLU

communicating with our carers  
**inc.**

SUMMER '08



## Welcome

to the second issue of TerraBlu's staff newsletter. Since issue one, we have been upgraded to three stars by CSCI and received very positive feedback from clients responding to our own Quality Assurance Survey.

We have made good progress with our aim to be the best home-care employer in the South East. Many have commented favourably on the staff discounts we have negotiated and the AA membership.

Our staff forum has proved really useful. We are looking for three new members, and would welcome anyone who has joined the company recently to think about putting their name forward.

Richard Gould, MD



*If you go down to the woods today, you're sure of a big surprise... Julia, Emma, Elaine, Richard, Gina and Sheila out on team-building manoeuvres.*

*Sadly, Gina is moving on to pastures new. The team will miss her but wishes her every success in her future career at the Rusthall GP Surgery – where we hope we will be the Homecare Provider of choice!*

## Get packing for the academy

The first TerraBlu Care Academy will be held at the Albir Playa Hotel in Altea Spain from 17th - 20th September.

The Albir Playa is a four star hotel on the beach with a Spa and Fitness Centre.

The Care Academy is part reward/thank you to members of staff who have been with us for more than a year and part profes-

sional and personal development.

A number of workshops will be held around wider social care issues, career development and customer service and, hopefully, a fair bit of time exploring the swimming pools and spa!



# Support workers become screen stars

Thanks to the support workers – including Kim (pictured right) and Nimet – who took part, with their clients, in a reportage style photoshoot. These images will be used on our website, currently being redesigned, and on future marketing material.

All our staff are stars in our eyes – and appreciated by our clients. The latest Carers of The Month had their moment of lights, camera, action when they had their portraits taken (shown below) as part of their prize.



## February - Anita Trowell



Anita has been awarded Carer of the Month for her ability and willingness to adapt and work in all areas at short notice to care for all clients. She has been nominated by clients for her cheerful personality and her kindness.

Nothing is too much trouble for her.

## March - Lynsey Gibb



Lynsey has been awarded Carer of the Month for her dedication and understanding towards clients. She is always willing to do extra calls at short notice in any area. Her timekeeping is excellent, always cheerful and helpful, she is complimented by many of the clients.

Nothing is too much trouble for her.

## April - Nimet Yerlikaya



Nimet has been praised by clients and their relatives for her reliability and caring attitude. She maintains a consistently high standard of care for all clients and works well with challenging clients. She ensures that the care co-ordinator

is aware of any problems and checks to make sure that they have been dealt with promptly.

## May - Sally Wills



Sally has been awarded COM for her commitment and high standard of care shown. When one of our clients became ill over a bank holiday period. Sally kept the on call service fully informed. When the decision to call an ambulance

was made by the GP, Sally went back to the client's home to pack an overnight bag in time for the ambulance's arrival.

# Taking care... on the roads



*TerraBlu goes the extra mile when it comes to helping support staff with their transport needs*

**Our Ford KAs are available to carers at just £10.50 a day...**

Reliable transport for staff is one of TerraBlu's major concerns. Without it carers can't carry out their rounds and clients are inconvenienced.

Carers with car troubles are invited to use one of the newly branded hire cars. Ford KAs, featuring the TerraBlu logo, are available to carers at £10.50 a day or £235 per month. These have

been priced to be cheaper than any commercial rental service, available locally. All tax and insurance is included in this price.

Prior to using one of the pool cars, the insurance company now requires that we complete and submit a driver information form. Please allow enough time to do this with Emma, before getting back out on the road.

## Helping you beat the credit crunch

In thinking about how we could drive down the cost of the weekly food shop for staff, we wrote to everyone about using the company's cash and carry access to buy bulk items for staff. Some members of staff expressed an interest, but a number weren't sure what the savings might be. Check out the website at [www.booker.co.uk](http://www.booker.co.uk) where you can browse and download a price list. Savings on bulk items like tinned tomatoes, crisps and washing powder can be up to 50 per cent off normal supermarket prices with a range of top brands.

We also have staff discounts in place at the

following stores and services:

- Scuffs and Scratches – minor car repairs;
- ACP Electrical – electrical repairs/installations;
- Setyres – Tyres, Batteries, Brakes and Exhausts;
- Just MOTs – means what it says!;
- Mr Clutch – servicing, brakes, clutches, gearbox and more;
- Jones – Shoes;
- Hair Workshop – Hair stylists.

If there is a store that you think should be added to this list, speak to Emma. She will make contact with them and try to negotiate a discount for our staff.



*TerraBlu is proud to be developing links with Age Concern, including work on our survey and the branding of their minibus*



# And our survey says... 'keep up the good work'

Tunbridge Wells Age Concern conducted a survey of all our clients' satisfaction in May and June. They managed to elicit 111 responses, which was a great response rate. Of these responses 82 per cent were overwhelmingly positive.

The areas that we have highlighted for improvement are:

- Reducing staff turnover and improving continuity of care. We are addressing this through our staff retention plan to make TerraBlu the best Homecare employer, and through reducing disruption to the rounds where we can.
- Communication.

Communication about changes to the timings of calls or who is doing the call needs to

improve as does the ability to contact the office. We are taking a number of steps, including changing the message on the answer machine and improving lunchtime cover.

- Improving clarity around Social Services charging for care. A number of our clients were confused about the thresholds at which they would be charged for their care by Social Services, and how they could claim money back if they went away on holiday. This area can be confusing and has recently changed. We are arranging for an expert from KCC to come in and brief Care Co-ordinators, so we are in a position to respond to questions better.

## Self-defence classes

As the nights draw in, we will be organising two self defence classes in the autumn led by James and Mandy Wharton.

TerraBlu takes lone working procedures very seriously, and while we hope that our staff will never have to use these techniques, it will help them avoid risks and also to deal confidently with any challenges encountered.

Anyone interested in taking advantage of one of these free courses should give their name to Julia to be first on the list. White pyjamas are not required!

## Time for tea for clients

Our next client event is being organised for 1st October at Penshurst Place. We will be holding a high tea, which will include sandwiches, cake, scones and cream. There will be access to the gardens.

We will be asking clients to make a contribution to the cost of this event. If any staff wish to come along or help out, please let Emma know.



**It's summer holidays season! Thanks to all those Support Workers who are covering extra calls to help out with holiday cover. To those going off for a well-deserved break, have a great time!**