

CareTalk

The voice of excellence in social care

Let's Talk Social Care! Issue **126** | November **2023**

Getting Vocal



GIVE
SOCIAL
CARE A
VOICE

In This Issue:



**MY VOTE
MY VOICE**
Hannah Molloy
Peer mentor at
United Response



**PROMOTING
EQUALITY OF
HEALTHCARE
SERVICES FOR
BAME
COMMUNITIES**
Tracey Bignall
Senior Policy
and Practice Officer,
Race Equality Foundation



**UPSKILLING
TO DELIVER
PERSONALISED
CLINICAL CARE**
Lisa Grainger
Clinical Lead,
Right at Home UK



**TRANSFORMING
HOME CARE
THROUGH STRATEGIC
INTERNATIONAL
RECRUITMENT**
Joe Desmond
Director,
Recruit2Care

Recruit2Care

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Coming up for the December 2023 issue:

■ HOW TO BE OUTSTANDING ■ DRIVING UP QUALITY
■ TRAINING AND DEVELOPING LEADERS AND MANAGERS

Circulation List

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

- Chief Executive
- Managing Director
- Registered Manager
- Supervisor
- Care Staff
- Ancillary Staff
- Service Users
- Families

Welcome to the November issue of **Care Talk**,

In a world where every voice matters how can we ensure that social care is heard? This month we look at how we can, **Get Vocal** and **Give social care a voice**.

We are delighted to be able to feature some fantastic individuals and organisations who are working innovatively to champion and amplify social care. Our contributors explore what can be done to build a symphony of advocates to ensure the sector, the workforce and people who draw on services can realise the true value of our social care.

Giving social care a voice in the public realm, is vital when it comes to increasing awareness and building a platform for essential sector reforms. In his article on page 7, Prof Martin Green, CEO at Care England, explains how care providers can proactively collaborate with the media to ensure an effective narrative for the sector.

Everyone's voice matters and no more so than when it comes the ballot box. Someone who is passionate about this is Hannah Mollo, a Peer Mentor at United Response. In her article, **My Voice, My Vote**, Hannah describes why she and her colleagues are on a mission to encourage people with learning disabilities and autistic people to vote in next year's General Election. Read more about this fabulous campaign and how you can get involved on page 11.

Shouting about all the good stuff that goes on in the sector is something that is very close to our heart. As you may have seen on social media, we are in the midst of awards season here at *Care Talk*. It's busy, busy, busy and we *LOVE* it! It's an absolute privilege to meet so many inspirational care professionals from all over the country and to celebrate the tremendous work that they do.

So, if you or your colleagues are finalists in *any* sector awards, please do spread the word in your communities and help **Give social care a voice**.

Do keep your good news stories coming in and help us to continue to share examples of innovation, outstanding practice and sheer dedication.

Happy reading

Lisa



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- 17th November **SOUTH EAST** Hilton Metropole Hotel, Brighton ● 18th November **LONDON** Hilton Bankside Hotel, London ●
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Give social care a voice

Social care is critical to a civilised society but often goes unnoticed or underrepresented in the media and public discourse. However, giving social care a voice in the media and with the public is essential to raise awareness, promote understanding, and advocate for necessary changes in the sector, and there are several strategies we need to pursue to achieve this goal.

“Giving social care a voice in the media and with the public is crucial to advocate for necessary changes.”

Social care organisations should actively engage with media outlets to ensure that their stories and perspectives are represented. This can be done by establishing relationships with journalists, offering expert opinions, and providing access to real-life stories and experiences. By collaborating with media outlets, social care organisations can increase the visibility of their work and highlight the challenges and successes within the sector. Local media is particularly anxious to hear the stories of local people, and social care providers need to encourage people who use services to talk about the impact social care has had on their lives.

As well as the established media, it is important to utilise social media platforms to present our case to a wider audience. Social media has become a powerful tool for communication and advocacy, and social care organisations should leverage these platforms to share stories, raise awareness, and engage with the public. By regularly posting updates, sharing success stories, and addressing common misconceptions, social care organisations can create a dialogue with the public and shape the narrative surrounding them.

It is important that in putting forward these messages, we empower service users and carers to give first-hand accounts of the difference services have made to their lives. Service users and carers are the heart of social care, and their voices should be heard. Social care organisations should provide platforms for service users and carers to share their experiences and perspectives. This can be done through interviews, testimonials, or even by encouraging them to write blogs or articles. By amplifying the voices of those directly impacted by social care, the public can gain a better understanding of the challenges faced and the importance of supporting the sector. It is also important to recognise that our staff can also be ambassadors for the sector, and we should do all we can to facilitate and support the stories of those who work in social care to be heard by a wider audience.

It is also important for social care organisations to actively engage with policymakers to ensure that social care remains on the political agenda. By providing evidence-based research, sharing success stories, and highlighting the impact of social care on individuals and communities, organisations can influence policy decisions and secure necessary funding. Engaging with policymakers also provides an opportunity to educate them about the realities of social care and advocate for necessary reforms. One important thing that we should do more of is identify the economic value of social care within local economies. In many places, social care is the biggest employer and staff live and work locally and sustain local businesses.

The 21st century is increasingly characterised by the cult of celebrities and influencers. These people have a significant impact on public opinion and can help raise awareness about social care. Social care organisations should collaborate with influential individuals who are passionate about social issues and have a large following. By partnering with celebrities and influencers, organisations can reach a wider audience and generate public support for social care initiatives.

The sector should also come together to work on awareness campaigns and events. Social care organisations should organise awareness campaigns, and these campaigns can include public talks, workshops, or even fundraising events. By creating opportunities for the public to learn about social care, ask questions, and interact with professionals in the field, organisations can foster a sense of empathy and understanding. Care Home Open Week, which is now organised by Championing Social Care, is a great example of a campaign that has really had an impact on local people in local areas.

One of our challenges in social care is that we tend to be quite insular, and in future, we need to foster partnerships with other sectors. Social care is interconnected with various sectors, such as healthcare, education, and housing. By fostering partnerships with these sectors, social care organisations can collaborate on joint initiatives, share resources, and amplify their collective voices. This interdisciplinary approach can help create a more comprehensive understanding of social care and its impact on society.

In conclusion, elevating the presence of social care in wider society is essential for increasing awareness, fostering comprehension and champion vital reforms. Through partnerships with media organizations, making effective use of social media platforms, empowering service users, carers and staff by engaging with policymakers, collaborating with celebrities and influencers, organising awareness campaigns and events, and fostering partnerships with other sectors, social care organisations can ensure that their voices are heard and that social care remains a priority in public discourse.



“One of our challenges in social care is that we tend to be quite insular.”

**Professor
Martin Green OBE**
Chief Executive, Care England



Shaping services through the Voice of the Customer



Leanne Owen
Chief Operating Officer
Midway Care Group

Midway Care Group (MCG), is a provider of services for 220 people with learning disabilities, autism and complex needs across The Midlands. The team have been working collaboratively with the people they support to enable extended choice and control through the development of a coproduction strategy.

We work in line with choice and control principles, empowering people to make decisions about their day to day lives. Our aim is to empower individuals to make decisions, not just about their life, but aimed at leading the service they receive. To enhance this, we have been working on the development of a co-production strategy which includes the people we support in leading the business. The Co-Production Strategy is enabling representation and the views and opinions of the people that are supported across the Group, to be shared and contribute to the decisions that the organisation makes.

Recent work has included developing a process called 'Voice of the Customer': a survey to people who live within MCG services, including accessible versions, to explore feedback and views on the organisation and the support people receive.

Our MCG Head of Quality Kirsty Peachey who has been leading on the development of the coproduction strategy had this to say:

"These surveys are focussed on service provision but have been created to enable Midway Care Group to make real positive changes at both service and organisational level. The plan is that the feedback that we receive will contribute to practice delivery and the growth of Midway Care Group. The survey focusses on four areas;

"Involving individuals in the decision-making process can ensure that services are truly person-centred."

Safety, Dignity and Respect, Active Support and Enjoy and Achieve. The survey contains 17 questions and the submission form has been created in an accessible format. Guidance has been provided to support staff on what to consider when seeking the feedback from the people we support. The highest levels of satisfaction were reported across for the following questions; I am supported to go to health appointments and with my medication, I am treated with dignity and respect and I am encouraged to do things independently."

Kirsty has also established the organisation's 'People We Support Forum' which is made up of volunteered people who live within the Midlands based services.

Kirsty told me: *"The group will be meeting quarterly to share experiences, concerns and ideas, facilitating meaningful improvements. As an example, for our next meeting the focus is on our care and assessment process and the analysis of the survey completed earlier in the year. The team will work together to redesign the process in partnership with operational colleagues, myself and the quality assurance team."*

Feedback from people who are supported at Midway about the coproduction sessions has been positive. Andrew has volunteered to be a member of the new forum and has recently completed a Voice of the Customer survey, he said:

"I am looking forward to being involved. I want to get involved in asking staff questions in interviews."

It is hoped that these focus group type sessions will provide valuable input and allow people to co-design the organisation's new approach to care planning and the development of policies, procedures, systems and outstanding care.

Our hope is that this work will improve the quality of the process by including real ideas and lived experience.

"The Voice of the Customer is a survey to people who live within MCG services."



