

Dying Matters in Social Care



DYING MATTERS

Katie Reade

Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer, Hospice UK

CO-PRODUCTION COUNTS!

Active Prospects

A NATIONAL VOICE FOR SOCIAL CARE

Sam Monaghan

CEO, Methodist Homes (MHA)

WHAT KEEPS ME AWAKE AT NIGHT

Stephen Chandler

President, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services

Become a
Care Home Friend

See page 26

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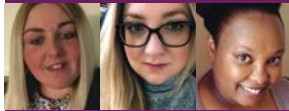
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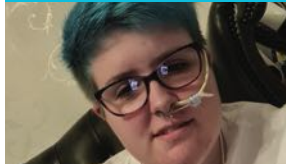
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CareTalk

The voice of excellence in social care

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Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this magazine. Do keep your articles, news and views coming!

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Coming up for June 2022:

■ MIND HOW YOU CARE ■ GOOD MENTAL HEALTH ■ A CARING CULTURE
■ CARER'S MONTH: CARING FOR CARERS

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Has this month's Care Talk
been read by all your staff?
Use our list to be sure!

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- ☐ Families

Welcome to the May issue of Care Talk which focuses on **Dying matters in social care.**

There are very few things that are certain in life, and as Woody Allen famously said, "I am not afraid of death, I just don't want to be there when it happens." None of us had a say in our birth, but we should all have the chance to make decisions about our death.

So why with something so inevitable is it something that we fear to think, or even talk about?

This month Dying Matters Awareness week takes place from 2-6 May. Hospices play a vital role in social care, improving the quality of life and wellbeing for people with life-limiting or terminal illness. This has been a hugely challenging year for the UK's charitable hospices, as Katie Reade, Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer at Hospice UK explains. In her article **Dying Matters** (page 7) Katie tells us why Hospice UK are calling for government investment and training in palliative and end of life care delivered in the community to support health and care staff.

In his article on page 5, Prof Martin Green, CEO at Care England explores the significance of **Dying matters in social care** and the positive role social care professionals can play at such a sensitive time. He also addresses the urgent need for a robust framework and resource services so that colleagues are supported with the inevitable grief that comes with end of life care.

Page 20 highlights an excellent example of person centred end of life care. Neurological Care Centre Manager, Colleen Brothers' mantra is 'kindness and compassion.' In the article, **The power of kindness in end-of-life care**, Colleen explains why the complexities of palliative care must also encompass the human side to caring as well as the clinical.

On a lighter note one of our real lives features this month is a must read. Our resident author Debra Mehta talks to Lady Tracey Woodward, a Registered Home Care Manager at Affinity Care Services in Wales. This remarkable award winning care professional is a shining example of why a noble job deserves a noble woman. Turn to page 23 to read **Care Nobility the Welsh Way**.

We do hope you enjoy this issue and thank you for supporting Care Talk. And please keep your wonderful stories, news and suggestions coming.

Lisa



Dying matters in social care

The Covid pandemic saw social care on the frontline of a war against this virus. Tragically, well over 30,000 of our cherished residents died during the first phases of the global health emergency. This created enormous challenges for our dedicated workforce, and many colleagues had to face the loss of residents they had supported for a long time.

“We can learn many lessons from the hospice movement.”

Over the last 30 years, the dependency levels and frailty of many care home residents have significantly increased, which has meant that residential care is often an end-of-life placement. Little consideration is given to the impact on staff who go through what could be described as a professional bereavement.

Often within social care and health professions, there is a tendency to pretend that staff do not have feelings and that it is somehow weak to express grief and sadness at the loss of people in your care. It is my view that the people who work in health and social care have incredible values and are also very connected to the people they support, and it is up to us all to recognise the impact that loss and grief will have on their lives. That is why I believe the care services should develop some clear support services. Staff must have an opportunity to grieve and build up resilience to continue to live fulfilling lives, even when they work in the profession that is so often about supporting people when they die.

We can learn many lessons from the hospice movement, which is similarly tasked with supporting people at the end of their lives. One of the essential elements of a support package is giving people time to reflect and talk about the person who has died. This can be with other colleagues or with the families and friends of those they have supported. It is essential that people have the opportunity to remember the person and particularly the positive things about them.

There is also a need for some people to access more formalised counselling and support services. Some care providers have made links to organisations such as Cruise bereavement counselling and publicised helplines and resources that can support people with grief.

There is also a need for some people to access more formalised counselling and support services. Some care providers have made links to organisations such as Cruise bereavement counselling and publicised helplines and resources that can support people with grief.



Professor Martin Green OBE
Chief Executive, Care England



The challenges of what social care has been through during Covid are unprecedented. Further support is needed because many staff are suffering from post-traumatic stress because of the number of people who have died during the pandemic. The NHS has set resources for its staff, and these resources should also be available for social care staff.

“It is up to us all to recognise the impact that loss and grief will have.”

The people who work in social care are our biggest asset. We owe it to them to ensure that they have all the resources and support necessary to fulfil this incredibly important but sometimes very difficult and challenging work together with training programmes that enable people to understand this complex role. We need a similar framework of resources and support services so that colleagues are never left isolated to deal with the many challenges they face, not least the grief of losing people they support.

@ProfMartinGreen @CareEngland

Social Care TOP 30

RECOGNISING INFLUENTIAL LEADERS IN SOCIAL CARE

Social care needs strong innovative leadership more than ever at this time. The **SOCIAL CARE TOP 30** will give the opportunity to showcase and recognise real leadership and excellence in the sector.

Who's top of the social care charts?

NOMINATE NOW
FOR 2022 AWARDS!



CARE TALK IS LOOKING FOR CEOs AND OTHER SECTOR LEADERS WHO ARE INFLUENTIAL MOVERS AND SHAKERS IN THE SOCIAL CARE SECTOR WITH A NATIONAL PLATFORM INCLUDING:

People who have the vision to improve developments and outcomes in the sector

People who have made a significant difference in our sector

Someone who is a strong leader in their field to improve services

Key influencers and decision makers in the sector

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HOW TO NOMINATE

Please send your nominations by email, together with a 100 word statement, as to why you think they should make the SOCIAL CARE TOP 30, to joe@caretalk.co.uk

SHORTLISTED SOCIAL CARE TOP 30 – READERS VOTE!

We will be asking Care Talk readers to vote online for the individual they think should be number one in the top 30 chart. Finalists and guests will be invited to a dinner on 19th October 2022 at The Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London where the overall winner of the SOCIAL CARE TOP 30 will be announced.

The individual may be from the private, public or third sector and a Chief Executive or other national sector leader.

DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO FITS THIS DESCRIPTION?

Send your nominations to joe@caretalk.co.uk

www.caretalk.co.uk/sct30



Dying matters



 hospiceUK

Katie Reade

Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer
Hospice UK

In summer 2020, both of Maureen Anderson's parents died, within four weeks of each other, in her sister's living room. Maureen and her siblings were unprepared for the realities of caring for their parents at home at end of life. They were not even warned that their Mum was dying when she was discharged from hospital, only discovering this when Maureen read that she had 'days to one week to live' in her medical notes. Maureen's Mum was sent home without any end of life medication, incontinence pads or food. These incontinence pads were only provided the day after her death.



Sadly, Maureen is not alone and there are many more stories of people dying at home without the support they and their loved ones needed. Hospice UK estimate that almost 67,000 people have died at home without the right end of life care since the start of the pandemic.

The numbers of people dying at home have been increasing for some time, but this trend has been accelerated by the pandemic. In February 2022, the UK reached the milestone of 100,000 excess deaths in private homes since the beginning of the pandemic, compared to the five-year average. What is particularly stark is that the numbers of people dying at home have remained high even through the peaks and troughs of the pandemic. In 2022 so far, around 4,000 people have died at home across the UK every week. These deaths are primarily from conditions other than COVID-19, with only 9-12 per cent directly attributed to the virus.

Whilst surveys show that many people prefer to die at home, we believe that the pandemic has removed any sense of choice. The surge in deaths at home may have

been driven by fear of COVID-19 infection, not being able to see friends and family, or apprehension about overwhelming the NHS in an inpatient setting. It is clear that the surge in deaths at home and its causes need to be investigated.

Hospice UK is concerned that the health and care system is not currently equipped to support such high numbers of people dying at home and that, as a result, families of those who are dying have had to take on more caring responsibilities, frontline health and care workers have been under unimaginable pressure and many thousands of people may have died at home without the pain relief, symptom management and emotional and practical support they need.

Millions of us have lost loved ones during the pandemic and this national grief has made many more of us willing to talk about death and dying, a typically taboo subject, than ever before. Hospice UK's Dying Matters campaign, which aims to open up conversations about death, dying and grief, is calling on the public to use their voices and recent experiences to campaign for better palliative and end of life care, particularly for those dying at home.

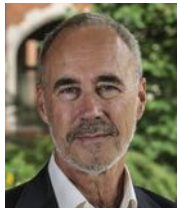
We are calling for the COVID-19 Public Inquiry to investigate deaths at home during the pandemic to find out what happened to the people dying behind closed doors – in the same way that the situation in hospitals and care homes will be covered. We must ensure lessons are learned from the pandemic and people receive better care at home in the future.

We know that many thousands of hardworking and compassionate health and care staff want to do the very best for patients and families. But they need the right support – and so we are also calling for government investment in palliative and end of life care delivered in the community, better training in palliative and end of life care for all health and care staff working across the system and improved integration of care between providers to meet the needs of communities.

"We know that staff want to do the very best for patients and families."

To learn more about Dying Matters and join the thousands of people campaigning for better palliative and end of life care for all, go to <https://www.hospiceuk.org/our-campaigns/dying-matters>.

Necessary discussions



Professor Kevin Brazil
Professor of Palliative Care School
of Nursing and Midwifery
Queen's University Belfast

Care homes in the UK have been sites for the worst outbreaks of COVID-19. Nursing homes are no strangers to outbreaks, including seasonal influenza and norovirus. COVID-19 is similar to these outbreaks, only more devastating where the condition is more contagious with staff feeling more fearful and isolated. The role of family carers who act as decision-makers on goals of care at the end of life is complex and can become significantly distressing. This challenge is magnified in the presence of a COVID-19 outbreak.

To support family carers and care home staff in this challenging circumstance we launched an online COVID-centric advance care planning resource for care home staff and family carers. The aim of this resource is to increase awareness of advance care planning and support shared decision making during a COVID-19 outbreak.

'Necessary Discussions', a freely publicly available online resource was developed in partnership with academics from Queen's University Belfast, the International Observatory on End-of-life Care at Lancaster University, Dementia UK and Marie Curie Hospice, Edinburgh. The resource provides an overview of advance care planning during a COVID-19 outbreak and includes tips and guidance for staff and family members.

Eight care homes located across Northern Ireland, Scotland and England involving care staff and family members participated in the evaluation of the web-based resource. Care staff reported increased confidence in understanding and conducting advance care planning. Family member feedback showed that the intervention provided a helpful overview of advance care planning.

Summary of the care staff and family member sections of 'Necessary Discussions'

Care staff training

Unit 1: Introduction to advance care planning in the context of a COVID-19 outbreak

Unit 2: Advance care planning in the context of a COVID-19 outbreak

Unit 3: How to complete an Advance Care Plan during a COVID-19 outbreak

Unit 4: Recording and sharing Advance Care Plans during a COVID-19 outbreak

Unit 5: Finding the words: Tips for having necessary discussions

Unit 6: Caring for yourself during a COVID-19 outbreak

Resources

Family member information

1. What is advance care planning?

2. Why is advance care planning important during COVID-19?

3. What might be included in an advance care plan during COVID-19?

4. Who takes part in advance care planning during COVID-19?

5. How do I take part in advance care planning during COVID-19?

6. How do I care for myself during COVID-19?

Resources

The health of those who contract COVID-19 can change rapidly, therefore it is vital to know their care preferences in case they are unable to contribute to shared decision-making conversations. The circumstances of COVID-19 therefore necessitated a proactive approach to advance care planning. However, care staff and family members can find these conversations challenging.

Advance care planning (ACP) is a mechanism to support family carers in this decision-making role. ACP describes the discussion between an individual, family and care providers where it is set on record the choices or decisions relating to care at the end of life. While guidance exists to inform the provision of ACP its uptake at the point of care is a complex and challenging endeavor.

