

BUSINESS READY

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK SCIENCE PARK

Business Ready takes care of new Warwickshire company

Caremark Warwick is a local franchise of a national organisation that offers domiciliary care to people ranging from personal care to companionship.



Pictured (left to right): Barney Davis, Cllr Martin Watson and Ian McFarlane-Toms

Barney Davis launched Caremark Warwick at the start of 2020 after being made redundant from a 20-year career in the wine trade, offering care to people in Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth either privately or through contracts with Warwickshire County Council and the NHS.

Soon after he had launched the business, Covid struck and it left him questioning the decision he had made.

However, with the support of Business Ready, Caremark Warwick is now thriving with 27 carers supporting around 70 clients across the region.

The Company

Caremark was founded in 2005 and is a home care company with excellent standards, excellent people and excellent success stories.

The company provides care in the home for people from all walks of life, enabling them to stay in their own home and community.

It has more than 7,000 customers throughout the UK, and provides 110,000 hours of home care each week.

Barney Davis had worked in the wine trade for two decades when he was made redundant, which gave him the opportunity to look at establishing his own business. He decided to go down the franchise route.

He said: "I'd worked in the wine trade for 20 years which involved a lot of travel and a lot of tasting wine which I know sounds perfect!

"However, I was having thoughts about what else I could do – something more worthwhile. Plus, I was keen to be in complete control of my own destiny – then I was made redundant so the decision was taken out of my hands.

"I opted to go down the franchise route and, having weighed up a few options, I really liked the Caremark offer. It ticked the boxes of doing something that would have a positive impact on people's lives and I bought the franchise in January 2020."

Caremark Warwick was launched and would operate across Leamington, Kenilworth and Warwick offering a range of services to people in their own home – from personal care through to companionship.

The Challenge

Just weeks after establishing the franchise, Covid struck and it left Barney questioning his decision.

He said: "I was sat there thinking, what on earth have I done? Caremark were and have continued to be hugely supportive but I also spoke to the Growth Hub to find out about local business support and they put me in touch with Business Ready.

"The support I received was invaluable. During the pandemic, when the full launch of the business was understandably delayed, I attended a number of online seminars as part of the Business Ready programme which helped me immensely as I was starting out as a business owner for the first time.

"These seminars, which covered a number of topics, gave me plenty of advice and, crucially, also helped me build a local network of contacts."

By November 2020, Caremark was delivering four hours of care per week to people across the county and still needed help to grow.

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The Solution

Barney worked with Business Ready advisor Helen Brewster, who acted as a sounding board and supported with plans for client and carer recruitment.

Helen advised Barney to set out what the offer was to local customers and how to position the business. The coaching time with Helen proved invaluable and helped him to lay the foundations for the future of the business.

Barney said: "Helen was a huge help to me and my business. The work we did around the customer proposition was really useful especially as mine was a new business and, as I was new to care, it was especially important to get these building blocks in place from the start."

The Results

Two years after being established, Caremark Warwick is delivering well over 500 hours of care per week with 27 carers now working for the business supporting around 70 clients in mid-Warwickshire.

Not only has it led to commercial success, the company was also named New Business of the Year 2021 at the Leamington Business Awards in March.

Caremark Warwick is now a lifeline for its clients across the area.

Ian McFarlane-Toms, Business Ready manager at the University of Warwick Science Park, said: "Caremark Warwick is making a real difference to people's lives in the Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth area and that's exactly what Barney wanted when he launched the business in 2020.

"He has navigated through the height of the pandemic to get to a point where the company is now employing 27 carers and supporting people with a range of needs.

"I am so pleased that the support of Business Ready has played such a key role in the development of Caremark Warwick and that the way we tailored our support to Barney's new venture has worked so well for him."

CLlr Martin Watson, portfolio holder for economy with Warwickshire County Council, said: "Caremark Warwick has not only created jobs, boosting the local economy but it has made the care workers market more resilient which helps the council in its provision of care. All credit to all involved and, from a county council perspective, we are delighted with the outcome."

Business support for the next level

The Business Ready programme is managed by the business support team at the University of Warwick Science Park. The experienced Business Growth Advisers team have been delivering business growth and support services to technology based businesses for over 30 years.

In addition, the team are supported by a range of specialist mentors who have run their own businesses and have expertise and experience supporting, advising, coaching and mentoring other growth businesses.



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