“These focus group type sessions will allow people to co-design the organisation’s new approach to care planning.”



We can't afford not to care



Dr Annie Williamson

Associate Researcher
IPPR Commission on Health
and Prosperity

Economic and societal benefits of social care in the current economic and political market.

The UK economy is stuck. Despite countless pledges and plans, we face stagnant growth alongside high inequality (Resolution Foundation 2022)ⁱ. Meanwhile, more and more people are not getting the social care they need, due to sclerotic funding and an undervalued workforce. Reforms have been shelved to achieve short-sighted cost savings (Bottery 2023)ⁱⁱ. Yet as a health economist and NHS doctor, I see daily how social care offers a foundation for untapped prosperity. Viewed as an investment, not a cost, social care can unlock prevention, autonomy, and high-quality careers across the country.

“As a health economist and NHS doctor, I see daily how social care offers a foundation for untapped prosperity.”

Adult social care is at the heart of preventing sickness and deterioration. Over the eight years to 2018, per-person social care spending for over 65s fell by a third – whilst average A&E visits increased by a third, likely because people turn to A&E when community support options are unavailable (IFS 2020)ⁱⁱⁱ. And preventable ill health costs us all: IPPR's Commission on Health and Prosperity found long-term illness of a household member leads to £1,224 in lost annual income, and sickness-related lost earnings cost the UK £43 billion in 2021 (Thomas et al 2023)^{iv}.

We know care services help, from physio-led balance programmes and supportive home carers to prevent falls, to community lunches and retirement communities that counter loneliness. Service users and their families shouldn't have to fight for services that improve their lives and our economy. We ought to universalise access to the most proactive social care, so every adult is supported to stay as well and independent as possible.

Second, social care can support greater autonomy, which brings wider economic benefits. Funding adequate social care officers to design individualised care packages can save money in the long run, such as supporting adults with disabilities to volunteer in a charity shop or work in jobs they love (Naylor & Wellings 2019)^v. Well-designed services for older adults also enable independent, active lives to spend with loved ones, care for grandchildren,

“The care sector is arguably the area of greatest untapped potential for economic growth in this country.”

or work in a mentoring role. Retirement villages are one positive model of a 'place to live' with facilities and support, yet provision falls short of demand (Housing LIN 2017)^{vi}. Economically, if one couple for every 50 older homeowners moved into specialist retirement housing, this could save £14.5 billion across the country, and reduce the length of unplanned hospital admissions from eight to 14 days to between one and two days (ibid). Community-building benefits can also be remarkable, as in the intergenerational Nightingale House, which runs an on-site nursery for children aged two to five years.

But perhaps the biggest untapped opportunity lies in transforming the care workforce. Care work is currently one of the worst sectors in the country for pay, conditions, and progression. Huge vacancies are unsurprising, when care managers comment 'I dread hearing Aldi opening up nearby... I know I will lose staff' (House of Commons 2022)^{vii}. Furthermore, care overwhelmingly relies on women and minority ethnic people, including a huge amount of unpaid labour. This is a broken labour market, failing to meet care needs and failing the 1.8 million-strong workforce.

When things are this bad, however, improvement offers low hanging fruit for economic growth. Good jobs – those that provide skilled training, future security, and at least a living wage – are core to renewal, yet are lacking in many regions across the country (Jung & Collings 2021)^{viii}. IPPR has called for a Better Care Charter requiring all state-funded providers to pay living wages and engage in sectoral bargaining, of the kind that has transformed social care in New Zealand (Patel et al 2023)^{ix}. Social care reaches every corner of the UK, and as a service-focused industry, offers greater security than sectors under threat of automation. If adult social care ensured good jobs and fairer pay, this could drive more equitable, future-proof employment and economic growth.

In sum, the care sector is arguably the area of greatest untapped potential for economic growth in this country. We can't afford not to care.

ⁱ www.economy2030.resolutionfoundation.org/reports/stagnation-nation/

ⁱⁱ www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2023/04/reform-adult-social-care-vanishing-over-horizon

ⁱⁱⁱ www.ifs.org.uk/articles/what-impact-did-cuts-social-care-spending-have-hospitals

^{iv} www.ippr.org/files/2023-04/168257258_healthy-people-prosperous-lives-april-2023.pdf

^v www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/A_citizen-led_approach_to_health_and_care_lessons_from_the_Wigan_Deal.pdf

^{vi} www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Reports/HLIN_Keepmoat_Report_FINAL.pdf

^{vii} www.committees.parliament.uk/publications/23246/documents/171671/default/

^{viii} www.ippr.org/research/publications/full-employment-and-good-jobs-for-all

^{ix} www.ippr.org/research/publications/for-public-health-and-public-finance

My Vote My Voice



Hannah Molloy

Peer mentor at United Response
Advocate for My Vote My Voice



The My Vote My Voice is a joint campaign with United Response, Dimensions, Mencap and Ambitious about Autism aimed at removing voting barriers and raising awareness about people with learning disabilities and autistic people's right to vote.

It's great to have an autistic voice in the mix and since getting involved I have attended a parliamentary launch where I gave a speech on voting ID, easy read resources and voting staff not having training on supporting people like me and I got to visit Downing street. We called on the government and parliament to do their part to make elections more accessible and open clearer pathways to politics for autistic people and people with learning disabilities. To knock on the door and hand in the My Vote My Voice petition will be an experience I won't forget for a long time.

“As a peer mentor to other young people with autism I know others have struggled to vote.”

Political engagement is the key to change. I have formed some fantastic connections and am now finding myself wanting to work in policy, so I can have more of an impact on disabled people who may find it hard to speak up. I can be a role model for them.

There are many ways organisations can get involved in the My Vote My Voice campaign, in a support service in Salford they held a mock election ahead of the local election so there was a chance for the people they supported to practise and learn about their rights. It meant some people voted in the local election for their first time. This is why it's so important more organisations sign the My Vote My Voice charter and reach out to more people with learning disabilities.

“We called on the government and parliament to do their part to make elections more accessible.”

My experience of using voter ID has been difficult. I struggled and forgot my ID during my visit. I feel there will be a lot more disabled people like myself wishing for more clarity and accessibility in terms of voting.

Another part of the campaign is about engaging and empowering people with disabilities to participate in public life and lead in decision-making. I saw my own local MP, Andrew Gwynne MP for Denton and Reddish in a meeting to talk about voter ID, I believe that it is unacceptable that a 60 plus travel card can be accepted as ID but a 18 year olds isn't. It is really valuable that my local MP is listening and from this discussion feels like it's making an impact.

Disabled people make up over 20% of the population, yet they're among the most underrepresented in politics and I would like to see this changed.

As a peer mentor to other young people with autism I know others have struggled to vote, saying they would feel supported if they had an easy read versions of manifestos to help break up the information and audible versions to help to process the information. Their experiences showed a real opportunity is being missed by political parties by not offering more accessible hustings or ensuring that political manifestos are published at the same time as full manifestos.

Voting needs to be accessible for disabled people to be able to have their say. If disabled people cannot have their vote then this society will become a very ableist one.

Changing the perception of social care together



Prosperwell

Tobi Alli-Uzman

Managing Director
Prosperwell (formerly Smooth Digital)

In the UK, the social care sector plays a vital role in supporting vulnerable individuals and enhancing their quality of life. However, despite its significance, the perception of social care often lags behind that of the NHS. Achieving parity of esteem between social care and the NHS is a complex challenge



that requires the collective efforts of various stakeholders, including the government, wider society, care providers, care professionals, and people who require care.

At Prosperwell, we believe that reshaping the perception of social care is not only achievable but also essential.

One of the primary stakeholders in changing the perception of social care is the government. Policy makers have the responsibility to create an enabling environment that supports the sector's growth and sustainability. This includes adequate funding, regulation, and training programs. To promote a positive image of social care, we believe the government must prioritise the sector in national policies and allocate resources

“Changing the perception of social care and achieving parity of esteem with the NHS is a shared responsibility.”

proportionately to its importance. By investing in social care and highlighting its significance, the government can set a precedent that will hopefully spread and be reflected back by the rest of society.

As part of the general population, we also play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of social care. It is essential to educate the rest of the public about the value of social care and its contributions to the well-being of individuals and communities. To achieve this, awareness campaigns and initiatives should be utilised and encouraged to dispel myths and misconceptions surrounding the sector. This could mean things like creating partnerships between care providers and local schools, community organisations, and connecting with media outlets to help raise awareness and foster a more positive view of social care.

Community Engagement

Show that you're a pillar of your community! Host open-house events, workshops, and seminars to involve the local community in discussions about social care. Inviting local leaders and influencers to these events can also help to broaden your reach. Showcase the rewarding aspects of careers in social care. Highlight opportunities for professional development and career progression within your organisation.

Social Media and Online Presence

Social media can't be underestimated these days. Utilise digital marketing strategies to maintain an active online presence. Share stories of staff dedication, success stories of service users, and engage with the community through social media platforms. These positive stories are really useful in combating the relentless negative media coverage that is often pumped out to generate views.