Necessary Discussions' represents an important training and information resource for care home staff and family members. Providing this training and information can have immediate tangible impacts on staff confidence and family member involvement, leading to more engaged conversations about planning with practical, documented outcomes. The website can be accessed at: www.covidacpcarehomes.com

Professor Kevin Brazil was the project lead. The work was co-funded by the Economic and Social Research Council as part of the UK Research and Innovations rapid response to COVID-19, and the Health and Social Care Research and Development Division (HSC R&D Division) of the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland. K.brazil@qub.ac.uk

What matters most



JEWISH CARE

Paula Plaskow

End of Life and Palliative Care Lead
Jewish Care

My colleagues support people and those important to them to identify and discuss What Matters Most when approaching the end of life. These conversations enable our staff to put in place an advance care plan that emphasises compassion and dignity.

With Dying Matters Awareness Week and Dementia Action Week so close together, I think we can make important connections between end of life care and dementia care. It's crucial to find out What Matters Most to people so that the End of Life experience for them and their families is as meaningful and respectful of their wishes as possible.

“We want to empower people to approach their later years with clarity, compassion and confidence.”

For most people, there is an instinctive aversion to confront ageing and mortality for fear discussing it could somehow hasten illness or death. Research consistently shows that most of us avoid discussing planning with family or friends, or execute Wills to govern our affairs or grant Lasting Powers of Attorney to enable people we trust to take crucial decisions, should circumstances impair our mental capacity. We postpone and defer, always thinking that there is plenty of time – but sadly, we only have a finite time on this earth and that is not always the case. Additionally, whilst continual medical advances are enabling people to live longer, it may not always be with quality or dignity.

Living with dementia, the loss of cognitive function which can progressively change a person's life and capabilities, impacts upon a person's emotions and relationships. Dementia diagnoses have been increasing and the disease is epitomised by a pervasive uncertainty resulting from an unknown future that continually challenges the person living with dementia and the important people in their life, often over an extended period.

When it comes to end-of-life planning it is not, and should not be, solely about death itself and the decisions governing a person's final days. Instead, it should be about an approach that seeks to understand all aspects of a person's wellbeing, care, and What Matters Most to

them throughout their lifetime, no matter what age or stage of life. In the context of a dementia diagnosis, this is fundamental.

Assumptions about people's intentions and priorities, against the backdrop of cognitive progressive decline, are often done under pressure, when the carer and family is under much emotional distress, and therefore adversely impact an individual and their quality of life. Unfortunately, the absence of end-of-life planning has forced too many people to confront painful issues during illness or grief when they feel most emotionally exposed thereby compounding their fears, concerns, and pressures upon them.

In a wider context, our challenge is always to support people in navigating the plethora of information and advice as well as to ensure we communicate with healthcare professionals involved to achieve a cohesive care planning that empowers people and those with dementia and their families to approach their later years with clarity, compassion, and confidence.

This challenge is at the core of Jewish Care's ethos and values. It is vital for us to understand a person's choices and preferences alongside their cultural values and to support them to feel heard and respected as well as to provide comfort to family and friends that can be so helpful in their bereavement.

Jewish Care is placing itself at the forefront of raising awareness and changing mindsets with the aspiration that, as a society, we can provide the community we support with the best care and support so that as they and their families and partners approach end of life, it can be as meaningful an experience as possible.

Blake Ezra Photography



Conversations about Advanced Care Planning can help to give more positive experiences at End of Life

Dying to talk



MacIntyre
Providing support...your way

Beth Britton
Consultant Dying to Talk Project
MacIntyre

Dignity in dying isn't something people with a learning disability have always experienced. Amongst the many reasons for this is the historical standpoint that people with a learning disability won't want to be or can't be involved in planning for their end of life care, or that they should be shielded from knowing about a death amongst their family members, peers or friends.

Through MacIntyre's Dying to Talk Project <https://www.macintyrecharity.org/our-approach/death-and-dying/> we have begun to have some honest, and often emotional, conversations about death and dying with people supported and MacIntyre staff. We are aiming to:

- **Help people supported feel less frightened to hear and talk about death and dying and gain more knowledge so that they can have greater personal choice**
- **Help family members of people supported feel more comfortable speaking to their loved ones about death and dying**
- **Help MacIntyre staff members feel more comfortable speaking to the people they support about death and dying**
- **Help professionals outside of MacIntyre understand the importance of speaking about the issues related to death and dying**
- **Develop a legacy of resources and training guidance**
- **Help guide more people to have advance care plans and wills**

"Would someone you support with a learning disability benefit from having these conversations too?"

To achieve these aims we've split the Project into two phases. Phase 1 saw us provide nine hours of training for MacIntyre staff in our four pilot areas. This covered everything from the language we use around death and dying, to advanced care planning, care in the last days and hours of life and grief and bereavement.



Jan, Frontline Practitioner

"I really enjoyed the three sessions of the Dying to Talk training. There was a wealth and variety of information presented and it was a nice way of dealing with a sensitive subject." Jan, Frontline Practitioner.

Phase 2 of the Dying to Talk Project, where we work with people MacIntyre support, families and health and social care professionals is still ongoing. A huge positive so far has been the willingness of many of the people MacIntyre support to:

Have conversations about what death and dying means to them:



Paige with Nicola Payne – Dying to Talk Project Manager

"I have had a lot of family and friends die of cancer. It's sad but we are all gonna die." Paige

What their wishes for their own death are:

"I don't want to be burnt (cremated) I want to be buried, because when my mum went behind the curtain it was too sad and it made me cry." Andrew (Andrew's staff were unaware of this and had documented cremation).

Reflect and remember people they've loved who have died:

"One of Kathy's favourite songs was Dolly Parton '9 to 5'. It was played at her funeral." Sharon and Steven remembering their housemate Kathy.

To support these conversations we are using a range of communication tools including Grave Talk cards, Books Beyond Words and Talking Mats.

Would someone you support with a learning disability benefit from having these conversations too? MacIntyre have numerous free-to-access resources to help any health or social care professional effectively support a person with a learning disability to understand what death and dying is and plan for their end of life care. These resources include eBooks, the 'My plan for before I die' and the 'My plan for after I die'.

Sharon and Steven's artwork



Steven making his remembrance artwork

How you can get involved

We are keen to work with health and social care professionals who support people with learning disabilities at the end of their life. Contact us if you'd like to know more about the Dying to Talk Project – email: **health.team@macintyrecharity.org**

Links:

<https://www.macintyrecharity.org/news-blogs/supporting-macintyre-staff-to-feel-more-confident-about-death-and-dying/>

<https://www.macintyrecharity.org/download/file/6970/>

<https://www.macintyrecharity.org/news-blogs/remembering-those-who-have-died-during-covid-19/>

<https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/features/grave-talk>

<https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk>

<https://www.talkingmats.com>

<https://www.macintyrecharity.org/our-approach/death-and-dying/>



Remembering
Kathy

By Steven &
Sharon

Transformational challenge prize to change dementia lives



Kate Lee
CEO
Alzheimer's Society



Jonathan Freeman MBE
CEO
CareTech Foundation



We are delighted to be working together to galvanise the brightest innovators across the world via a landmark challenge prize.

With a grant from CareTech Foundation, and access to the knowledge and expertise of CareTech plc in delivering personalised care to those with complex needs, our vision of changing the future of dementia care is a step closer to being realised.

Right now, there is strong appetite for greater assistance to combat the general decline in independence a person living with dementia experiences. Over half of us know someone with dementia, and we both know, from personal experience of dealing with dementia in our own families, how tough this can be. Individuals living with dementia, their family members, the people that provide care and the healthcare sector itself are crying out for real tangible solutions now.

Partnering with Nesta Challenges and a range of international delivery partners including CareTech plc, our aim is that this challenge prize becomes the ideal platform to raise the profile of dementia and the challenges those affected by the condition face.

"The Longitude Prize on Dementia is entering a space that could positively transform the way we live."

This ambitious project has the potential to deliver a positive life-changing innovation. This partnership between Alzheimer's Society and CareTech Foundation is much more than a simple transaction; this is a big programme with international interest and long-term impact. With our collective visions, the prize can create the conditions to develop something that will change the world.

"The key to this success is the involvement of people with lived experience of dementia."

In creating a space where innovation and solutions can develop and grow, the aim of a challenge prize is to provide help for today and hope for the future. With a pool of initial proposals being whittled down to one winner, Alzheimer's Society's expertise will be on hand throughout to ensure that the research and innovation stays relevant and practical solutions are part of the end result. In creating a level playing field where there is space for innovators working on their passions, we hope to inspire interest from everywhere and allow innovators to test, apply and quantify their solutions.

There is a real opportunity to create something unique that will transform assistive technologies to best support people affected by dementia. Working in partnership together will positively impact on the lives and care of those living with dementia, their families, friends and carers everywhere.

Recognising the positions of both Alzheimer's Society and CareTech Foundation - one as the leading voice in dementia and the other rooted in supporting the care sector, carers and those living in care - together we aim to rejuvenate and elevate the thinking around dementia to create relevant, personalised and adaptive technology that works. With CareTech's insight of the commercial market as well as lived experience, we can give all the innovations the most competitive chance to succeed.

The key to this success is the involvement of people with lived experience of dementia. The experience CareTech plc has caring for the most vulnerable of people with complex needs helps us to understanding different symptoms and stages of dementia, as well as the many nuances that come from personal experience. With this insight, we can ensure the right perspectives, views and needs are included in the design and scoping of the ideas generated through the prize.

A challenge prize in this space could positively transform the way we live and the way our two organisations offer our services. The prospect of developing a new technology that could help solve a multitude of problems faced by people affected by dementia and other people with cognitive vulnerabilities is extraordinarily exciting. This is bigger than all of us; it has the potential to be life-changing now and for future generations.



WOMEN ACHIEVING GREATNESS
IN SOCIAL CARE

AWARDS AND NETWORKING PROGRAMME
2022

- A unique programme of networking and social events
- Bringing together women leaders in social care
- A platform for support, empowerment and real change
- Gala Awards celebrating achievements of women leaders

***“WAGS provides
a unique opportunity to
come together and support
one another.”***

Ann Taylor,
Chair, Kent Integrated Care Alliance



**Awards – 24th November 2022,
St Pancras Renaissance Hotel, London**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

CareTalk
The voice of excellence in social care

KICA
KENT INTEGRATED
CARE ALLIANCE



www.thewags.co.uk

T H E 2 0 2 2



The National
Children &
Young People
Awards

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL CARE

The ICC, Birmingham
Thursday, 6th October 2022

Small things
make a **BIG** difference

Categories

THE EMPLOYER AWARD ★ THE NEWCOMER AWARD ★ THE SUPPORT WORKER AWARD

THE KEY WORKER AWARD ★ THE CHILDREN'S HOME MANAGER AWARD

THE CHILDREN'S HOME TEAM AWARD ★ THE FOSTER CARER AWARD

THE FOSTERING & ADOPTION AWARD ★ THE WELLBEING AWARD ★ THE BIGGEST IMPACT AWARD

THE CHILDREN & FAMILIES SOCIAL WORKER AWARD ★ THE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AWARD

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Supporting care workers in crisis



Karolina Gerlich
CEO
The Care Workers Charity

Every day we receive emails from care workers in crisis who are struggling financially or mentally with various issues. In 2021 we supported 1121 care workers paying out £611,000 worth of grants.

“We got a call from a terrified care worker who was going to be evicted from her home.”

One of our connections referred The Care Workers Charity on for support, stating they had gotten a call from a terrified care worker who was going to be evicted from her home. Miss B is originally from Europe and has worked in the residential care industry in the UK for some time. Miss B requested a salary advance from her manager but was told it was not feasible. She was living in a hostel and had asked her friends and relatives for a loan so she could pay her rent, but no one was able to assist her.

Miss B was contacted by a member of the Grants team, who spoke with her about her situation and assisted her in going online to complete an application form for a Crisis Grant. They also discussed what evidence she would need to submit with her claim, which included a letter of support from her employer.

