



BLUEBELL HOUSE
IN SAFE HANDS HOME CARE LIMITED
74 – 76 Mitchell Avenue Ventnor I.O.W PO37 7PA
Company House No 07521487



To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to provide a comprehensive overview of the circumstances leading to the closure of Bluebell House Care Home and to address the inquiries regarding its feasibility to continue operating.

The care home ceased operations on 4-11-22 under the management of Safe Hands Home Care Limited. Despite attempts to explore alternative avenues, including offering the property for sale as a care home both to the council and the open market, the response has been discouraging.

Bluebell House Care Home was partly funded by a scheme utilising central government funds to the Isle of Wight (I.O.W) Council, which was designed to assist and aid the challenges faced by nursing homes, care facilities, and home care services on the island with recruitment and retention of staff. The scheme, which provided financial support from central government, facilitated the engagement of staff through a mainland agency, with the care home compensating the difference in wages. However, with the cessation of funding from central government, the scheme inevitably came to an end, leaving the care home without the necessary financial support to sustain operations.

Despite attempts to explore alternative avenues, including offering the property for sale as a care home, the response has been discouraging. We even offered the property to the Isle of Wight Council, who cited a lack of funds to operate it, echoing the broader financial constraints imposed by government decisions to cut funding. Additionally, discussions with estate agents revealed reluctance from other operators due to the perceived stigma associated with the closure due to staffing issues, further compounded by the nationwide shortage of care staff and the limited pool of personnel available on a small island like ours.

Regarding the suitability of the care home's facilities, several factors contributed to its no longer being fit for purpose. Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by government mandates requiring vaccination of all staff, exacerbated an already existing national shortage of care personnel. Despite diligent efforts to recruit and retain staff, including exploring various avenues and even offering competitive rates, the challenge persisted. With the withdrawal of support from the council and the additional strain of staff members going on maternity leave, the care home faced an untenable situation. If I had continued, I would have been in breach of the Care Act for which I was legally responsible, and CQC would have closed the care home for being unsafe.

In conclusion, while the decision to close Bluebell was undoubtedly a difficult one, it was driven by a confluence of factors beyond our control. If there are any further inquiries or assistance required, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you for your understanding and consideration in this matter.

Best regards,

Gail Falloon-Phillips