What Care Providers Can Do

Care providers are on the front lines of it all, and that includes changing the perception of social care, so it's important for them to be proactively engaging with their local communities and showcasing their commitment to providing high-quality care. Here are some practical tips for care providers:

Transparency and Communication

Be transparent about your organisation's values, goals, and the impact you make in the community. Regularly communicating your successes and challenges with your local audience will go a long way in helping them see the overall sector in a more positive light.

We are also in the era of the influencer, and this can be utilised by carers engaging with peers on their personal social accounts with positive stories, which can feel more genuine than corporate accounts.

Changing the perception of social care and achieving parity of esteem with the NHS is a shared responsibility. It requires a collaborative effort from government, society, care providers, staff, and service users. At Prosperwell, we believe that through these efforts, we can transform social care into a positive choice for service users and a career of choice for potential employees. Together, we can create a society that truly values and supports the vital work of the social care sector.

Proud to care



JEWISH CARE

Rachel Jones
Director of Care & Housing Services
Jewish Care

Once I began my first role as a carer, I knew that social care was a career for life. Since then, I've dedicated the majority of my career to working in Jewish community charities providing social care. To me, social care nourishes the soul and I feel so privileged to have found something that I truly love. I hope in some way I can help to encourage people into the world of social care by sharing my own experiences.

Everyone in society is touched by social care at some point in their lives and I think there is no better way to fulfil a need to help than by supporting people. I would say that for me, working with older people and those at the end of their lives is the most privileged job. I adore working within the community which has loved and supported so many of my family and friends over the years. I am proud to work at Jewish Care, who cared for both my grandmothers, in what is now Jewish Care's Anita Dorfman House care home at Sandringham. I joined Jewish Care in May 2021 as the Interim Head of Housing and Domiciliary Care and was then appointed as Director of Care & Housing Services.

I always knew I wanted to have longevity in my career so that I could make a positive difference to people's lives. I began volunteering and then worked as a carer at Norwood and Kisharon, Jewish charities for children and adults with learning disabilities. I started to volunteer at the after school and holiday club for young children with severe physical disabilities at Norwood and I still volunteer there. I met some incredible young people and eventually ended up being paid staff. We took groups of children on specialist holiday schemes and I loved it. I am still in touch with youth workers, families and children that are grown up some 25 years later.

I loved the spirit of selflessness and the feeling of belonging. When children were dropped at camp, their faces excited for activities ahead really gave me hope. I knew what respite was from an early age, and I see it in the faces of relatives and families now when Jewish Care can ease the pressure for people caring for elderly relatives and loved ones.

From my perspective, the key to career development is hard work, dedication and persistence. If you want something, you have the power to make it happen. I listened to and met people who were just as passionate as me. I went for jobs and progression and sometimes I didn't get it. I learnt from the failures and was able to distil my passion over the years.

I have met some inspirational front line staff over the years who have aspired to develop themselves and have been encouraged by their managers to do so. I would say that keeping abreast of the sector and taking part in all training available are the best ways to connect with opportunities.

Photo: Justin Grainge



Rachel Jones with **Marion Carr** resident at Jewish Care's Stella & Harry Freedman House care home

"I always knew I wanted to have longevity in my career so that I could make a positive difference to people's lives."



Photo: Paul Lang

Tenants and staff celebrating together at Jewish Care Wohl Court Retirement Living 4th birthday party

I have two degrees, though they are not related to what I do now. Firstly, I did a BA Hons in Early Childhood studies specialising in additional needs. This was born from my early volunteering roles and the ambition to be an Art Therapist. Following that I did a City and Guilds in Jewellery Design and Diamond Setting as I knew I loved the creative arts. The rest of my qualifications are down to experience and training.

During my career I have been nurtured by my managers and by organisations who want me to succeed and have allowed room for growth and development. All the roles I have had over the years have brought something special to my life. I moved into more senior roles and went on to run various housing associations and smaller charities before serving as the Executive Director at Sunridge Court care home for eight years. I was one of the lead professionals in overseeing the merger between Sunridge Court and Jewish Care, which was a real stand out moment in my career.

“I am proud to work at Jewish Care, who cared for both my grandmothers.”

I’ve loved the new experiences my job has brought with it, such as being part of the team and working alongside our care homes and Retirement Living schemes supported by our incredibly talented and strong team of staff and volunteers.

I have been most inspired by my incredible mum who worked full time and raised me to be a strong independent woman. I can build on a Jewish communal legacy that she inspired within me and through her sacrifice and dedication to both her family and her community, I am able to do the same.

For more information about working with Jewish Care visit <https://doyouwish.org/>

Thursday is Murder Club: changing the story around social care



Ed Maxfield

Director
Championing Social Care

Pop ‘attitudes to social care’ or ‘people’s experience of care’ into your favourite search engine and the results can make grim reading. Offering far fewer smiles than a Richard Osman novel.

There’s the Nuffield Trust survey showing negative numbers that would make a politician blanche. There’s some decade-old research from Scope and from SCIE that highlight inadequate funding and lack of choice in care services. These themes run through numerous news stories and calls to action from campaign groups. On the other side of the scales, Anchor has published some post-Covid research that showed some movement in public attitudes. But the balance is clear and Richard Osman’s character Joyce, and her fellow Cooper’s Chase Murder Club members, would have a fun time assembling the list of likely suspects if they tried to explain why.

We all know that accessing care – at any age – can be a disruptive and disorienting experience. Many people have faced battles with funders, local authorities and the NHS to get care support that meets their needs. Outcomes for disabled people and care leavers – although improving in some areas - do still run behind the rest of the population in many fields. Recruitment and retention of staff is a problem across the sector.

We also all know that an aging UK population has more and more people living with chronic conditions and in greater need of care. The impact of that growth in demand is not helped by governments talking for years about the urgent need to ‘fix social care’ without ever quite getting around to it.

So far, so gloomy. It’s time for a plot twist.

“Pop ‘people’s experience of care’ into your favourite search engine and the results can make grim reading.”

The care sector is bursting with innovation and entrepreneurship. Adult care alone employs more people than the NHS in a workforce that is flexible, diverse, increasingly skilled and mostly female. The Skills for Care survey shows that turnover rates are nudging downwards and employment numbers continue to grow. The sector is also values-driven and focused on quality: it genuinely cares.

No one downplays or overlooks the challenges faced by the sector or those accessing care. But there is a growing need to change the narrative. The sector must do that for itself and here at Championing Social Care we are aiming to do just that. Hosted by the Caretech Foundation, the Championing Social Care team currently runs four key programmes that aim to make a positive difference for the sector. Let’s look at each of them in turn:

As you read this, the organisers are recovering from staging the annual Care Sector Fundraising Ball. Last year, the Ball raised over £400,000 for the beneficiary charities and in 2023 the event raised even more – meaning that it has raised over £1.1 million for charities working in the sector since its inception. The Ball is an outstanding evening’s entertainment that brings together people from across the sector, and beyond, to celebrate what we achieve. At its core, though, is that ability to raise substantial funds for the beneficiary charities. Charities that each show the immense social value that the sector creates. The Alzheimer’s society is a leading provider of support for those living with dementia and of research into the disease and its treatment. The Care Workers’ Charity supports those working in care when they need extra help, creating extra resilience in our workforce and unlocking future potential.

Our second major fundraising effort in the calendar is our Christmas Lunch. Plans are well under way for the lunch to be held at the RAC Club in London. This is a relaxed event that aims to celebrate a year of achievement for Championing Social Care and the wider sector. As well as, of course, raising funds for charitable organisations working, once again, in the social care space.