Miss B told the Grants team that she has been attempting to get out of the hostel and into something more pleasant, such as a shared house or something alike. However, to do so, she would need financial stability and the assurance that she would be able to keep up with her rental payments on time, which is something she couldn't accomplish because of her present financial difficulties.

The Grants team then discussed her situation and decided on the best course of action; she was awarded a £500 grant to ease the immediate threat of eviction, as well as assistance in locating alternative housing; once that has been found, the second part of her grant will be used to pay a deposit for the room.

“The team continued to work with Miss B until she was ready to move out of her hostel.”

The Grants team assisted her by contacting the local authority to check if she qualified for a no-guarantor room rental programme. When they discovered that the local authority did, they arranged up a call with a member of the local authority's staff and the care worker. The team then moved on to seek their contacts in the area whether they knew of any suitable accommodations for Miss B.

The team went on to continue working with Miss B until she was ready to move out of her hostel and into a local room.

We receive applications like this one every day and there are so many care workers who still need support.

We would like to thank our supporters and sponsors, funders, trusts and foundations and the fundraisers who continue to make it possible to provide a significant amount of support to care workers. The funding helps to prevent evictions, clothe and feed children, provide support to care workers who are at breaking point, and enable those at risk of domestic abuse to move away from their abusers. It funds funerals, provides a financial safety net to care workers who are in financial crisis and trains mental health first aiders to support care workers in their organisations.

“We receive applications like this one every day.”

www.thecareworkerscharity.org.uk

Career Cafes

How Stow Healthcare are retaining and developing staff



Alex Ball
Operations Manager
Stow Healthcare

**American author Harvey Mackay once said
“Your workforce is your most valuable asset.
The knowledge and skills they have represent
the fuel that drives the engine of business -
and you can leverage that knowledge”.**

*“What made me stay? Social Care
was never my career of choice.”*

This mantra has never been more relevant to the social care workforce than it is today. According to the latest State of Adult social care workforce in England report published by Skills for Care in the autumn, since the opening up of the wider economy in March 2021 many employers are reporting that recruitment and retention is now more difficult than before the pandemic. Pre-pandemic this was a challenge. Fast forward two years and social care staff are exhausted, both physical and mentally, with many reaching the point of burnout. Is it any wonder recruitment and retention in the sector may seem nigh on impossible?

At Stow Healthcare we wanted to look at this issue afresh. I started by asking myself, “what made me stay?” Social Care was never my career of choice having previously studied Tourism, however the opportunities for progression and development within Stow Healthcare and the wider Social Care sector have given me a career pathway, qualifications and opportunities I never could have dreamed of when I started with the company as a kitchen assistant ten years ago.



At Stow Healthcare we spend a lot of time talking students at local schools and colleges about careers pathways in social care and opportunities within our company. It was during our last session that it suddenly occurred to me – Do our staff know this? Are we making this information clear and accessible to them? Do they know what we are offering in terms of career development? What is it they want to achieve from working with us? This is where the idea for ‘Stow Healthcare Careers Cafes’ was born.

We held a total of twelve two-hour open house café sessions covering every home across the group to give staff the opportunity to come along and discuss their career aspirations and training requirements. The idea being there is always room for learning and development no matter what stage of your career you are at, or what job you do. I initially thought I may have conversations with a handful of staff, this quickly escalated with over 60 staff representing almost 15% of the entire staff team attending either in person or requesting a virtual appointment.

The results have been fantastic. Over 20 staff are now starting the process to complete a diploma in health and social care with us ranging from Level 2-5. We have sourced additional nutrition, hydration and care home specific dysphagia training for our kitchen staff, reviewed external courses for our maintenance staff, and our activities teams will be coming together to attend a bespoke Activities Coordinator development day in May. Staff also offered constructive feedback on the current training offering requesting a move back to more in person training post COVID, plus further developments to our induction offering for new starters and in-house training. The sessions also saw staff stepping forward with an area of interest they would like to develop, and in turn share knowledge with their colleagues through workshop exercises.

Feedback from these sessions has been enlightening. One staff member said *“The drop in session was brilliant and I wouldn’t be starting my qualification if it wasn’t for that.”* Whilst another added *“It has been a form of*



‘reflection’ and I am glad I booked to chat as I was able to explore some areas of training that I would like to do not only for myself, but also how we can grow as a group of nurses to lead the team.”

To summarise, my three key learning points to take away would be:

1) Two ears for listening - Whilst it was important that these sessions were a two-way conversation, it is vital they are led by the staff and what they want to achieve. Let them speak and let them express their wishes. Staff should feel listened to and valued, this is their career and their future; it is important to them and should be respected.

2) The small things can sometimes be the biggest - Retention doesn’t have to cost the earth. Spend money on the small things, some helium balloons, cakes and donuts are all you need to help get these conversations started. The biggest investment is time, but it is worth every second. Take the time to follow up; make a record of the conversation and any actions agreed on both sides and stick to them. We are also sending personalised ‘Thank you’ cards to everyone who took the time to attend a session. Make people feel valued.

3) Don’t look too far out of the box - Whilst it may seem staff are exhausted following the pandemic, many are looking to refocus and reset. Make sure that is you’re your company! Help them find the new challenge they may be looking for. Supporting staff to grow into more senior roles may be easier that recruiting, with the right nurturing and guidance- you may already have what you need right in front of you.



“I am glad I booked a chat - it has been a form of reflection.”

Energy for life



Julie Stephens

Global Director of Wellbeing
Health & Safety
Bupa

The way we live our lives and the pressures we have to cope with at work or at home are constantly changing. We all want to be efficient and effective, feel positive and in control but in reality, how can we actually achieve this on a daily basis? In this article, Julie Stephens, Global Director of Wellbeing, Health & Safety at Bupa, shares important habits we can all adopt to support our physical and mental wellbeing.

“The programme has recently been updated with our care home staff in mind.”

Now more than ever employers are recognising the importance of prioritising employee health and wellbeing. At Bupa, we want all our people to thrive and with this in mind, we developed Personal Energy - a programme designed to help colleagues understand what they need to focus on to stay physically and mentally well, fulfilled and happy in their work and personal life.

The programme is available to Bupa colleagues across the world and has recently been updated with our care home staff in mind.

It's designed to help our people become aware of how they're feeling, recognise when they're becoming overwhelmed, learn habits which support their wellbeing, and think about small and sustainable changes they can make in their daily lives to benefit their health.

Good mental wellbeing is important for everyone.

Here are some self-care habits we can all think about to help find positive ways to navigate our response to the demands we face in life:

Sleep

For the body and mind to function properly we all need a decent night's sleep.

Sleeping well helps us to absorb knowledge, regulate hormone levels and relieve stress.

It's also fundamental for repairing the body and mind, and helping with energy, attention and creativity.

Top tip: Aim for 7 – 9 hours' sleep a night, and make sure your bedroom is reserved for sleeping – eliminate all noise, bright lights, and stop using screens well before bedtime.

Eating

Our mental capacity is influenced by what we eat, for example eating foods with a low glycaemic (GI) index can help improve memory and attention.

While healthy fats, such as those found in avocado, nuts and oily fish can boost brain function.

Top tip: Aim for 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, reduce your sugar consumption and ensure you stay hydrated.

Drinking lots of water can also help you feel full, so you are less likely to reach for that unhealthy snack - often we feel hungry when we are actually thirsty!

Exercise

Studies suggest adopting a regular and well-balanced physical exercise routine has a positive influence on our mood, productivity and satisfaction at work.

Although we all know how important exercise is, long working days can prevent us from achieving the amount of exercise we'd like.

Top tip: *Including 5-10 minutes of physical exercise a day during working hours can help develop positive habits which we can build on when time is easier to manage.*

Try getting off the bus one stop earlier or taking a walk whilst you have your break - even just a small change can make a big difference to how you feel.

Relax

There are many proven relaxation techniques, but you need to think about what works best for you and what you can commit to regularly.

Top tip: *Take regular breaks during the working day and focus your attention elsewhere so at the end of the day you can leave work without ruminating over the day's events.*

If you can, get outside or have some kind of a nice view in front of you, pause, allow your mind to empty and just breathe, even just 2 minutes will help!

Social

We're all social creatures and having a good social support network reduces the risk of mental health problems.

If we feel we're being listened to and supported by someone else, it's good for our self-esteem.

Top tip: *Technology is great, but it's no substitute for physical contact.*

Think about the people in your life who give you energy and you enjoy spending time with and meet up with them in person.

Often combining habits can make them more likely to happen, for example exercising with friends gives you social contact AND exercise, and the combined impact is really positive.

Reframe

Reframing is about being able to look at things from a different perspective and is an important skill which is fundamental to protecting our mental health.

Top tip: *Acknowledge when you are being too critical of yourself or someone else and instead imagine what you would say to a friend if they were in your situation. We can be so self-critical, be kinder to yourself.*



**“Do you
give yourself
permission to
look after
yourself?”**

Focus

Your mind can only fully focus on one thing at a time. Jumping between tasks can drain energy.

When we focus on one thing at a time, our subconscious helps us finish tasks quicker and more easily.

Top tip: *Try to focus on one task at a time even when you're busy and have regular breaks to clear your mind, quality not quantity is the key outcome.*

Gratitude

Regularly reflecting on the things and people we are grateful for can help us feel happier and more satisfied.

Top tip: *Finish your day by thinking about three things you've genuinely appreciated about your day, no matter how small, and write them down.*

Permission

Do you give yourself permission to look after yourself, or do you overcommit to other priorities at the expense of your own energy and wellbeing?

Top tip: *Think about how you can free up time in your busy schedule.*

Can you stop any bad habits that waste your energy or even just change your routine to make things work better for you?

Put yourself first more than you currently do.

The power of kindness in end-of-life care



Colleen Brothers



As Manager of Bluebirds Neurological Care Centre, the Gold Standard Framework's 'Home of the Year', Colleen Brothers has an award-winning approach to end of life care. Here, she explains the importance of kindness and support for families when treating residents approaching the end of their life.

“What happens after a resident has died is important too.”

End-of-life care can be complex, as it is not just about the clinical side, in making a person as comfortable as possible, but also the human side, especially for the family of the person nearing the end of their life.

At Bluebirds, we look to get everything right about end-of-life care from a clinical side, such as making sure we have good symptom control. One of the big things about the Gold Standards Framework (GSF), which we follow here, is that with end-of-life care nothing comes as a surprise; everything is planned and in place ahead of time and you know you are following a person's wishes as much as you can.

That is about being well organised and well planned, but we also look to build up relationships with families. We talk to families about what their loved one does or doesn't want as our residents by the time they come to us are beyond being able to do that because of their brain injury or dementia. We explore that with family or friends to find out about who they were, what they liked, what their belief system was to help them to think about what was important to that person. We do that for all our residents.

But above all, our approach comes down to kindness. It covers everything; if a person is essentially kind by nature, they are going to be patient, supportive, respectful, want to be knowledgeable, open and honest and gentle. A kind person covers everything we need. This approach runs through the team, from nursing staff to housekeepers and maintenance personnel. After all, when supporting families, it may be a member of the housekeeping team that strikes up the trusting relationship or might share an experience that resonates with the relative, it is not necessarily going to be the nurse that can offer the most support to somebody.

