

RideLondon-Surrey Case Study

Carewatch (East Surrey)

Carewatch (East Surrey) is a large, well-established home-care provider that helps people to manage their day-to-day lifestyle in their own homes. This can include assisting with recovery from hospital and helping those who have a physical or learning disability, or who have dementia or mental health issues.

We caught up with Lee Hopcroft, Operations Manager, to find out how the staff at Carewatch planned for the RideLondon-Surrey events.

“As Operations Manager at Carewatch I’m responsible for the day-to-day business operations of the unit. Our staff provide home care across a large area of Surrey – which includes Leatherhead, Dorking, Reigate and Redhill – so the RideLondon-Surrey events affected a large part of the area we work in.

“In the last few years, Surrey has become the cycling capital of England – with the Tour of Britain, the Olympics and now RideLondon-Surrey all taking place in the county – so we’ve had plenty of experience in dealing with road closures and the challenges that a mass-participation event might throw up.

“So while we appreciate the revenue and benefits that cycling events generate for Surrey, our priority during the RideLondon-Surrey events was to ensure that the road closures did not prevent our care staff visiting their clients as normal.

“To achieve this goal, we adopted a variety of strategies in the run up to the events. The community drop-

in sessions in the months leading up to the event – run by the event organisers, the London & Surrey Cycling Partnership (LSCP) – were a really useful starting point.

“I picked up loads of information at the drop-in sessions and afterwards briefed our field care supervisors, who directly manage the front-line care staff. The field care supervisors would then filter relevant information – like road-closure timings – down to the care staff so that they could use up-to-date information to plan their client visits around the event road closures.

“Once the event route was confirmed, we identified all our clients who live

on, or immediately adjacent to, the route as they would be the ones most likely affected by any road closures. The care staff informed their clients about the potential disruptions on a case-by-case basis because many of our clients suffer from severe dementia, while others become anxious when their routine changes so we didn’t want to unduly worry them. We also let the families of our clients know what would be going on throughout the day of the RideLondon-Surrey events.

“LSCP gave us a detailed colour-coded summary of what times riders would be passing through various points on the route, and what times the roads



would reopen, which was great but it was very detailed so a simplified version would be useful for 2014.

“As event day drew closer, we liaised with our clients and their families to let them know our care staff would plan to visit them at the regular time but also to warn them that the care staff might be a little early or late due to the road closures associated with the RideLondon-Surrey cycling events.

“Most of our clients and their families were really understanding when we explained to them that there might be disruptions during the cycling events. They understood that any road closures were out of our hands and

appreciated that we need to work with events like RideLondon-Surrey to ensure disruptions are kept to a minimum.

“On any given day something like a traffic accident can hold up our staff up so we already have robust contingency plans in place for most eventualities, and our staff are used to thinking on their feet and dealing with unexpected challenges. And now that Surrey is such a hub for cycling, the more events that take place, the more we know how to deal with them and the more easily we’ll take them in our stride.

“I don’t think we’ll do anything differently when we plan for the 2014

RideLondon events. We now know how the route of the cycling events will affect our area so we can plan around that to ensure our clients receive a good service.

“To sum up, if any businesses find themselves in a similar position, I would suggest that they find out as much information as possible well in advance of the events and then feed this information through to their staff, clients and their families.

“It’s also a good idea to leave a bit of extra time to get around on the day and go to as many of the community drop-in sessions as possible so you’re up to date with the organisers’ plans.”