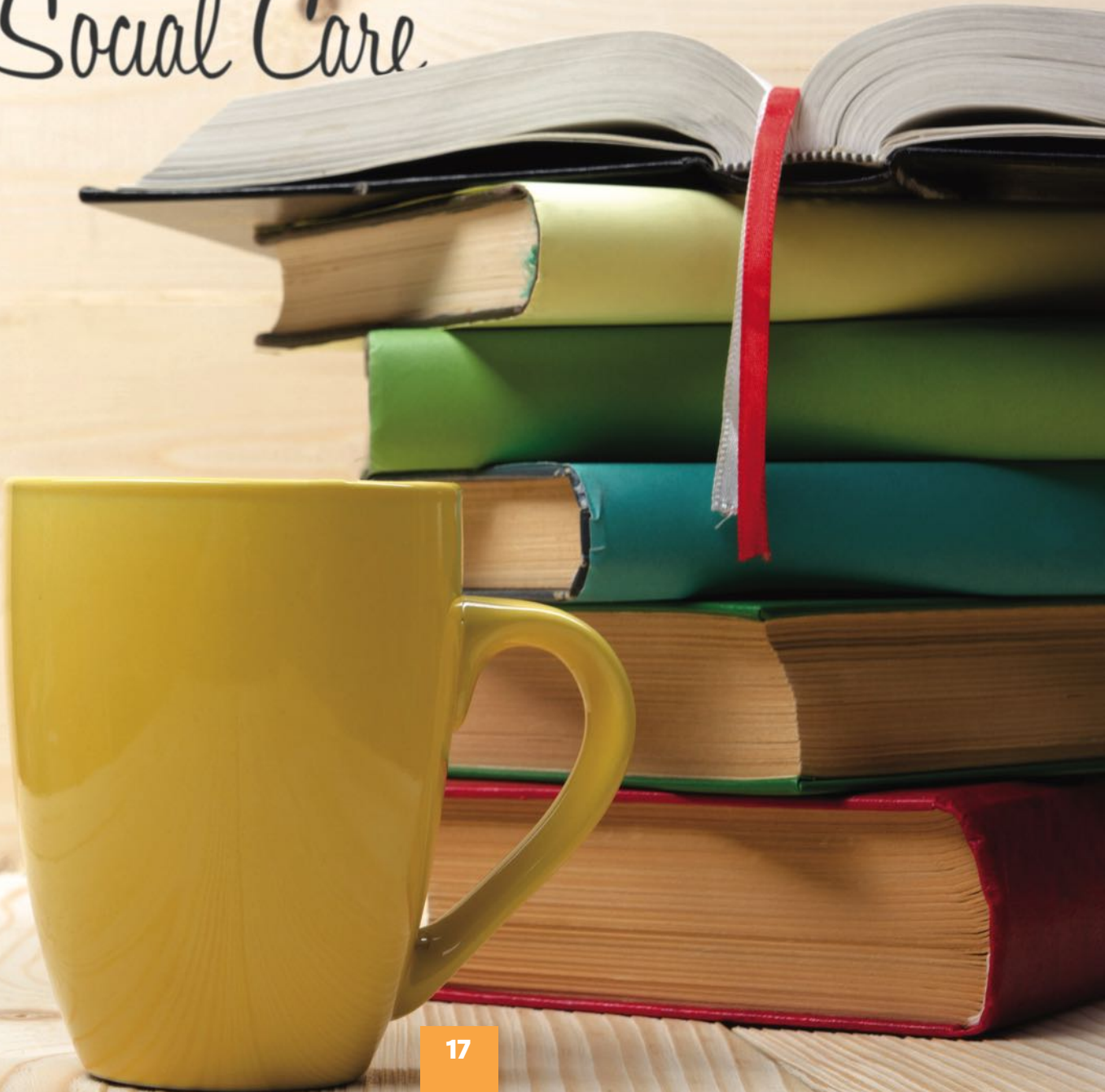
April 2024 will see the return of Care Sector’s Got Talent. Last year’s show-case was watched live online by almost 1,800 people (with nearly 3,000 views now clocked up in total). Eight super-talented care workers battled it out in a live event held at Derby Arena. The winners have had the chance to reprise their performance at a number of high-profile events since the finals in the spring. The team is determined to make the 2024 show even bigger and better with more entrants and more viewers enjoying the extraordinary abilities that our sector has on offer.

Last, but not least, we organise Care Home Open Week. The event in 2023 engaged over 5,000 care homes. One hundred and fifty Members of Parliament visited homes in the Week and significant media interest was generated. Just like our other programmes, we are aiming to make the 2024 Week the biggest yet. Once registrations are open we are hoping for a flood of engagement from the sector to ensure every corner of the country, and every aspect of the sector, is featured.

*“It’s time for a plot twist.
The care sector is bursting
with innovation and
entrepreneurship.”*

The Story of Social Care.

Championing Social Care is volunteer-led. By bringing together people who care about the sector and focusing on key programmes, we aim to make their contributions greater than the sum of the parts. Our mission is to spread positive stories about care. We rely on the wider sector to get involved and help us to tell the world about the great work you are doing. The popular image of the sector should be a place where empowered individuals come together to enrich their lives, stimulate their minds and broaden their experiences. If that includes running a weekly Murder Club in their care setting, we’ll be happy to tell the story.



Key insights from Professional Care Workers Week



Karolina Gerlich
CEO
The Care Workers Charity

Wow, what a week! Professional Care Workers Week, (PCWW), recently concluded, uniting care workers, managers, and industry experts to explore the past, present, and future of social care. There were so many inspiring and insightful discussions that it is impossible to cover them all here. I am thrilled to share a snapshot and luckily, they were all recorded so you can watch the full panels HERE.

Connection

Connection emerged as a central theme including:

- **Connections between Care Worker and People Who Draw on Social Care:** Highlighting the significance of strong bonds between care workers and those they support, and representative recruitment strategies that help to foster these.
- **Personal Connection:** Many journeys into social care work start with personal stories involving family or friends in the field.
- **Employee-Employer Connection:** Supportive management, clear career paths, fair compensation, and flexibility enhance the work experience.
- **NHS and Care Sector Connection:** Recognising the interdependence of these sectors, offering opportunities for mutual learning and collaboration.
- **Care Work and Society Connection:** Care work is all around us, touching all our lives.

Panellists stressed caregiving is a vocation. They emphasised value-based recruitment and the fulfilment that can be found by those who choose this career.

Retention before Recruitment: Social Care as a Career

Effective recruitment strategies to address the 165, 000 vacant postsⁱⁱ were a focus throughout the week. These included connecting with local communities, outreach programs, and reaching out to young people, parents, and teachers to showcase various career paths.

Retaining experienced care workers was seen as equally vital. Key considerations included:

- **Improving Working Conditions:** adequate travel time, fixed rotas, and a supportive environment.
- **Training:** Flexible pathways with management tracks and alternatives for people wanting to stay on the frontline.
- **Nurturing Leaders:** Recognising and mentoring future leaders from within the sector.
- **Wellbeing and support:** Applying person-centred care principles within teams to fosters trust, flexibility, and inclusivity.
- **Regular supervision and team meetings:** Listening to care workers and keeping them updated.
- **Professional Registration:** A body that can advocate for the needs of care workers.
- **Recognition and appropriate pay:** Thank-you goes a long way but pay needs to reflect the responsibility of the role.

Recognising the True Worth of Care and Care Worker

Despite social care's substantial economic contributions (a Gross Value Added of £51.5 billion in England alone)ⁱⁱⁱ, it's often perceived as a cost rather than an asset. This is before recognising the immense impact on the lives of people who rely on social care. There was a strong call to understand the interconnected needs of those who provide care and those supported by care workers.

Care work revolves around humanity—addressing basic needs and well-being. It's all around us—in our communities, schools, among our friends, family, and neighbours. At some point in our lives, each one of us may rely on the care and support of a caregiver. When that moment comes, we want those who support us to receive both financial and emotional support and to be in a strong position themselves.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the amazing speakers, especially the frontline care workers who generously shared their time and insights. We encourage you to watch the full discussions and share them with your teams. These conversations provide valuable insights into the sector and the steps we can collectively take to strengthen it.

Watch HEREⁱ and help us spread the word!

ⁱ www.youtube.com/channel/UCbf9007wof8nQbpi8MTQMsQ

ⁱⁱ www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/publications/national-information/The-state-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-in-England.aspx

ⁱⁱⁱ www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Workforce-intelligence/documents/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector/The-state-of-the-adult-social-care-sector-and-workforce-2022.pdf

A register for carers in England: An employer's perspective



Sally Rhodes
Registered Manager
Innovations Wiltshire Ltd

Historically carers have always been considered low skilled. For many years, it has been seen as a job that you can do if you cannot do anything else. Nothing can be further from reality, but unfortunately Care Professionals often see themselves as “just a carer”.

Care Professionals, working both in the community and in residential care, are well trained and have an extensive knowledge of the role they perform. They need to make decisions that have serious repercussions. For example, in one morning they may administer medication in maybe 5, 6 or even 7 different locations. They will be constantly risk assessing situations, knowing that they are likely to be the first to see signs of infection, stroke or other life-threatening conditions in those they are caring for. They are also best placed to identify wellbeing, and signs of depression or anxiety. They need to retain information such as likes, dislikes and preferences, as well as deal with vulnerable people who place trust in the person who is providing care and support. And work under extremely difficult circumstances.

As an employer of those working in the community, I am very much aware of the challenges faced by Care Professionals. They are lone working with very little support from the medical profession. Working on their own in the community, they have to be self-reliant and confident to use their initiative.

Knowing the clients so well means that they can spot the smallest change in circumstances and can literally save a life, by identifying issues very quickly. They support a client's wellbeing and are often a lifeline for those living in isolation, providing a safety net for families who can't be with their vulnerable relatives all of time. They also have the ability to give detailed and accurate information and insight to medical professionals.

“It is so important that carers feel valued and confident to call themselves professional.”

“We need to give school leavers the confidence that it is a viable and respected careers choice.”

So why a Care Register?

Those on the register will have a current DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) certificate. They will have taken the time and initiative to apply to the register. They will be able to showcase their qualifications and achievements. And, if they so wish - and probably most importantly - they will be able to evidence that they are a Care Professional by being on the register.

It is so important that carers feel valued and confident to call themselves professional. Over recent years, recruitment has been at an all-time low. We need to encourage school leavers to join the sector and give them the confidence that it is a viable and respected careers choice.

The role is so rewarding and, yes it can be tough, but you make a real difference to a person's day. I asked one of our clients what is the biggest benefit of seeing a Care Professional every day. They told me that it is their only opportunity to talk out loud and be listened to on many days. Amongst everything else, a Care Professional just being present and interested may mean the world to a lonely person.

I feel the register is the first step to rebuilding the Care Sector in England and encouraging people to consider Care as a career. The register is a good news story for Care and can only be a positive step to reinvigorate the sector.