Open door

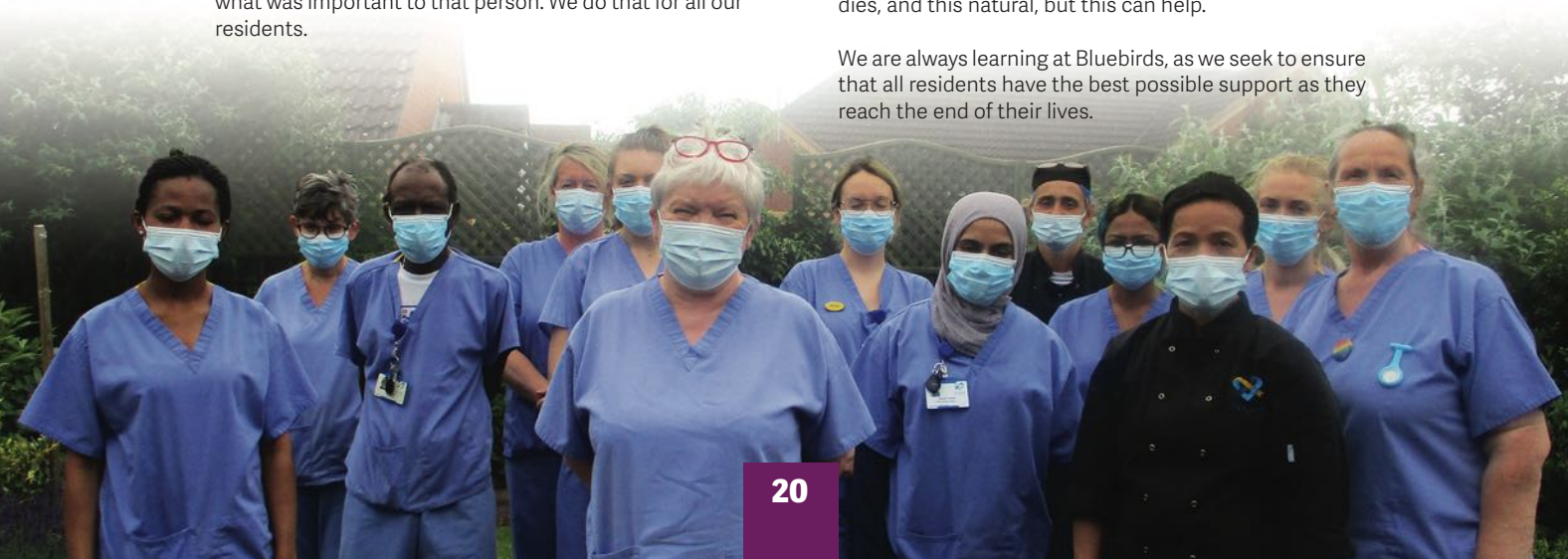
This approach helped us through the Covid pandemic. We maintained an open door policy for end of life care, even when everything else was in lockdown. Whether it was bringing people in through the back door instead of walking through the unit, providing practical support to family members such as three meals per day, somewhere to sleep if needs be or access to a shower.

We also give family members swipe cards so they can let themselves in as they please, which some really appreciate as they literally can move in for a week when their loved one is reaching the end of their life. Obviously, they had to have daily lateral flow tests and regular PCRs, as well as change into scrubs, wear the same PPE as we did on the ward – essentially it was like they were a member of staff coming into work every day. To keep this going, even when many other providers excluded relatives during lockdown periods, was incredibly important for our relatives – the value of being with their loved one at the end cannot be measured. It was hard to make it work but careful planning with the families ensured that it did.

Honest review

What happens after a resident has died is important too. We complete a significant event analysis. This involves the whole team; it is an open forum where we are honest and ask staff what things we thought we did well and not so well and what we could do better in the future and learn from this? It is a chance for staff to talk about how they felt about things. Staff do get upset when a resident dies, and this natural, but this can help.

We are always learning at Bluebirds, as we seek to ensure that all residents have the best possible support as they reach the end of their lives.



Aspiring to care



Aspire is an award-winning career development programme at Dimensions, a leading charity for people with autism and/or learning disabilities

Aspire has helped 450+ Dimensions employees gain professional qualifications, develop leadership skills and transform their self-esteem.

Over 70% of those who have participated in the programme have reported measurable career growth as a result. Three of them have shared their experiences and the benefits Aspire has delivered.

*“As part of her journey, Caroline is now a **reverse mentor** for senior employees.”*



Zoe

Zoe joined Dimensions as a Support Worker in May 2019, and looking back she believes that despite being 28, she had a “teenage” attitude to work and life. However, the Aspire programme helped her find a sense of purpose at work and encouraged her to think about her career progression. In fact, following the Aspire programme, 96% of participants say they feel more motivated at work.

People can develop a wide range of skills through a career in social care. From medical knowledge to teamwork and problem-solving, Aspire offers employees essential training.

Through this training, Zoe helped a diabetic individual she supported to overcome their aversion to blood tests and significantly reduce their daily sugar intake, without any drastic changes that could have been overwhelming for the individual.

Aspire supports Dimensions’ employees to complete the Care Certificate or All Wales Induction Standards (a requirement of anyone working in the social care sector). The success of Aspire is reflected in the 80% of participants who are promoted following their involvement.

Zoe explained how gaining recognised qualifications helped her view her career in the sector with longevity. She is now Assistant Locality Manager in Blaenau Gwent and has ambitions to add more Dimensions support units to her area.



Dani

Dani was a Helpdesk Coordinator and expressed some concerns to her line manager about the direction of her career. To her delight, Dani was put forward for the Aspire programme. She was grateful that Dimensions wanted to invest time and resources into her career development.

her career development.

Dani secured a secondment as Helpdesk Team Lead and attended a “confidence workshop” with Aspire. This was truly transformational for Dani, who now has a permanent position as overall Team Leader.

Having previously felt like she needed to mute her personality, Aspire’s one-on-one sessions showed Dani the value of putting herself out there, showcasing her unique personality and overcoming her perfectionist tendencies.



Caroline

Caroline is a Locality and Registered Manager, responsible for supporting 11 people. She was nominated for Aspire by her manager.

Caroline believes she has developed as both an individual and a leader. Aspire helped her identify her strengths and weaknesses, and provided a safe space to develop her confidence.

Importantly, Aspire encouraged Caroline to think about what she wanted from her career in the next 5-10 years and, consider what she needed to do to get there. As part of her journey, Caroline is now a “reverse mentor” for senior Dimensions employees, keen to use her personal experiences to improve the representation of BAME employees across the social care sector. Without Aspire, Caroline believes she would not have the self-confidence to do this; it has truly helped her see the value in what she has to say.

Dimensions is proud that it’s more than twice as likely to retain its employees than organisations in the same sector, according to the Skills for Care figures. Opportunities offered by Aspire are a key determinant of this.

“Over 70% of those who have participated have reported measurable career growth.”

For more information visit www.dimensionscareers.co.uk/aspire

The business of caring for Mrs O



Joan Wilson



Apparently you need three simple things to start a business: know your product better than anyone, know your customer, and have a burning desire to succeed.

“The story might end there were it not for a certain client called Mrs Eileen Oliver.”

So, you've met Joan Wilson, the founder of Mrs O's Caring Hands Homecare, right? Well, Joan didn't come up with that quote but she certainly could have as she embodies all three in spades...

From Northumberland, Joan started as a domestic after raising her family, before moving into the care side in 2002, realising very quickly that she had an innate love of looking after the elderly. She then became a Senior followed by an On-Call Manager and then Branch Manager.

And there the story might end were it not for a certain client called Mrs Eileen Oliver:

“I used to be a manager of a dom care agency when I met Mrs O. She lived in a rural place on her own with her two sons living down south and they would ring me to go up once a week to wash her hair because she had dementia and got used to the same person. She then declined and the company asked if I could go and do some hospital visits till the sons could get up there. I then helped them to get funding for her care so I worked a lot with the family. When she died there was a Celebration of Life and I was invited. And I said, if I can look after your mother like this...help people like this...I'm going to give it a go myself because it's much needed out there.”

So, in 2016, Mrs O's was born - no carers, just Joan, and from there it grew and grew. A successful Tier 2 Council contract has provided six areas in Northumberland and they're now delivering 1400 hours per week with a staff of 40-50.

That's quite a trajectory and not least when you factor in that Joan had a late baby at the age of 44 along the way!



And as many business owners will testify, the biggest challenge was money. Joan deliberately didn't take out loans or apply for grants. So, when the first package came in she worked it herself so that she didn't have to pay anyone and kept doing that until it got too much. When the money started coming in Joan didn't want to create a pot, and then start taking on carers. She could have taken on loans but took the hard path which she doesn't regret, looking back.

When the money started coming in Joan didn't want to create a pot, and then start taking on carers. She could have taken on loans but took the hard path which she doesn't regret, looking back.

And the inevitable sacrifices?

“The company was my life! No social life, not a lot of time spent with my young daughter, no holidays etc. It was really, really hard for two years. I didn't want to hire people till I had the finance behind me. That's why I wanted the pot and worked myself to get it. I believe that going into business and getting loans means you're doomed before you start. It was a big risk because but this was something I just had to try because if I didn't I knew I would regret it for the rest of my life.”

Many books have been written about the single vision and drive required to make a business succeed, so why is Joan Wilson driven in this way?

“I think because I have a passion and a lot of knowledge that I can help people with: I get great pleasure from helping people, especially the funding side because there aren't enough people out there with the understanding of how it all works: people like Mrs O have worked all their lives to become old and have to pay for their care. Really? Why should they spend all their savings to be looked after?”

Despite the hard road of inevitable hair-pulling and tears, Joan is incredibly proud of what she has achieved, and her company has been in the Top 20 for the North East, a few years running now.

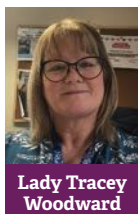
So, though it's not easy, it's as straightforward as the guy said, and as Joan Wilson demonstrates: product, customer, desire!

And all thanks to an elderly lady called Mrs O.



Debra Mehta

Care nobility the Welsh way



Lady Tracey Woodward



It's not every day you get to interview a Lady, but I now have, and am pleased to report that although the people of Powys needn't curtsy, they should be grateful to have her in their midst...

Lady Tracey Woodward has been a Domiciliary Home Care Manager Finalist for the Great British Care Awards, working for Affinity Care Services based in Newtown for the last 10 years, building it up to what is now 58 staff and 138 clients.

"I started there as a Senior and then my manager left. At the time we had only about 20 hours per week but now we're one of the biggest providers, if not the biggest in Powys."

And why?

"Because I put all my effort into making sure I have really good staff, a commitment to continuity and looking after them, plus having a laugh with them too. It's important they feel valued. A good and happy team is very important to me. Supporting them is very important - there's been a lot of mental health around, especially this year and last."

I've often wondered about crossovers with care and counselling - they can't help but bleed into one another, surely?

"Yes, that's true. I have some clients suffering alongside staff going off with it. Supporting and being on the end of the phone talking with them is often the best form of medicine as meds are possibly not the best way forward. In fact, I have a client I meet once a week with mental health problems where at one point she was suicidal and now she's in a much better place which is likely due to our talking in person or on the phone once or twice a day."

It'll be no surprise to read that for Tracey it can be a seven day week which means broad shoulders and commitment many of us would balk at. So why does she not only do it, but thrive on it?

"I do it because it's in my nature to always want to make sure everyone's happy and getting what they want. Basically if everyone's happy, I am! And yes, my phone is on seven days per week because the buck stops with me. Powys is a vast area to run and there are a lot of rural areas here. In fact, I helped out in Presteigne a few weeks ago and it was a 100 mile round trip!"

So what does Lady Tracey enjoy most about her vocation?

"I like to see the compliments coming in about the carers and I like to see they're happy with the rotas they get and that they come back in and communicate with me and will work with me if they're not happy about something. I'm constantly reassuring people and talking with them about what we can do to make things better."

And how does she think things could be better for social care in Wales which has generally been seen as more deprived?

"England always gets the better deal! There definitely needs to be more money in social care for us to pay carers a better wage, but I believe Wales is getting more money so things will be changing from April. At the end of the day, carers now have to be registered in Wales for home care which entails someone having to do a Diploma first which takes a lot of work and they pay for it, although the PCC has offered it back this year."

And of course, you're all dying to know whether the Lady is an inherited title? Well, no. A colleague bought it for Tracey as a Christmas present, but who cares! A noble job deserves a noble woman...

"Carers now have to be registered in Wales for home care which entails having to do a Diploma first."

PS. If any of my colleagues are reading this, my birthday is in November and Duchess Debra sounds just the ticket!



Debra Mehta

My biggest achievement is overcoming those challenges



Kelly
Bridges

With May marking Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) Awareness Month, following on from World Autism Awareness in April, 28-year-old Kelly and her support team share some of the challenges of her dual diagnosis of autism and PWS – and the inspiring story of her achievements.

In 2018 Kelly came to Parvale House in Kettering which, in the main, supports people with the rare genetic condition PWS, characterised by an insatiable appetite. It is one of 12 specialist services in Northamptonshire managed by Consensus Gretton, which has supported adults with PWS for the past 40 years.