I support the Voluntary Care Professional Register. I encourage all Carers to sign up on the website - vcpr.co.uk

www.vcpr.co.uk



Collectively caring for unpaid carers



Kaddy Thomas

Founder and CEO
Elijah's Hope CIC and Carers Collective

There are an estimated 10.6 million unpaid carers in the UK, which translates to one in five adults. One in seven of them is juggling care with paid employment.

The care they provide contributes a staggering £445 million to the economy every day. That's £162 billion per year!

But the UK's unpaid carers are also some of the most stressed and burnt out in the world. Many face a daily struggle with their own emotional, physical, and mental health.

So, we have to ask the question, who's caring for the carers?

My experience as an unpaid carer

The reason this topic is so close to my heart is because I'm an unpaid carer. People often assume that I became a parent-carer when my son Elijah was born in 2006. Like me, he has Apert Syndrome, a rare genetic condition that causes bones in the skull, hands, and feet to fuse.

In fact, because I have Apert Syndrome, I wasn't fazed by Elijah's diagnosis, as I knew that it hadn't held me back.

Unfortunately, things changed in 2007. At 18 months old, Elijah developed a post-surgical infection. This caused a catastrophic brain injury and changed our lives forever.

Back-to-back medical appointments, long hospital stays, rehab, and meetings filled our days. Elijah needed around-the-clock care. I needed to grieve the life we had lost.

“The Carers Collective offers an online six-week course for unpaid carers.”

The early years were a baptism of fire. You have to learn how to navigate a strange new world and speak a new clinical language!

I spent 2011 to 2015 campaigning for Elijah to have an Integrated Personalised Care Budget. The CCG signed it off in April 2015. Elijah was in hospital at the time after a long period of illness, during which he had a tracheostomy. The budget gave me much greater control over the services we use. I could also train and recruit a care team centred around Elijah and his needs.

As fantastic as this development was, I'd never managed a large care budget and team before. Indeed, I became a care manager overnight but with no training or support.

Within two years, I hit a crisis point. I was emotional, overwhelmed, reactive, and struggling with when to be mum, and when to be a manager. With carers in and out of my and Elijah's home 24 hours a day, I felt I always had to be in manager mode.

It was around this time that I had the opportunity to work with a coach. She understood the demands I was facing as an unpaid carer. Working with her was life changing. I learned how to set boundaries, advocate for Elijah, and manage a team. My confidence and resilience skyrocketed.

In 2020, as the pandemic began to unfold, I experienced the many stresses of keeping Elijah safe and well. I realised that I was far more equipped to cope than many carers because of the coaching I'd had.

This was when I decided to launch The Carers Collective.

How we support unpaid carers through The Carers Collective

The Carers Collective was born out of a passion to support other unpaid carers. These are people who have to facilitate, communicate, negotiate, and firefight every day. Our mission is to be the first port of call if they are struggling with their mental health and well-being.

Working with a qualified therapist, The Carers Collective offers an online six-week course for unpaid carers. Through this course, they learn vital coping and management skills. We also signpost resources and each course intake becomes a supportive group of friends.

www.carers-collective.co.uk

At the moment, we're connecting with employers who have people in their workforce who are juggling care responsibilities with their job. If you have carers in your workplace who you think would benefit from a six-week Resilience and Wellbeing programme, I'd love to connect with you on LinkedIn at: [linkedin.com/in/ehccarerscollective/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ehccarerscollective/)

“The Carers Collective was born out of a passion to support other unpaid carers.”



The 'Hospital at Home' Model: Local factors, staffing and equality assessment



NHS Confederation

Dr Layla McCay
Director of Policy
NHS Confederation

Providing greater choice to patients and empowering them in managing their own health conditions, as well as providing independence and flexibility away from traditional hospital environments, have been long held ambitions for the NHS and for patients, who want a greater say in their care.

Whilst there has been much work to enable such a shift, this has often been slow and somewhat patchy. However, the onset of the pandemic catalysed a shift away from in-hospital care, including a greater focus on virtual wards – where patients remain at home but have their condition monitored remotely.

Virtual wards, or 'hospital at home', uses the systems and staffing of a hospital ward while enabling the patient to get the care they need where they live safely and conveniently, rather than being in hospital. This way of delivering care can free up more capacity in hospitals by avoiding hospital admissions, discharging people back into the community, and reducing clinical time while making sure people get the care they need. With clinical workforce pressures as they are, virtual wards are an ambitious and necessary measure, which on the face of it are proving successful and popular with patients. NHS England has recently hit its target of rolling out 10,000 virtual 'beds'.

However, as is often the case with new, innovative measures implemented at pace, the evaluation of how they are successfully supporting people into early discharge or avoiding hospital admission compared to traditional hospital care is ongoing. While data is being collected, we are yet to fully establish what effect hospital at home programmes are having on productivity, health outcomes or whether these wards are relieving pressure on systems. So, it is important we do not get ahead of ourselves and take a cautious approach, while looking in detail at how we can utilise virtual wards to the best effect, via the best practice established from where they have been rolled out successfully.

Virtual wards may also be a tool to improve healthcare access for population groups that find it challenging to engage with 'traditional' healthcare routes – but there is a risk that they could reinforce existing inequalities in provision as the virtual wards concept favours patients who are more digitally literate. So, there will be a need for robust evaluation through an equity lens, as well community services to be flexible and accommodating the need of local populations in new ways of working to ensure exacerbation of existing inequalities does not occur.

While they can vary and be flexible in the way they operate, a good working example of community led virtual wards is the Wandsworth and Merton hospital at home team at Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLCH). They set up one of the first community trust-led virtual wards in the country, providing hospital-level, holistic support for serious conditions, in patients' homes. The CLCH modelling estimates that the initiative has saved approximately 3,478 hospital bed days, helping to reduce urgent and emergency care capacity pressures in the local system by improving patient discharge rates or avoiding admission altogether.

Central to the implementation of virtual wards is the utilisation of digital solutions, but we need the appropriate support of both technology and staff, which means freeing up existing staff to take on the workload, increasing the efficiency of the service and reducing costs. The success of hospital at home relies on supporting community staff to make it happen, but this will mean an increase to the caseload of an already overstretched community workforce. So, it is important to remember that virtual wards aim to reduce pressure on the health and care system as a whole and we must avoid simply transferring pressure from acute care to the community. We need a direct focus on filling the gaps in the community workforce, specifically aligning them with the health and care needs of local populations so we can cover all these bases and ensure that staff have space in their workloads to deliver patient focussed rollout.

“The onset of the pandemic catalysed a shift away from in-hospital care - to a greater focus on virtual wards.”

Joining up end of life care



Jackie Tritton
Chief Clinical Officer
Rennie Grove Peace Hospice Care

Rennie Grove Peace Hospice Care a hospice care provider serving patients in Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Here she talks about the importance of social care in ensuring a holistic, person-centred approach to care at the end of life.

Whatever their role or background, it is widely acknowledged by staff in both the health and social care sectors that a holistic, person-centred approach is the best way to ensure

a good death for each person who reaches the end of their life.

At Rennie Grove Peace Hospice Care this is our overarching ethos and our aim for all patients. Whether we care for them on our Inpatient Unit, in a private home or in a care home setting.

The care provided by hospice organisations has advanced considerably in recent decades and domiciliary care is now part of the range of services that we, as a local hospice charity, provide. Our Rapid Personalised Care Service (RPCS) is a fully funded service that sees our staff provide domiciliary care for patients who have been accepted for continuing healthcare (CHC) funding¹ in the last 12 weeks of life.

The benefit of this is the integration it allows between health and social care. If a patient is being cared for in their home by both our hospice at home and RPCS teams, there is an opportunity for one team to alert the other to changes in a patient's needs or circumstances. This ensures joined up care that puts the patient at the centre of everything and allows them to receive both the health and social care that they need, in the comfort of their own home, if that is their wish.

For some patients who are reaching the end of life, home is their own private home, and for other patients it is a residential care home. Our hospice services are available to patients who reside in a care home, when needed. In this case, the care we provide would aim to complement the care provided by the home's own team

of professionals. As experts in end-of-life care, our role may be to advise the home's own staff, who will then deliver the care needed, to ensure consistency and familiarity to the resident.

As well as working with specific patients in care home settings, we have a long history of working with partner organisations, including residential care homes, to share knowledge and develop the skills of their own workforce.

By upskilling colleagues in care home settings, whether that's through education or even secondments

or placements within our Inpatient Unit, we can support them in developing their palliative care skills. Our specialist educators deliver courses to care home managers and staff in their own setting that can be tailored to the requirements of the team and their patients. Content may include syringe pump training, end-of-life care, symptom management and palliative dementia care. This enables social care colleagues to care for more patients in their own setting, reducing the needs for reliance on in-patient care, either in an acute hospital or a hospice.

“The benefit of this is the integration it allows between health and social care.”

By supporting social care staff in developing their practice for the benefit of countless residents in their care, we are also able to shape and influence the end of life experience of more patients than we could reach through our own services.

¹ NHS continuing healthcare funding allows people who have long-term complex health needs to qualify for free social care arranged and funded solely by the NHS.

To find out more about the work of the education team, visit renniegrovepeace.org or email education@renniegrovepeace.org

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Lisa Grainger
Clinical Lead
Right at Home UK

Perhaps the most common misconception about working in care is that it's low-skilled or lacks career progression. This is unequivocally false.