Deputy Manager Rhiannon Price recalls: “Kelly had been really unhappy in her previous placement. When she arrived here, she was very intense and had repetitive behaviours as well as frequent outbursts, times when she was hurting herself or damaging property, or leaving the service and going off on her own.”

At that time, the staff team at Parvale House were finding Kelly’s behaviours so difficult that they involved specialists from the Positive Behaviour Intervention Team at Consensus. Behaviour Practitioner Angela Bliss explains:



Angela
Bliss

“Parvale’s team are experienced in supporting individuals with a diagnosis of PWS and their support needs, but not supporting individuals with a dual diagnosis that includes autism. Through working alongside the team and Kelly, we implemented pro-active strategies and introduced these to the team through individualised workshops.

So staff gained greater knowledge and understanding of autism and what additional support Kelly needed, plus strategies to help provide her with ways to cope with her anxieties and processing relating to her autism.

“For instance, we created a ‘5 point scale’ together, to show how she was feeling (Happy/Calm; Worried/Anxious; Unhappy/Frustrated; Annoyed/Agitated; Angry/Aggressive) and how best for those around her to support her. This also helped at times when she was experiencing high anxiety or stress and wasn’t always able to communicate verbally, so she used her 5-point scale to point out her feelings. Kelly found it difficult to have ‘free time’ so, to support her with structure and predictability, we created a weekly timetable of activities she could enjoy each day. Kelly also found it difficult at times to express her anxieties, worries and feelings, so we got a diary where she could write them down. Then when she was ready, she could talk about and resolve them with me or her support team.”

“She is now extremely settled, motivated, and has a whole new routine that includes a paid job working as a Quality Checker for Consensus. She’s communicating with the staff effectively; other supported individuals in the house understand her and her autism; she’s just been away on holiday with her family. I’m delighted that Kelly doesn’t need my specialist support any more – but she’s made me promise to keep popping-in for a chat and a coffee with her every few months. It took me a while to be able to trust the staff and explain how I was feeling”, says Kelly. “Now I have strategies in place that Angela helped me with, and I’ve got people I can talk to when I’m not in the right frame of mind.

“Last summer I gave a presentation with my PowerPoint slides to everyone living in the house. I wanted to apologise for my behaviours before, and help people to understand how to help me, and how best to support me at times when I am feeling upset or anxious. Then in the evening I prepared and cooked a meal for all of my friends at Parvale to say thank you for their support.”



Kelly at work

Rhiannon remembers that, because of autism causing additional anxieties for Kelly alongside those of PWS, food had been a real problem when the team first met her: “She couldn’t be offered any kind of options, whether it was for a meal or just a pot of yogurt.”

“Before I came here, I struggled with variety and choice. I didn’t even like to see different flavours around me,” agrees Kelly. “Now my biggest achievement is overcoming those challenges that include walking into kitchens as part of my Quality Checker work, being around food in certain situations, and being able to control my PWS as well as doing my job at the same time. Not that I let those defeat me, as I know how to work through and around them. Without my job, I’d be in a different place – with it, I’m really happy. I love helping people who are less able than me, and giving them support and advice to achieve some of the things that I have.”

“It’s inspiring to see how well Kelly has coped and how far she’s come in just a few years – benefitting from new opportunities, making choices, and finding success in something she loves to do,” Rhiannon adds. “Her job is one important aspect of that journey, but outside of work she’s busy with all her other leisure interests and activities too – including getting into the kitchen to cook and loading the dishwasher afterwards! It’s just one example of her amazing, positive progress since she’s been here with us.”

consensus...

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Become a Care Home Friend

Schools across England are being encouraged to become Care Home Friends in a new scheme to bring together children and older people living in care homes.

'Become a Care Home Friend' is a 10-week challenge that offers schools a programme of activities to foster understanding about older generations, raise awareness of care homes and build community links.

"Intergenerational work can boost children's self-esteem and improve empathy of others."

The challenge has been created by Care Home Friends and Neighbours (Care Home FaNs): Intergenerational Linking – England's biggest intergenerational project connecting young people with older people living in care homes. The project is a partnership from organisations My Home Life England and The Linking Network, and is now reaching out to get more children involved. The project is funded by Dunhill Medical Trust and the #iwill Fund (a £54 million joint investment between The National Lottery Community Fund and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport).

"Both older people and children can get so much out of a relationship with each other, but their contact with each other can be very be limited," said Tom Owen, Director of My Home Life England, which promotes quality of life for people living, visiting and working in care homes.

"Grandparents often don't live down the road like they might have in previous years, and children are infrequent visitors to care homes, especially in recent years because of the pandemic. Intergenerational work can





boost children's self-esteem, broaden their world view and improve empathy and understanding of others. Equally, feeling part of the community is very much key to quality of life for people living in care homes and intergenerational work helps make this happen.

"We've seen so much joy, fun and energy in all our local projects and we wanted to spread this further and make more connections. This led to the creation of our Become a Care Home Friend Challenge!"

The challenge is aimed at children aged 5-14 and activities are geared towards Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. It starts at the beginning of Global Intergenerational Week on Monday 25th April and runs through 10 weeks to Care Home Open Week. The worksheets are developed by teachers and are issued weekly, offering schools regular activities to build into the curriculum. They include thinking about different generations and the achievements of older people, an introduction to care homes and the people who live and work there, as well as a postcard exchange and making small gifts.

"This is a brilliant opportunity for more children across England to get involved in social action and make a positive difference in their communities", said Linda Cowie, Director of The Linking Network.

"We give schools information about how make contact with their local care home and we've put together activities that are engaging and fun, supporting children to think more about different generations and create something special for a nearby care home. We'd love for more children to join our network of Care Home Friends!" Care Home Friends and Neighbours: Intergenerational Linking combines My Home Life England's expertise with

"This intergenerational linking project has given residents absolute joy!"

older people and care homes with The Linking Network's expertise with young people and schools and their successful Schools Linking programme. It's currently creating intergenerational links between schools, youth groups and care homes in 11 areas of England, and this challenge takes things one step further.

Aire View Care Home in Leeds have been benefitting from connecting with nearby Whitecote Primary School. Karen Grainger, Wellbeing and Activities Co-ordinator at Aire View said:



"This intergenerational linking project has given Aire View residents absolute joy! They can't believe young children want to learn about them, and are delighted when they get cards and questions from them. We would really encourage more schools to be involved through the "Become a Care Home Friend" challenge."

Signing up to the Become a Care Home Friend challenge is free. Visit <https://myhomelife.org.uk/challenge> to register.



CO-PRODUCTION COUNTS!

Pro-actively improving support

The Pro-Active Community is a registered charity run by people with learning disabilities and autistic people. It was set up in 2015 by Active Prospects, a Surrey-based charitable care provider which supports around 250 people each year. In 2018 the Pro-Active Community won the People's Award at the National Learning Disability & Autism Awards, and they became a registered charity in 2020. They also run the Surrey People's Group giving a platform for everyone to improve local services and make connections.

Two members of the Pro-Active Community, Mimi Ghaith and Matt Leadbeater, explain how they use their experience to help improve the support and information that people with learning disabilities or autistic people receive.

"I'm being paid to co-design a Peer Health Champions project with Surrey County Council."

Mimi:

I'm employed by Active Prospects as a paid Expert by Experience Coordinator. This means that I help Active Prospects with:

- **Quality checks of services, which look at services from the perspective of someone who receives care services. I'm one of 8 trained quality checkers at the Pro-Active Community. We also provide quality checks of other care providers' services, not just Active Prospects. There's more information about our quality checks on our website at www.proactivecommunity.org.uk.**
- **Annual plans for services: it really helps a service to hear from users when deciding on their priorities each year.**

- **Recruitment – members of the Pro-Active Community help Surrey County Council and Active Prospects with recruitment by sitting on interview.**
- **Induction and training - I explain to new starters how much of a priority co-production is for Active Prospects. I also help to strengthen training courses by giving the experience of care receivers.**
- **Recruiting other experts by experience into paid work.**

"It really helps a service to hear from users when deciding on priorities each year."

Recently I visited some of Active Prospects' care homes with Jade Vallance, Director of Care. Jade and I did an audit of how people are now leading aspiring lives after lockdown and the impact of zoom fatigue. I think it's important that after two years of restrictions in care homes, services now find ways to support people to get back to living the same opportunities as everyone else. The visit showed me how much people need face-to-face contact for their wellbeing. The Pro-Active Community has continued to meet by Zoom during the pandemic, and we've all got used to video calls, but there's nothing like meeting up in person now we're able to.

Matt:

I volunteer as a fundraiser for Pro-Active Community. Last year I raised over £1000 by climbing the O2 with my support worker Christine. It was a dream of mine to do this, but I wasn't expecting it to be over 30 degrees when I did the climb!

Last year I was named as one of the Dimensions Learning Disability Leaders, which made me very proud. I was also a finalist for Volunteer of the Year at the Third Sector Awards. This year I've already run a bake off and my next challenge is organising a raffle. It's important for people and companies to meet people who their donations will help, and I love getting out and about and meeting new people, and explaining the work we do.

At the moment, I'm one of five members of the Pro-Active Community who are being paid to co-design a Peer Health Champions project with Surrey County Council. We are designing a training course which will give people with learning disabilities the knowledge and confidence to give help and advice to their peers to improve their health and wellbeing.



Mimi Gaith



Matt Leadbeater on top of the O2



The Pro-Active Community

WHAT KEEPS ME



AWAKE AT NIGHT

Stephen Chandler

President, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services

As we gingerly pick our way through 2022, I have taken much-needed time to pause and reflect on the lessons, successes, and sacrifices of recent years.

“The knowledge of what people in social care have done lulls me back to sleep on even the most anxious nights.”

Just a few weeks ago, we came together in remembrance of the brave and compassionate social care workers who tragically lost their lives in the COVID-19 pandemic. This day of reflection reminded us of their unerring selflessness, and of the crucial role they play in our community.

In social work and social care particularly, we also remember the impact on unpaid carers, older and disabled people, poorer and BAME communities, people with increased mental ill health, rough sleepers; and many others – not least the increasing numbers of people waiting for assessments, care and support reviews, despite increases in the care at home delivered.

Indeed, in the past few years, society has been relearning the true value of our social care workforce, and that care is an essential part of life. We have faced hurdles that we wouldn't have imagined few years ago. Who could have predicted the life altering events we confronted in only three years? Brexit, then COVID-19, the fallout from a bloody and devastating war and its effects on refugees and society. The implications are felt daily when trying to deliver the quality care we all deserve.

Yet beyond navigating these significant challenges, we must also contend with what is, for me, most daunting: what will come next?

Not knowing what the future holds, for us as a community, for social care, our country, and the world, undoubtedly keeps me awake at night more than anything else. Recent events have thrown into stark focus just how fragile and unpredictable our world is.

But while the unknown remains daunting, what the past years taught me is the resilience of everyone who cares.

Against all odds and expectations, and notwithstanding the seemingly endless crisis of recruitment and retention, exhaustion and overwhelming circumstances, our colleagues have shown their determination to go above and beyond to deliver care, supports and safeguards, underpinned by compassion and professionalism. I have been astounded by their ingenuity and tenacity time and time again.

I know this will be true no matter what lies on our horizon. There is very little we can safely rely on today, but one thing we must celebrate, without taking for granted: the commitment of everyone working in care, paid and unpaid, who persist through hardship and profound sorrow.

On reflection, I appreciate that these challenges have pushed us towards embracing a truly innovative and flexible mindset. Amid the struggle, creativity has flourished, and we've carved new pathways, forging smarter methods to deliver care. We've opened conversations, asking tough questions, and giving clear answers on what is important to us, and what is redundant, when we think about high-quality care and the future of our workforce.

I welcome many of these changes, including improved relationships between providers and local authorities.

The pandemic has made the case for adult social care's importance. The pandemic has shown how vital investment is for social care, for our workforce to thrive professionally and to facilitate the care we need to live the lives we want.