Yet, it's hardly surprising that this stereotype persists when carers are still deemed as "unskilled" workers and research shows care workers suffer a 20% pay shortfall in comparison to those working in other sectors with similar skill levels.

In the social care sector, we know better than anyone that carers provide an invaluable lifeline to vulnerable individuals. Our CareGivers' dedication and compassion for their work is vital to assist those who cannot fully care for themselves. It's also an integral component of our wider healthcare system, helping Clients remain at home for longer, reducing potential hospital admissions and alleviating pressure on the NHS.

Our CareGivers are also motivated for more. More opportunities for skills training, more progression and choice for their future careers and the chance to challenge perceptions about what care work is, and what it can be.

As one of the UK's largest homecare providers, we feel strongly we have a responsibility to help fulfil CareGivers' ambitions by facilitating clinical skills training, and in doing so, help upskill our current social care workforce.

Currently, national social care nursing and clinical training offerings remain underdeveloped and lacking in consistency and evidence. The lasting impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, combined with the cost-of-living crisis have placed increased pressure on our health service, therefore providers like Right at Home can, and should, help to diversify routes for clinical care training for Carers.

"It's hardly surprising that this stereotype persists when carers are still deemed as unskilled."

I'm delighted to have joined Right at Home at what is an exciting time for the business. In my role as designated Clinical Lead, I'm working on the delivery of our network's Clinical Care Project, which will enable CareGivers to deliver personalised clinical care to Clients, such as catheter care, bowel stoma care and Gastrostomy/PEG care confidently, competently and within a defined framework.

With over 30 years of experience in healthcare across different settings including acute, primary and community care, I know far more can be done to deliver cohesive, preventative healthcare. I've worked within many multi-disciplinary care teams across sectors and have experienced first-hand the need for enhanced social and home care, and the huge potential and motivation in our CareGivers to deliver this enhanced level of care

One way we can achieve this is through harnessing the untapped potential within our current social care workforce, providing them with appropriate training, competence, and confidence to deliver enhanced care. District Nursing teams are increasingly stretched and whilst many would love to deliver CareGiver training and competency sign off, they neither have the time nor the resources.

Our CareGivers, who already have strong personal relationships with their Clients, are arguably best placed to carry out delegated healthcare activities. They will know the person well, be aware of Clients' histories, have a personal rapport with them and fundamentally understand what is important to them to deliver consistent person-centred care.

Our Clinical Care Project can contribute significantly to DHSC initiatives to meet individuals' more complex needs within community settings, while also offering a career structure for those wishing to extend their skills and develop their roles within the company.

Already we're seeing positive results from our pilot project. As of September 2023, Right at Home has over 120 CareGivers clinically trained and deemed competent to deliver Urinary Catheter Care and Bowel Stoma Care to Clients. Those same CareGivers will also have completed training in Gastrostomy/PEG care during October 2023.

“National social care nursing and clinical training offerings remain underdeveloped.”

By the end of the year, we will have launched the training to the whole Right at Home network. Together, we're striving to deliver the highest quality Delegated Activity training with a full competency sign off process, to our homecare Franchise Network. This will enable our Clients to receive continuously high levels of care in their own homes, together with a clear clinical care pathway for those CareGivers who wish to take it and enhance their career.



We deserve better

Promoting equality of healthcare services for BAME communities



Tracey Bignall
Senior Policy and Practice Officer
Race Equality Foundation

Healthcare equality is a fundamental principle of any just and inclusive society. In the UK, however, significant disparities persist in access to healthcare services for people from ethnic minorities with learning disabilities and autism.

From our recent research with the NHS Race and Health Observatory, people with a learning disability from Black, South Asian (Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage) and minority ethnic backgrounds face shorter life expectancy as a result of poorer healthcare access, experience and outcomes.

The report 'We deserve better: Ethnic minorities with a learning disability and access to healthcare', is a comprehensive five-part review containing data, personal interviews and analyses undertaken by the University of Central Lancashire, in collaboration with the NHS Race and Health Observatory, supported by NHS England, with Manchester Metropolitan University, Learning Disability England, and the Race Equality Foundation. The review examined two decades of research into discriminatory barriers preventing equitable healthcare treatment.

We found that people with a learning disability die at a younger age than people without a learning disability, and they have more health problems. And this is even worse for people with a learning disability who are from ethnic minority backgrounds. They die even younger than white people with a learning disability, and they have more problems with their care.

“The We Deserve Better report highlights the stark disparities faced by people from ethnic minorities with learning disabilities and autism.”

The We Deserve Better report, taken together with several other studies, highlights the stark disparities faced by people from ethnic minorities with learning disabilities and autism in accessing healthcare services. Also, a report by Mencap, found that individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds often encounter language barriers, cultural insensitivity, and a lack of understanding from healthcare providers. These issues can lead to misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment, and delayed care.

We've also seen a lack of representation of people from ethnic minorities in clinical trials and research studies, leading to limited knowledge about the unique healthcare needs of this population. This knowledge gap hampers the development of culturally sensitive interventions and equitable healthcare policies.

Social care professionals can play a crucial role in bridging the gap and ensuring proper access to healthcare services for individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds with learning disabilities and autism. They are vital champions in ensuring equitable access to healthcare services. They can aid support in three key ways - advocacy, education, and guidance.

Within our complex healthcare system, social care workers can be key advocates for ethnic minorities with learning disabilities and autism to navigate the system. They can ensure that the voices of these individuals are not lost in busy healthcare settings. Social care professionals can also use their expertise and dedication to help support any unique concerns of their clients.

Social care professionals are also educators, imparting vital knowledge to healthcare providers that can extend beyond conventional medical training; they can also have the cultural competence and the nuanced requirements of individuals with learning disabilities and autism from diverse backgrounds, which can enlighten healthcare workforce and pave the way for informed, culturally sensitive, and responsive patient care.

Within the complexity of our healthcare system, social care professionals can be real pillars of support and guidance. They offer not only their expertise but also empathetic assistance to individuals and their families. Navigating some of the bureaucracy of healthcare systems can be daunting, but social care professionals can guide and provide reassurance through healthcare services.

Most significantly, the ability of social care professionals to provide emotional support and guidance to individuals and their families, helping them navigate the complex healthcare system is crucial.

“Social care professionals are also educators, imparting vital knowledge to healthcare providers.”

From our research, we believe that the following recommendations would help promote equity of access:

1. Government Initiatives:

The government should implement policies and initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion in healthcare, including funding for research on healthcare disparities among ethnic minorities with learning disabilities and autism.

2. Cultural Competence Training:

Healthcare professionals should receive mandatory training on cultural competence to improve communication and understanding with patients from diverse backgrounds.

3. Community Engagement:

Healthcare organisations should engage with ethnic minority communities to better understand their needs and preferences, facilitating the development of tailored healthcare services.

4. Research and Data Collection:

More research is needed to understand the unique healthcare needs of ethnic minorities with learning disabilities and autism. Data collection should include ethnicity and disability status to identify disparities accurately.

5. Awareness Campaigns:

Wider society should be engaged through public awareness campaigns to promote acceptance and understanding of individuals with learning disabilities and autism from all ethnic backgrounds.

Addressing healthcare disparities among ethnic minorities with learning disabilities and autism in the UK is essential for achieving equity in healthcare services. Research has shown that barriers related to language, culture, and healthcare practices continue to hinder proper access to services, leading to adverse outcomes. Social care professionals play a pivotal role in advocating for their clients and bridging the gap between communities and healthcare providers. To promote equity of access, the government, healthcare sector, and wider society must work collaboratively to break down barriers, foster cultural competence, and ensure that every individual receives the healthcare they deserve, regardless of their ethnic background or disability.

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Tackling winter challenges through remote monitoring



Nick Weston
Chief Commercial Officer
Lilli

The health and care system in the UK is overwhelmed. With growing demand from an ageing population, constrained budgets, workforce recruitment and retention difficulties, and backlogs for treatment, there is a growing gap between the demand and delivery of services. Winter brings another level of pressure to the system driven by seasonal illness and low temperatures – further impacting the system’s ability to deliver care.

The cold weather presents a very real challenge for many, with 13 million households keeping their heating switched off during some of the coldest months last year according to Which. With the cost-of-living crisis continuing to bite, this is the harsh reality many people will be faced with as temperatures drop over the coming months, putting those who are already vulnerable at higher risk and adding increased pressure on the system.

Our data shows that some homes reached as low as five degrees last winter - with more than 60 percent of people monitored by Lilli at risk of low home temperatures between December 2022 and January 2023. To put this into context, the World Health Organisation recommends a safe indoor temperature for the general population of 18 degrees. The harm these plummeting temperatures could cause to an elderly person is stark; low body temperatures among seniors can lead to a cascade of other health risks such as raised blood pressure, lower resistance to respiratory infections, sleep disruption, depression, anxiety and isolation.

“Our Winter Care Fund will allow access to matched funding to procure and roll out remote monitoring technology.”

“Our successful pilots have proved that remote technology has the potential to save millions of pounds.”