As we hope for less turbulent times, it's critical we do not forget what the past teaches us. We must always be looking for change that gets the best out of everybody: our instinct for innovation and flexibility must not be lost. That understanding, and the knowledge of what people in social care have done throughout it all, comforts me and eventually lulls me back to sleep on even the most anxious nights.

“We must celebrate the commitment of everyone working in care, paid and unpaid.”



Stephen Chandler
President
Association of Directors
of Adult Social Services





IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CARE

From Construction to Care

Throughout the year we profile a care professional who has come into the sector after a career change and who demonstrates that it really is never too late to care! This month we meet Sam Parker, Care Assistant at Westmorland Homecare, who went from construction to care.

A former construction worker is building a new career as a home care assistant with a Kendal-based company.

Sam Parker, 28, who previously worked for his father's historical building restoration company, has joined Westmorland Homecare.

In his construction role his job involved brickwork, plastering and general labouring tasks. Now he spends his day helping elderly and often frail people to live independently in their own homes.

And Sam, who lives in Kendal, is delighted with what he says is a very rewarding job. *"When you wake up in the morning and look ahead to what the day has in store it doesn't feel like it's work," he said. "It's more like you are going out to help friends and family."*

Sam, a former pupil of Hawkshead Primary School, spent several years working for his father's firm Chris Parker and Son. Projects included restoring a wall at Sizergh Castle's famous 'mirror pond' and building a toilet block at Rydal Hall.

But Sam, who says he has always loved caring, decided on a change of career. His role at Westmorland Homecare involves providing personal care and medication and meals support for the company's clients.

"I also take some of my clients out on social visits," said Sam. "We might go bowling, to the cinema or out for a coffee and cake at Levens Hall or Rydal Hall. I took a younger client to a gaming shop in Kendal - I am an avid gamer so we have a lot in common."

He said the main satisfaction he gained from the job was helping to make people's lives easier. *"If it wasn't for me, they would not have the quality of life they have," he said.*

He believes his time in the construction industry gave him some transferable skills for his new role.

"I think I am good in very stressful situations and I learned that in the building trade. I am level headed and if something happens when some people might panic, I will stop and think about what to do."

"I also met many people in the building trade where you have to be socially adept and able to speak to anyone and that has also helped in my home care assistant role."

Sam said he would recommend becoming a home care assistant to anyone thinking of entering the profession.

"I would say go for it. There are thousands of people who need help with the quality of their life and if you can be a tiny part of that jigsaw puzzle that is fantastic."

He said he also enjoyed the flexibility his role offered. He was able to take some hours off during the day, which meant he could return home to look after his snakes - two Burmese pythons.



Sam Parker doing some training in Westmorland Homecare's Kendal offices

"I think I am good in very stressful situations and I learned that in the building trade."

Kelly Haygarth, training co-ordinator at Westmorland Homecare, said having staff from varying backgrounds was a benefit.

"They are a fresh pair of eyes and ask questions we might not usually be asked. That challenges to think about if we should do things in a different way."

Kelly said new staff were given extensive training and support to help them in their jobs.

She added: *"Whenever anyone comes to us seeing a job it does not matter if they are experienced or not. What we are looking for is that they genuinely care about people - everything else we can train them to do."*

Westmorland Homecare has vacancies for staff, including home care assistants. To find more information email freya@westmorlandhomecare.co.uk



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13TH MAY 2022

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PEOPLE POWER

A proud advocate for life's diversity

Each month we feature an inspirational individual or team who are taking a lead in their lives and helping make society better for everyone. This month we feature Chloe Douds, winner in the Advocacy, policy and the media category in the Dimensions Learning Disability and Autism Leaders' List.

The Learning Disability and Autism Leaders' List 2021
#LDALeadersList
For people taking a lead in their lives

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V O D G L D E



Introducing...

Chloe Douds

Chloe is autistic, uses a wheelchair and is part of the LGBTQIA+ community. They tell us why they are calling for Pride events to be accessible and inclusive for physically disabled and autistic people.

"In addition to being autistic, I am also somebody who is physically disabled and a part of the LGBTQIA+ community. As a result of this I have faced challenges in relation to being a part of these groups."

The first ever Pride event I attended was, in all ways, a disaster

"It was a very overwhelming experience sensory-wise, there were no quiet places for me to take a break and ground myself, there were no toilets that were useable in a wheelchair and security staff were aggressive and lacked empathy towards me."

"When I went to use the viewing platform to watch some of the performances, I was told that my carer wasn't allowed to come up with me and that I would need to remove my 'headphones'."

"For neurodiverse and disabled people, Pride is not always the most accessible of events."

"My carer explained that I needed somebody to be with me at all times and that they were not headphones, but ear defenders to help me to cope with auditory sensory overload. The security guard was aggressive and rude, and mocked me for my needs and behaviours when I became really overwhelmed."

The whole experience made me want to never go to a Pride event again

"However, after taking months to reflect and recover, I learned that things needed to change. Rather than waiting for somebody else to make things change, I remembered that I was in a pretty good position to force this change and increase accessibility and acceptance."

"I took on this challenge, and in doing so pushed for the main Pride event in my area to hire a Mobiloo."

"It feels amazing to have won a Leaders award. It makes me feel really proud of myself to know that the work I've been doing is making a difference to my peers and others."



#LDALeadersList

dimensions-uk.org/
leaderslist2021

"I also started raising awareness in my social circles and on social media, and I joined the LGBTQIA+ Society at my university where I gave a presentation to show them how to be more inclusive of disabled and neurodiverse people in LGBTQIA+ spaces."

"I also joined the equality and diversity group at the place where I volunteer, which led to me making an easy read poem and video about what Pride means to me and about how Pride is still a protest because although we have come a long way, we still have so far to go."

Being autistic means being different but in a really good way

"Without being autistic I wouldn't see the world in the way that I do, and that makes me who I am."

"It also means I am often the person in the room that thinks of a perspective that others might not have considered, and this has helped me in both my volunteering work and when I was at university."

"Being creative is another big part of who I am, and I think a lot of that comes from me being autistic."

Pride is an event that is supposed to celebrate difference and fight for change

"For able-bodied and neurotypical people this is often the case; but for neurodiverse and disabled people, Pride is not always the most accessible of events. There are number of things that could make Pride more accessible..."

"From the point of view of physically making Pride more accessible it would be great for organisers to rent a Mobiloo – a toilet facility on wheels that has an adult changing bench, a ceiling hoist, toilet, and handwashing facilities – so that everyone has access to facilities to meet such a basic need. In addition to this, having events on hard standing or providing rubber pathways would make Pride easier to access for those with mobility needs.

"In terms of making Pride more accessible for neurodiverse people, it would be great if there were sensory/quiet spaces that people of all ages could access and not just children, as is currently standard.

"In addition to this, people should be allowed to take their own food and drinks, especially if they have sensory difficulties related to food and drink.

"It would also be great if all information was provided in an easy read format for those who need it.

Other things that would make Pride more accessible...

- **Provide sign language interpreters**
- **Have viewing points for performances for those who need them**
- **Allow carers in for free at paid events when they are supporting somebody**
- **Have staff – including stewards, volunteers, performers, stall holders, and security staff – trained in supporting those who are disabled and/or neurodiverse.**

The Learning Disability and Autism Leaders' List is produced by Dimensions in partnership with Learning Disability England and VODG.

Visit dimensions-uk.org/leaderslist2021 to meet all the Leaders.

Follow [@DimensionsUK](https://twitter.com/DimensionsUK) and [#LDALeadersList](https://twitter.com/LDALeadersList) to stay up to date.



ASK THE EXPERTS

How do you support the delivery of compassionate, quality, person-centred palliative care?

2-6 May marks this year's Dying Awareness Week, a national campaign which encourages communities to talk about death, dying and bereavement and raise awareness of the emotional and practical support required to support people at the end of their lives. In light of this we asked a team from leading home care provider and palliative care specialist Hilton Nursing Partners,

"In your role how do you support the delivery of compassionate, quality, person centred palliative care?"

"We have a holistic approach to ensuring a good death."



Ann Taylor

CEO
Hilton Nursing Partners

"Everyone has a future, even if it is an extremely short amount of time we recognise that choice and control up to the end of life is of paramount importance to an individual. To receive palliative care in your own home is luxury many do not receive the opportunity to benefit from. We are passionate about ensuring our patients are given the opportunity, not only to return home but to receive the best quality palliative care possible. We invest in our staff to make sure they have the best chance of making the end of someone's life as stress free as possible. We ensure they are fully trained to support the physical needs of the individual but also able to give emotional support to both the individual and their family too. We have a holistic approach to ensuring a good death. Our staff are developed in the role to deliver dignified care and discuss an individual's death in a positive and calm manner with professionalism, compassion and respect. There's really no greater privilege than being the organisation that helped someone to have a good death."



Lisa Selling

Head of Operations
Hilton Nursing Partners



"It is a hugely privileged role that holds so much value to those who are supported."

"I am generally advised by one of our Team Leaders that a patient on their service has been referred to us and is palliative, or once they are home and we have been supporting them, have deteriorated and are now palliative. Whilst we are waiting for Health to take over our teams are providing the best care possible, not only for the patient but their family as well. Once a patient becomes 'end of life' it is incredibly difficult for our team to move them on through the system. The bond and relationship has already been formed, to move to another team in Health is just a blow to us, and our patient. However we are not deterred and our passion and genuine desire to provide the very best care is always ongoing. Our care teams never give up on those individuals and their families. It is a hugely privileged role that holds so much value to those who are supported, and their families too. We are incredibly lucky to be there for them in those final days ensuring it is a good death."



Hannah Neal-Donald

Head of Quality, Compliance
and Clinical Governance
Hilton Nursing Partners



**“We only receive one chance
to get it right.”**

“The pandemic has highlighted the devastation left when a patient’s wishes to die at home with loved ones cannot be met. It is vital to increase awareness of the importance of providing effective end of life care at home. The role of our staff in providing palliative care often sees them acting as advocates on behalf of patients and their families, engaging with other services to ensure continuity of care is maintained. It is vital continuity is maintained, as you can imagine it is often a welcome relief for those involved when informed they will not be moved to another service. We only receive one chance to get it right which is why our training programme provides a sensitive and informative approach when teaching palliative care. This along with a supportive leadership structure, including many with extensive experience in end-of-life care, ensures staff are prepared and supported to deliver effective care. Getting the right staff and services in place is absolutely priceless in delivering effective end of life care.”

**“Through collaborative
relationships my team are able
to take the worry away.”**



Joanna Stevens

team Leader
Hilton Nursing Partners



“I have a passion to make a difference to all patients discharged from hospital with any health or social need requirement. Patients who have been diagnosed with a palliative care plan are often referred onto the wrong pathway and become at a loss of where to turn to for help. It is devastating and upsetting to witness, which is why it is important to us to help if we can. Through collaborative relationships with social services, occupational therapists, GPs and cancer support services my team are able to take the worry away. Described as angels it illustrates the appreciation patients and their families have in our assistance. It’s important to us that our support extends to the families of the individuals receiving end of life care. Providing them with the ability to spend valuable time with their loved ones without feeling obligated to be their full-time Carer is a priceless gift so many people appreciate, leaving them with comforting rather than distressing memories.”



Jayne Britchfield

Personal Nursing Assistant
Hilton Nursing Partners



**“Palliative care can be
challenging but the rewards
outweigh this.”**

“The support that we can give to our patients and their families at this most difficult time in their life is so very important to them and to us. Our patients and their families build such a bond of trust and rapport with us I am currently supporting one of our patients who has terminal cancer. Right now our patient needs stability in knowing who is coming to support her, knowing that she can cry, laugh, rant and rave but know that whatever happens we will still be with her. Her main concerns should be enjoying every moment she has left and not worrying about who will support her towards her death. Palliative care can be challenging but the rewards outweigh this. Making a special connection with someone, celebrating their life story and being part of that whilst making a positive impact on their end of life is very special.”

Care Talk has a packed agenda of conferences and seminars ahead.
We are proud to be media partners and supporters for some
fantastic events listed below.

Coming up...