The government has stepped in by announcing multiple packages of support which, although welcome, will only scratch the surface. This is why at Lilli we’re launching our Winter Care Fund. This will allow access to up to £1,000,000 of matched funding in order to procure and roll out remote monitoring technology to tackle winter and population health challenges before the cold weather starts to really take hold.

By taking this proactive step, local authorities and caregivers can help to support those who need it most. And reduce the risk to life for the most vulnerable in society throughout the upcoming winter season.

Lilli’s Winter Care fund will match any organisation who wishes to tackle challenges within the care system using a proactive, digital solution. By adopting remote monitoring technology, local authorities and adult social service teams can be on the front foot and spot patterns of behaviour - or conditions like low temperatures - which suggest people may be struggling without carers being present. They can then intervene before health starts to decline and focus constrained resources where they are most needed.

In the short term, we can make a real difference in supporting the most vulnerable during the coldest months of the year and ensuring their homes stay heated. But longer term, implementing remote monitoring technology now will be a catalyst for transforming the social care eco-system, piece by piece.

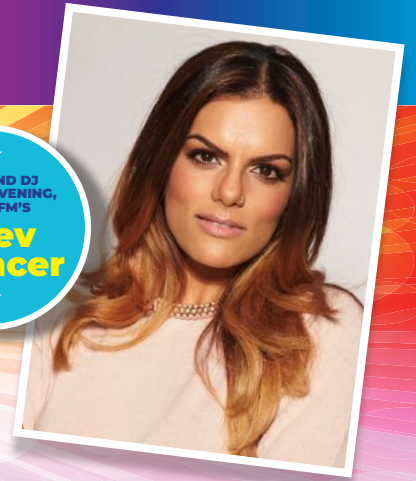
The benefits will enable a ripple effect into the wider health system delivering better outcomes for the entire population. Our successful pilots in Reading, Nottingham and North Tyneside have proved that remote technology amplifies caregiver hours, accelerates hospital discharge rates and has the potential to save millions of pounds. This allows funds to be redeployed into areas where they are really needed. We need to break the cycle and put the right digital foundations in place now to prevent further harm and overhaul our gridlocked healthcare system. Only by adopting smart technology will we see real positive change.



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A Pearl of wisdom in the LD nursing community



In the vast healthcare landscape, certain individuals rise above the rest, making invaluable contributions to the communities they serve. Paula Pearl, boasting over 30 years of experience as a Learning Disability (LD) nurse, is undeniably one of them.

Celebrated by the Mid & South Essex NHS Trust, Paula's unwavering service and dedication to the LD community make her an emblem of excellence.

After completing her training in the Northeast, Paula's path led her to South Essex. Starting in residential services for children with LD, she dedicated most of her career to community LD nursing. But it was in 2019, when she ventured into acute liaison nursing, that her commitment shone even brighter.

Going beyond her duties to advocate for patients, one emotional scenario saw Paula supporting a terminally ill individual becoming a pillar of emotional support, ensuring safety and comfort during the most challenging times, and being present until extended support arrived.

In another instance, she showcased her commitment by assisting in streamlining a crucial medical procedure for an individual with special requirements. A tailored approach was designed, considering the patient's comfort, and scheduling the procedure during optimal hours to ensure a serene and reassuring atmosphere.

Paula's zeal doesn't end with patient care. She's passionate about empowering hospital staff to cater seamlessly to individuals with LD. Through regular training sessions, she's been pivotal in shaping the skills and sensitivities of countless professionals. Moreover, Paula champions the recruitment and mentorship of LD advocates across hospital wards and departments, ensuring a holistic approach to care.



Paula Pearl
Mid & South East
Essex NHS Trust

Paula's essence of care extends beyond medical intervention. It's deeply rooted in authentic human connection. When facing the harrowing news of a dire prognosis, Paula was there, not just as a nurse but as a pillar of strength for a patient. From ensuring continuity in radiotherapy for patients to facilitating ultrasounds for those with intricate needs, Paula's patient-first mindset is evident in every action.

Her enthusiasm for empowering hospital staff to meet the needs of people with LD is palpable. Through training and championing LD roles across hospital wards and departments, she ensures that her impeccable standards become the norm, not the exception.

Aiding this she has developed a robust local network of patients, health and social care colleagues, and care providers enables her to constantly engage the LD community, tapping into their insights to enhance services continually.

Not content with just enhancing the hospital experience, Paula also takes proactive steps to ensure people with LD don't face extended admissions. Her ward visits focus on advocacy, ensuring that individuals with learning disabilities receive timely and efficient care, thus reducing their stay in potentially overwhelming environments.

For many, especially those with LD, hospital visits are a source of anxiety. Paula, with her pioneering approach, transforms this narrative. Whether it's by allowing individuals to familiarise themselves with hospital uniforms and equipment or using VR headsets for immersive experiences, Paula works tirelessly to demystify hospitals. Such initiatives not only make annual healthcare checks less intimidating but also improve early health issue detections.

Feedback remains central to Paula's approach. Easy-to-read satisfaction surveys are a testament to her commitment to inclusive care. By valuing conversation and seeking continuous feedback, Paula ensures that healthcare is an accessible and evolving journey.

Paula's foot into LD nursing came serendipitously. At 16, a social care course led her to an LD care service that unveiled her life's purpose. Since that pivotal moment, her dedication has remained steadfast, proving that sometimes, destiny has a way of guiding us.

Being Highly Commended in The Learning Disability Nurse Award is recognition of the not just the proactive way she ensures the hospital experience has been positive but a reflection of the myriad lives touched by Paula's unwavering service.

“Paula is passionate about empowering hospital staff to cater seamlessly to individuals with LD.”

“Paula works tirelessly to demystify hospitals and make annual healthcare checks less intimidating.”



Paula's 'Ask, Listen, Do' group meeting (left) and the team's promotion stand in the hospital with an LD ambassador, who supported the team on the day (right)

Paula Pearl (left) with team member

Banking on care



Back in the day, as a teenager, I bet I was one of very many whose parents pushed the idea of joining a bank after school exams. I reckon they did this because it was seen as respectable, secure, well paid and doubtless a job for life. And for the longest time, they'd have been right, of course. But no longer, perhaps because very little feels secure today, and banks have let us down.



Vicky Williams
Bedspace

"It is, but I absolutely love it! I only started here in March 2022 but looking back, I was always just a number at Santander. I feel I've found my calling - a passion for helping people now. There are so many mental health issues out there right now that I went on a Counselling Skills course in order to help me connect better with these young people. It's so important and it definitely helps. Some of their stories are heartbreaking."

Perhaps what also helps is that Vicky wryly admits to having been a "bit of a menace" herself when young - feeling misunderstood like so many of Bedspace's clients. Throughout our chat, she exudes an innate understanding and empathy, clearly caring deeply for the people she supports. And this hasn't gone unnoticed given how, in so short a time, her work and attitude has been officially praised by both the Police and Social Services:

"Yes, you just think you're doing your job, of course. It's mad! I've been told I'm very proactive...like a dog with a bone! My manager wants me to become Team Leader but when I doubt myself that I haven't done the job long enough as a Support Worker, I'm told it's not how long someone has done it for, but who you are as a person... how you are."

This has the ring of familiarity to me, frankly. How so many people I've spoken with have discovered the depth of their own substance, working in care. And why might that be?

Vicky is quick to reply:

"It's all about job satisfaction at the end of the day. If you're someone who likes to help others, make a difference, and are a caring person, then it's truly the perfect job. I would never have naturally gone into it. And yet, in such a short time, to have had so much praise from social workers for how I support these young people is more than enough reward!"

And if the bank came knocking with a pay rise and job for life?

Vicky's laughter is infectious:

"At Bedspace, we're literally changing lives and futures! I'd never go back now - definitely not."

Vicky is no longer just a number, she's a Number One for those in her care.

"Working 16 years for Santander, the arrival of Covid-19 swept aside all notions of security."

Vicky Williams, finalist in The Housing With Care Awards, knows this only too well. Working 16 years for Santander, latterly on the Business Banking team, the arrival of Covid-19 swept aside all notions of security and with no warning, she was made redundant. So, all that focus, direction and commitment crumbled up?

Not a bit of it:

"The day after I left Santander, I began helping a friend who had MS, as her PA. She was bed bound with both a catheter and colostomy bag so I had to learn everything on the job. I cared for her for about a year and it was so much more rewarding as a job than the bank!"



From there Vicky joined Bedspace - a highly respected organisation providing housing and support services to vulnerable people including care leavers, refugees and homeless families - at their Liverpool branch, where she works in a house with three young 16 - 18 year olds.

I can't help but push how incredibly different a world this must be from working in the bank...



Debra Mehta

Smiling matters for Lisa and April



Lisa Noble and April Howie are Manager and Deputy Manager at Springbank Care Home, (part of Spellman Care), in Silsden, West Yorkshire. Recently, Lisa and April have put together their own initiative to improve the oral health of their residents.



Lisa Noble (far left) & **April Howie** (far right) Springbank Care Home (part of Spellman Care)

assistance to the people we care for. The first stumbling we encountered was that the training isn't out there. Initially, we approached Skills for Care, who pointed us in the direction of Webinar's and online training. We also approached private dentists for in-house training, and finally, the Community Dental service who are in the process of designing an in house-training session. At Springbank, we felt we needed to act now, hence the creation of Smiling Matters."