National Learning Disabilities & Autism Conference

8th July 2022 The ICC, Birmingham

National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards

8th July 2022 The ICC, Birmingham

Social Care Top 30, Social Care Leadership Awards and Social Care Premier Supplier Awards

19th October 2022 The Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London

The Children & Young People Awards

6th October 2022 The ICC, Birmingham

Great British Care Awards Regionals

East Midlands - 3rd November 2022

EMCC, Nottingham

East of England - 4th November 2022

Stadium MK, Milton Keynes

West Midlands - 5th November 2022

The ICC, Birmingham

North East - 10th November 2022

Gosforth Park, Newcastle

Yorkshire & Humberside - 11th November 2022

The Royal Armouries, Leeds

North West - 12th November 2022

Kimpton Clocktower, Manchester

Wales - 16th November 2022

Marriott Hotel, Cardiff

South West - 17th November 2022

Ashton Gate Stadium, Bristol

South East - 18th November 2022

Hilton Hotel, Brighton

London - 19th November 2022

Hilton Bankside, London

Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards

24th November 2022 St Pancras Renaissance Hotel, London

Great British Care Awards National Finals

17th March 2023 The ICC, Birmingham

*please note: some dates/venues subject to change.

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...INCOMING MESSAGE...

...THE 2022 REGIONALS...

...3RD NOVEMBER...**EAST MIDLANDS**...EMCC, NOTTINGHAM...

...5TH NOVEMBER...**WEST MIDLANDS**...ICC, BIRMINGHAM...

...11TH NOVEMBER...**YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE**...THE ROYAL ARMOURIES, LEEDS...

...12TH NOVEMBER...**NORTH WEST**...KIMPTON CLOCKTOWER, MANCHESTER...

...17TH NOVEMBER...**SOUTH WEST**...ASHTON GATE STADIUM, BRISTOL...

...4TH NOVEMBER...**EAST OF ENGLAND**...STADIUM MK, MILTON KEYNES...

...10TH NOVEMBER...**NORTH EAST**...GOSFORTH PARK, NEWCASTLE...

...16TH NOVEMBER...**WALES**...CARDIFF MARRIOTT HOTEL...

...18TH NOVEMBER...**SOUTH EAST**...HILTON HOTEL, BRIGHTON...

...19TH NOVEMBER...**LONDON**...HILTON BANKSIDE, LONDON...

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IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Supporting The National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards

What the Sponsors Say - There are many reasons to sponsor The National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards... but don't just take our word for it. Here, some more of the sectors' stakeholders tell us why they continue to support the sector's premier event.

HEADLINE SPONSOR Consensus

consensus
Supporting opportunity, choice and success

"The National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards showcase the very best of health and social care in our sector," said Consensus CEO Eddie Morgan. "We feel extremely privileged to be the overall sponsor for this year's awards, reflecting our own focus on continuous improvement and delivering the highest quality care at all times to everyone we support."

Over 18 categories, the 2022 awards celebrate excellence in support for people with learning disabilities and aim to pay tribute to those individuals or organisations who excel in providing quality care. Across the UK, Consensus is a leading provider of support and accommodation in a range of settings for people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs, including Prader-Willi Syndrome. In addition to its overall headline sponsorship, Consensus has also chosen to sponsor the prestigious Award for Outstanding Contribution category.

"I was humbled and proud to be the recipient of that accolade in 2021", added Eddie. "When I visit our services, it's clear to see the ways that colleagues demonstrate our values and maintain our mission for every individual to have a life of opportunity, choice and success. So we have a special affiliation with this award that recognises someone making a long-term outstanding contribution to the lives of people with a learning disability and/or autism."

"We want to recognise not just the winners of these awards but the sector as a whole."

"Through sponsoring this category in particular and the 2022 awards as a whole, we will enjoy the opportunity to be part of honouring those who have worked in exceptional ways to ensure independence and quality of life for the people they support. It's important to recognise and celebrate the dedication of colleagues who go 'over and above' to achieve excellence in health and social care. Good luck to all those nominated for this year's National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards and we look forward to seeing the successful finalists at the Gala Night on 8 July."

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The National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards
2022

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ROCKERS & ROLLERS
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8th July 2022, The ICC, Birmingham

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CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS: 13TH MAY 2022

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Camphill Village Trust

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"At Camphill Village Trust we're committed to ensuring that every person has the same opportunities to live a life full of opportunity in the communities in which they live. We are sponsoring these awards in recognition of the inspirational support that makes this ambition a reality for every person."

Recognising the amazing and creative practice that ensures that every person is a valued citizen with an incredible contribution to make.

Unlocking the potential in every single person takes truly committed support that should be celebrated and shared so that it can act as an inspiration to others thereby ensuring that a Life of Opportunity is achievable for everyone."

Care England



"The Learning Disability and Autism Awards are a fantastic opportunity to champion the quality and excellence of learning disability and autism services. The awards offer recognition to our dedicated colleagues who work so hard to ensure that people living with learning disabilities and autism have the best possible life and achieve their potential. Social care has been through some challenging times, and these awards will be an opportunity for us all to come together and celebrate the successes of the learning disabilities and autism sector."

Domus Recruitment



"Domus Recruitment are proud to continue supporting the Learning Disabilities & Autism awards and give recognition to the exceptional men and women of who do such genuinely life changing work. Working with many of the great companies that provide support to individuals in this field, both larger corporate providers and smaller independents, we understand the difficulties and restraints that must be navigated daily in order to continue providing the best quality of care. Your dedication and spirit throughout these difficult times that we continue to live in currently in a covid/post covid world are an example and inspiration to us all.

As a result, this year we have chosen to sponsor the 'Social Care Covid Hero Award' at the 2022 Learning Disability & Autism Awards and are delighted to be able to acknowledge some of the amazing contributions that have been made by so individuals over the past year.

It is great to have the opportunity to play a small part in supporting the sector by working with many of you to provide staffing support as and when required and we look forward to joining you to celebrate what incredible work has been achieved this past year and recognise not just the winners of these awards but the sector as a whole."

Hays Recruitment



"Registered Managers are the beating heart of the care sector and this year, more than any, when Managers have continued to deliver exceptional care through adversity, Hays Social Care is delighted to celebrate the contribution that Managers make through sponsorship of the Registered Manager Award at the Learning Disability & Autism Awards 2022

As a specialist recruiter in Social Care, Hays recognise the crucial role that Registered Managers play in developing and supporting their teams to deliver excellent care to their service users. Through providing recruitment services to thousands of Care Professionals each year, helping them secure temporary or permanent positions, we have the privilege of seeing the impact that excellent Managers have on the organisations they work for and crucially, the service users they care for. We hear first-hand the challenges that Managers face and witness how with determination, professionalism, and

"We enjoy honouring those who have worked in exceptional ways."

empathy they rise to those challenges, delivering high quality personalised support to drive the best outcomes for people in their care.

We would like to congratulate all of the finalists nominated for an award this year for the excellence they have clearly demonstrated and acknowledge that these stories are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the contributions made by all of the dedicated individuals who work in this sector.

The Learning Disability and Autism sector is one with a massive heart and Hays is proud to support & celebrate it through this sponsorship."

Holmleigh



"Holmleigh is very proud to be one of the sponsors of this year's National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards.

We are proud to help the organisers to honour, recognise and celebrate the dedication of colleagues who go above and beyond to achieve excellence. Our teams, and those of other providers across the sector, are full of exceptional people who make a valuable contribution every single day. Thank you so much for all the hard work – good luck and well done to everyone who has been nominated!"

National Care Forum



"Care employers and social care staff across the sector are doing their utmost to support people with learning disabilities and autism to live fulfilling and meaningful lives. The Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards is a fantastic way to recognise their efforts and celebrate the great work they do each and every day."

"Unlocking the potential in every single person takes truly committed support."



Sam Monaghan
CEO
Methodist Homes (MHA)



A NATIONAL VOICE

Sam Monaghan

CEO, Methodist Homes (MHA)

Sam Monaghan, CEO at Methodist Homes, reflects on what leadership means in social care as a Top 10 finalist in the Social Care Top 30.

“Being values-driven has to be at the heart of leadership.”

Talking about your leadership and style can be a bit of a challenge. We're all a work in progress and every day can bring something new, with the potential to be tested and to learn.

But for me, leadership is fundamentally about accountability and inspiring those who work for MHA to be the best they can be; to try to lead by example, at the forefront of the charity, speaking out for what we believe in. That's what we do as a sector, so I was hugely honoured and humbled to be named as one of the top five leaders.

And because of what we do, being values-driven has to be at the heart of leadership. Being able to demonstrate that you live and breathe those values and seeing them translated through every aspect of the organisation, so that those you care for and support truly benefit. It's about trying to inspire a culture of inclusivity, collaboration, respect and care.

Alongside the values, I think knowing who you are, your strengths, limitations and traits is also crucial. Understanding your own preferences and profile, how you operate, helps you to not only build and lead a complementary, rounded and effective team, but also facilitate others, fostering buy-in to an open and mutually supportive culture. One where accountability is clear, but contribution is intrinsic to the organisation's development.

This is one of the reasons why, before the pandemic, we embarked on an ambitious leadership training programme for all our managers, whether running a care home or managing a team of accountants.

The programme, entitled *Engaging Leadership*, uses a coaching methodology to create a supportive performance culture, giving people confidence to engage with, trust and empower their teams. Through

the course, participants are able to draw upon and translate their experiences and knowledge, sharing with others in a safe environment where they can learn from each other.

While the pandemic disrupted the programme, shifting it to Zoom, we are now picking up with previous delegates to see how they have been able to use the knowledge and experience they gained during the past two years and welcome managers new to MHA on to the programme. I know accountability during the pandemic will feature hugely.

And that very clear sense of accountability is, for me, such a core element of leadership. It needs to be seen and spoken. It's why, over the last two years, it was never an option not to lobby and speak out on behalf of my frontline colleagues and those we care for and support. It was about not only seeking change, but giving voice to the experience besetting our sector.

Which leads me to the final aspect of leadership I'd like to touch on - determining and communicating a compelling direction for the future. We're now part way through our five-year OneMHA strategy and we've been reflecting on what it means in these changing times and how we bring people on the journey with us.

The strategy was formed through collaboration across MHA and our annual managers' conference and roadshows provide an opportunity for me and my team to engage with colleagues, communicate and further refine that vision and bring it alive.

Without that opportunity for ownership and influence, how can they as leaders enable their teams to see themselves in the strategy and as part of MHA's present and future, which brings me full circle - to fostering an inclusive, creative and engaging culture.

“The OneMHA strategy was formed through collaboration across MHA.”

People need to feel involved and listened to, otherwise how can they create the culture we all want across MHA - a place where we all enable people to live later life well.



LEADING THE WAY IN SOCIAL CARE

Adam Hutchison

Managing Director, Belmont Healthcare

Innovation in social care seems to offer loads of clichés but nothing tangible, rather a buzzword for re-inventing the wheel. Innovation for me is more about adjusting a mindset to embrace the possibility of a different perspective leading to different actions.

I see myself very lucky in being able to do that. Having come from a sales and marketing background in the telecoms industry I don't have some of the deep rooted perspectives or thoughts about what a care home should be like or how it should be managed.

Care isn't about the company it's about the people cared for. Forever mindful of this I wanted to create a care journey for individuals that I myself would be happy to consider.

Fulfilling the vision hasn't always gone to plan. Post pandemic I fully admit I was trying to do everything. With four residential care homes it was just impossible but at the time I didn't realise, not until the pandemic hit.

The pandemic taught me a very valuable lesson, that I can't do it all on my own!

We really struggled during covid, as many care operators did. It wasn't just the strain on the business it was the desperate feeling of being helpless, not being able to fix it, seeing colleagues emotionally at their worst and good friends we care for unable to see their families. We were on emergency autopilot like pandemic zombies.

One thing we didn't do during the pandemic was panic or make knee-jerk business decisions. We didn't consolidate the business or pare back operations; we kept all our staff, and maintained a 'business as usual' approach knowing that one day it would all be over.



"I wanted to create a care journey for individuals that I myself would be happy to consider."

More important, I handed responsibility over to the experts. If there is one thing I have learnt, always get an expert to do an expert job rather than trying to do it yourself, it really pays dividends in the end.

I made critical appointments in three main functions, finance, operations and marketing. Having experts in these roles has helped me to deliver and build on my vision of developing our care journey. Maybe that in itself is unique to Belmont Healthcare.

I do know we stand out in ethos. We are 'one' team and all in the same boat. I don't present myself as a 3-piece suit wearing managing director, I'm there and present just like everyone else. I've worked in industries where the 'them and us' culture destroys morale and businesses, for Belmont Healthcare we're all in it together 100% and I am very proud of that.

My whole ethos about developing the Belmont Healthcare care journey is purely to develop choice for people. I don't want to create 'vanilla' care homes I want to develop a multi-faceted care journey in its truest form where care isn't a last resort. I want someone with capacity to say to themselves 'I want that', to manage life as best as possible in their own home, perhaps with our help, until they are ready to move into residential care.

Until we get people to think differently about care and care homes we will never get to where we want to as a sector. It really is all about getting people to engage with care services in a different way.

I have always focused on the long-term vision. Even when it seemed foolhardy I always believed we would get to that next point. The pandemic may have stalled business development but it also enabled me to reassess. We now have a really solid foundation to grow and develop our care journey and we are all really looking forward to it.

"I don't present myself as a 3-piece suit wearing managing director."

Calling all senior leaders of excellence to social care!

Care Talk is delighted to host the **2022 Social Care Leadership Awards**.

These unique awards will recognise, celebrate and promote great leadership in the Social Care Sector, over and above Registered Manager level and share knowledge and expertise in leadership.

We are looking for nominations for senior leaders in social care who have demonstrated strong, innovative leadership to ensure a quality outcomes that make a real difference to care delivery.

AWARDS CATEGORIES:

the lifetime achievement award
the executive award
the care home leader award
the clinical nurse manager award
learning disabilities & autism award
the workforce development leader award
the quality assurance leader award
the home care leader award
executive children and young people leader award

Finalists join top leaders and decision makers in social care!

Finalists and guests will be invited to the esteemed **Social Care Top 30** Gala Dinner, a bespoke event that celebrates leadership from care providers and other key influencers in the sector. The event will take place on 19th October 2022 at The Marriott Hotel, Grosvenor Square, London where the category winners will be announced alongside winners of the **Social Care Top 30**.

Nominate online at: **www.caretalk.co.uk/scl**
Closing date for nominations 31st August 2022

Calling all suppliers of excellence to social care!

Care Talk Business is delighted to host the **2022 Social Care Premier Supplier Awards**.

These unique awards will recognise excellence in suppliers of products and service to the care sector, showcasing innovation, customer service and demonstrating outstanding client outcomes.

We are looking for nominations for key influencers from suppliers to social care who excel in quality products and services, that make a real difference to the end user.

AWARDS CATEGORIES:

legal services
public/transitional

banking
& investment

recruitment
property
agents

workforce
development

technology
pr & marketing

infection
control
products

consultancies

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Closing date for nominations 31st August 2022



PARTNERS IN CARE

The two biggest challenges for social care providers



RIDOUTS
SPECIALISTS IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE LAW

Jenny Wilde
Director, Solicitor
Ridouts

In my 13 years at Ridouts there isn't much I haven't seen in terms of regulatory and operational challenges in the health and social care sector. CQC enforcement action, opaque and seemingly never-ending safeguarding investigations and difficult contractual negotiations with local authorities are just a few of the issues that we unpick day to day. And then came the pandemic.

We are all too familiar with the challenges that providers faced on the ground over the course of almost two years. Staff fatigue, lockdowns, outbreaks and shortages of vital equipment. However, it is only now that we at Ridouts are starting to see the long-lasting impact on the sector and it is important to spread the word on how this will continue to effect organisations for years to come. Below are what I view, through recent client work, as the two biggest challenges for health and social care providers.

The Care Quality Commission

During the pandemic the Care Quality Commission (CQC) were almost invisible. Many of our clients expressed disbelief at the lack of support offered to them by the regulator and have done this quite vocally. Services went for many months without inspection and did the best that they could with reduced numbers of staff and ever-changing guidance. As a consequence of public criticism, it would appear that when the CQC did spring back into action they were more aggressive than we have ever seen before. We have seen a sharp increase in enforcement action against clients and critical inspection reports which make no allowances for the tribulations that providers had been through. The CQC appears determined to justify its own role by baring teeth and demonstrating to the public that it is an effective and strict regulator. Whilst this is obviously reasonable, what is not fair is the lack of compassion and understanding of the positions of many providers

who have struggled in recent months. Particular focus has landed on use of agency staff (which the CQC dislikes but is very difficult to avoid in times of crisis) and availability of activities (which have obviously been sporadically impeded by lockdowns, both nationally and in times of localised outbreak).

Care businesses must be hyper-vigilant about the inflexibility of the regulator and how its focus can work. Providers must continue to create documentary evidence to record all decisions made, including (using the examples above) use of agency staff (including risk assessments and dependency tools) and identifying/creating alternative activities when service users are unable to leave the service as a result of a lockdown. The CQC is compelled to rely on evidence provided to it and so producing such items will enable providers to stave off criticism in these and other key areas.

Staff morale

We are all aware of the national staff shortage which has arisen as a consequence of the mandatory vaccine mandate, changes in immigration law and the general migration of people away from the health and social care sector in the wake of the pandemic. This has had a significant impact on businesses but we have also noted how this is affecting existing staff teams that are committed to their work. Many regulatory issues arise as a consequence of anonymous whistle blows from unhappy staff. Problems can relate to fatigue, feeling undervalued or that staff do not feel supported by their managers. These issues can become more prominent when staff are stretched or required to cover for colleagues that are absent or have left the service and are yet to be replaced.

If communication is poor then staff may prefer to complain to the CQC directly rather than to their own senior team. Any allegation received by the CQC will then (understandably) become the focus of investigation and potentially inspection. A key to avoiding this escalation is to encourage open discussion with the staff team and offer 1:1 meetings to discuss concerns. Staff feedback is vital to ensuring a harmonious and effective service and in turn, that will avoid the need for staff to report to the CQC – which should be a last resort.

We see first-hand how small issues can snowball into major regulatory problems so being responsive and proactive will stand providers in good stead for what is likely to continue to be a hostile regulatory terrain.

jenny@ridout-law.com

Support for social workers to be healthier and happier at work



Throughout May and June Skills for Care is focusing on wellbeing support for people working in social care.

Over the next two months Skills for Care is highlighting resources, information, and inspiration to help everyone working across social care to be happier at work, and to support their colleagues and teams too.

We've put together a round-up of some key resources which can support managers and individuals. You can find signposts to all of this on our website.

Workforce wellbeing finder

You can find a wide range of resources to support with wellbeing on our Workforce wellbeing finder. This handy tool directs to a large database of information to support with mental wellbeing. The resources cover leading for wellbeing, grief and bereavement, supporting your own and others' mental health, and looking after your physical health.

Wellbeing sector stories

Our wellbeing sector stories round up real-life examples from different people across the social care sector about how they support wellbeing in their organisation and how they look after their own wellbeing.

Registered manager support

Registered managers play a vital role in social care, but it's a role that we know can be challenging and at times isolating. That's why Skills for Care focuses on providing a wide range of support for registered managers.

This includes regular webinars, many of which touch on wellbeing for you and your team and related topics such as effective supervision. The peer networks available for registered managers is something that we know managers find supportive. This includes our local Registered Managers Networks as well as our Facebook group and WhatsApp groups, plus our registered manager membership offer.

Effective supervision toolkit

Supervisions allow managers and team members to discuss any challenges or issues before they're too big to deal with. They also allow an opportunity to reflect on achievements and set goals and learning opportunities for the future – all of which can help with staff motivation and job satisfaction.

There are many factors which ensure supervision is effective – from having a clear agenda to making sure supervisions happen on a regular basis.

Creating a positive workplace culture toolkit

Workplace culture is the character and personality of your organisation. It's made up of your organisation's leadership, values, traditions, beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes of the people in it. Having a positive workplace culture is key to delivering quality care and support and it plays an important role in supporting the wellbeing of your team.

NHS support

The NHS offers a wide range of expert advice for mental health on their website. This includes a personalised 'mind plan', and information specifically about wellbeing related to the COVID-19 pandemic. There's also information about the connection between physical and mental health, and how supporting one can support the other, plus their 'Five ways to wellbeing' including connecting with others, being physically active, learning new skills, giving to others, and being present.

Guide to managing anxiety and stress in uncertain times
The Greater Manchester resilience hub has developed a six-page practical, plain English guide to managing stress, anxiety, and worry in uncertain times. It includes things you might notice, ways to look after yourself, information about stress, anxiety and worry, and tips to help.

Samaritans' helpline

Social care workers in England can call the Samaritans' dedicated confidential support line for free on 0800 069 6222, 7am–11pm every day.



"We've put together key resources which can support managers and individuals."

You can find more information and support to support with wellbeing on our website:
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/wellbeing



Care Consultancy Ltd

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Working with providers in maintaining compliance. Working with administrators and insolvency teams to help manage and guide you through a difficult time.

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Working with services to ensure they provide high quality care. Supporting providers to maintain Good standards of care and work toward Outstanding.

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NCF supports its members to improve social care provision and enhance the quality of life, choice, control and wellbeing of people who use care services. We work directly with not for profit providers of care and support services across the UK offering:

- Expert response to government consultations and engagement with senior politicians and staff
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Making a house a home



The physical environment can have a big impact on the lives of people living with dementia.

The symptoms of dementia, including memory loss, confusion and difficulty learning new things, means that people with dementia may forget where they are and where things are.

If designed right, care homes can promote independence and can be supportive and enhancing environments. However, if the right approach isn't taken, care home environments can become confusing and institutionalised, where routine and task driven practice takes precedence over the promotion and delivery of care based on attachment, comfort and inclusion.

Person-centred care for people living with dementia

For people living with dementia, person-centred care should be at the heart and centre of all care planning and delivery, especially when someone moves into a care home.

It's important to know and understand each individual's own abilities, beliefs, values, likes and dislikes, both past and present, which can then inform every interaction and experience the person has when living in a care setting.

A quality person-centred care model should also include understanding and reference to social psychology, and the impact that the environment and day to day interactions surrounding the person living with dementia can have on their wellbeing.



Dementia-friendly environments in care homes

Often, when an individual moves into a care home, the new surrounding does not immediately feel like a home, as the walls and décor aren't familiar.

It's important that care home teams create spaces around the home that feel more familiar to the person. They should

encourage the individual and their loved ones to bring items of furniture, mementos and photos that were present in their previous home setting. This can help to make bedrooms feel more like a place to call home.

The care home should provide an environment that facilitates orientation and independence, as opposed to confusion and reliance on others.

"If designed right, care homes can promote independence."

Here are some of the ways that care homes can do this.

■ Signage

Signage should indicate where important rooms such as toilets, the person's bedroom and the dining room.

Signs should be attached to the doors they refer to, rather than adjacent walls, and positioned slightly lower than normal. They should use a bold font and good contrast between the text and background.

■ Flooring

Flooring should be plain and flush to aid navigation and promote independence.

Avoid patterned carpets as they may trigger an illusion of insects or mice running around, which can be unsafe. Similarly, avoid reflective or slippery surfaces which may cause confusion, and rugs or mats which could lead to trips or falls.

■ Navigation

Research shows that people living with dementia use landmarks to navigate their way around.

This can be especially helpful for important rooms such as the dining room, lounge, garden or the person's bedroom.

These landmarks should be attractive, interesting and recognisable, such as paintings or plants.

■ Communal spaces

People with dementia should be encouraged to participate in the everyday tasks they would normally do in their own home, such as cooking, washing up, cleaning, folding laundry and gardening.

This will help to foster a sense of 'home' and belonging, and give more meaning to each day.

Communal spaces in care homes should be accessible for those living with dementia. For example, kitchens should have a clear lay-out, in which everything is easy to find and use.

Exemplar Health Care is a leading provider of specialist nursing care for adults living with complex and high acuity needs. They have a number of services that specialise in supporting adults living with dementia. Visit: www.exemplarhc.com

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Sharing business excellence in social care

Care Talk Business is a new and exciting Business2Business news resource aimed at key decision-makers within social care provision, which include care and nursing home operators, home care and day centres.



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