Smiling Matters introduced 'Oral Hygiene Champions' to the home, whose responsibility it is to make other carers, residents, and family members aware of the importance of Oral Hygiene. To ensure that the whole team is working towards improving residents' oral health, all staff members were offered the opportunity to be an 'Oral Hygiene Champion' including members of the admin team, whose role it is to pass their knowledge on to new starters.

On Wednesday 4th October, Lisa and April held a 'Smiling Matters' event to raise awareness of good oral hygiene. The event was combined with a MacMillan Coffee Morning, to bring an aspect of fun to the learning. Staff members from all communities in the home visited the event, to learn more about Oral Health and the resources available to them to help improve residents' oral wellbeing.

The home has improved how they record information in their Oral Care Plan, to further assist carers in continually monitoring residents' oral health. The care plan is accessed via mobile-phone-like devices, to allow carers to immediately update the plan with the most recent and detailed information. Within the plan, a photo chart shows examples of teeth in different conditions, with a scale next to the photos. This allows staff to accurately describe the condition of a resident's teeth based on examples.

"The Smiling Matters initiative aims to raise awareness of good oral hygiene amongst residents, family members and staff."

The Smiling Matters initiative aims to raise awareness of good oral hygiene amongst residents, family members and staff at the home. The initiative was introduced due to the current crisis in the NHS. According to the Telegraph and Argus (T&A), only three dentist surgeries in the whole Bradford District are currently accepting new NHS patients (5.5%). The T&A also went on to say that *"more than half of older adults who live in care homes have tooth decay, compared to 40% of over 75s who do not live in care homes"*. Care home residents do not currently receive any financial support for routine dental check-ups, with support only becoming available from the emergency dentist once a problem arises. Smiling Matters aims to provide a small relief to residents who cannot afford a private dentist, by going above and beyond to look after their teeth, reducing the number of emergency dentist visits required.

Lisa Noble, Home Manager said... *"The Care Quality Commission expects registered managers to take account of nationally recognised guidance, including guidance from NICE.*

Evidence about how you support residents to maintain good oral health will help you demonstrate that your service is both effective and responsive.

So, how do we at Springbank achieve this? Communication and Training are the key elements for care staff. As Managers, it is our duty to source that Training to enable colleagues to offer effective



Leading change in profound and multiple learning disabilities



The world of profound and multiple learning disabilities care is not for the faint of heart. It demands a unique blend of dedication, compassion, and innovation. Every year, the Profound & Multiple Learning Disabilities Award sheds light on those individuals who rise to this challenging task, and this year, Stacey Sheldon of Progress Care stood out as a beacon of excellence.



Stacey Sheldon
Progress Care

“Driven by personal experiences, Stacey’s passion for healthcare was ignited early on.”

What sets Stacey apart further are her visionary strides in patient care. Working firmly to her core values of care, trust, and progress Stacey, and the impressive in-house team of therapists, have taken their passion advocacy and made dreams come true. A child with severe epilepsy recently achieved their dream of visiting Disneyland Paris. For many care providers this would have been a trip resigned to imagination, but for Stacey it was a challenge that required a different viewpoint, one that successfully succeeded in a positive and fulfilling trip to Disneyland, and a dream come true.

Driven by personal experiences that saw her father’s post-stroke care needs, Stacey’s passion for healthcare was ignited early on. This personal touch has been her guiding star, steering her from childcare to adult care, and eventually, into the realm of learning disabilities. The inspiration she drew from an experience caring for a young boy with autism underscores her heartfelt approach to care.

Being at the helm of a team is no easy feat, but Stacey’s leadership is characterised by her proactive approach. She challenges the status quo, thinking outside the box to achieve desired outcomes for those under her care. This willingness to push boundaries and advocate for her patients makes her a true trailblazer in the field. Her continual thirst for knowledge is evident in her aspirations, now studying for a Master’s Degree in Child Psychology. She plans to put this to good use in further enriching Progress Children’s Services, and the lives of those they care for and support.

“A willingness to push boundaries and advocate, makes her a true trailblazer in the field.”

It’s clear that Stacey is not just content with maintaining the status quo. She’s on a mission to redefine it. Being commended in the Profound & Multiple Learning Disabilities Award not only celebrates her past and present achievements but also anticipates the brighter future she’s carving out in learning disabilities care.

With leadership from professionals like Stacey who inspire hope, innovation, and change in the healthcare landscape we can look forward to a very bright future indeed.

“Through Stacey’s nurturing approach, families feel integral members of a larger caregiving family.”

Navigating her way up from a Support Worker to a Registered Manager of a 9-bed complex health needs home, Stacey’s journey exemplifies passion and commitment. The leap from Team Leader to Manager was significant, yet she embraced the responsibility with an unwavering spirit. The challenges of 2022 tested many, but Stacey remained steadfast, particularly in those heart-wrenching moments when she supported two children in their final hours.

“When I saw the role advertised, I knew I had to step-up and take it.” Says Stacey. Keen to continue to advocate for those she cares for. Of equal importance was her goal of embedding and passing-on everything she has learnt to her team members. This was critically important when making the decision to apply for the position, and an opportunity she thought she would lose if she didn’t.

The rest as they say is history as Stacey is in position as a Registered Manager. The beauty of her leadership lies not just in her ability to provide care, but in her knack for forging genuine connections. A poignant testament to this was her commitment to a young patient during his last moments, symbolised by holding his hand until his parents arrived.

Through Stacey’s nurturing approach, families feel not just as clients, but as integral members of a larger caregiving family. Her innovative perspective, referring to a patient’s care home bedroom as “his dorm room,” adds a touch of regularity and warmth to the often cold and clinical world of healthcare.

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WHAT KEEPS ME



AWAKE AT NIGHT



Amanda Cunningham
Chief Executive Officer
Horizon Care & Education

There are so many young people still missing from the care system since COVID-19 who are not receiving the necessary support from multidisciplinary teams, including psychologists, therapists, and social care workers to address the diverse needs of young people across England.

The sector must provide additional training and support to ensure that young people receive appropriate levels of therapeutic care, including solo placements and step-down support from specialist CAMHS.

There is also a significant number of young people currently out of education and the sector needs to increase the availability of alternative learning provision. Our HEAL (Horizon Education Alternative Learning) provision supports young people between the ages of 5-19 who have lost their love of learning and help them transition back into education, workplaces, or training.

Funding restrictions can play a significant role in shaping the effectiveness of our sector, especially during the current economic downturn and rising cost of living. Despite this, Horizon remains committed to quality and puts therapeutic practice at the heart of what we do.

It is important to acknowledge that social care workers can experience burnout, and emotional challenges due to the demanding nature of their work and exposure to complex situations. Providing ongoing support, resources, and training ensures their continued resilience and well-being. We provide extensive wrap-around support for our colleagues to ensure their overall health and well-being. We have a fantastic therapeutic team embedded across all our services to support our key workers and a dedicated People Team focused on mental health, employee wellbeing, reward, and recognition. We are also proud to pay our colleagues the real living wage.

“We are looking forward to the new opportunities that the regulation of supported accommodation for 16 and 17-year-olds will bring.”

“Our young people are remarkable, and their achievements are a testament to the dedication of our workforce.”

Better opportunities for career progression, learning, and professional development will not only address the shortage of qualified candidates but also retention challenges within children's services. Our career advancement opportunities and professional development pathways ensure colleagues gain the right skills to achieve their career aspirations. Our Horizon Academy offers a comprehensive induction and training programme which outlines our therapeutic model to help colleagues acquire the necessary skills to support our young people.

We are looking forward to the new opportunities that the regulation of supported accommodation for 16 and 17-year-olds will bring. We believe that regulation will help to drive up standards across the sector and, crucially, support young people to achieve high-quality outcomes as they move towards independence. As one of the largest providers of supported accommodation in England, we have split our portfolio into five registrations, each with dedicated management teams to ensure rigorous oversight. Three of the providers are fully registered and pre-registration inspections have been carried out for the remaining two providers which we expect to be registered imminently.

Over the next three years, we aim to increase the availability of our homes and specialist schools in a variety of localities to address the number of young people still lacking therapeutic care, support, and education. We also hope to open more complex facilities such as assessment units to ensure young people in crisis get alternative support if there is no CAMHS available.

This growth will allow young people to still have close relationships with their loved ones and receive valuable family therapy. Building therapeutic environments that are characterised by warmth, compassion, and connection is essential to supporting young people who have experienced trauma and adversity.

I visit as many young people as possible to share their experiences and see the fantastic progress that they are making. Our young people are truly remarkable, and their achievements are a testament to their dedication and the exceptional quality of our workforce.

I have the pleasure of working alongside extraordinary key workers. They possess a high degree of empathy and compassion, which enables them to connect and understand the individual needs of our young people. Their genuine care for the welfare of others fuels their resilience and enables them to make a real difference to the lives of our young people.

Calling all senior leaders of excellence to social care!

Care Talk is delighted to host the **2024 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
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the workforce development leader award
the quality assurance leader award
the care home leader award
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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 October 2024 at a central London hotel where the category winners will be announced along side winners of the **Social Care Top 30**.

Nominate online at: www.socialcaretop30.co.uk
Closing date for nominations 31st July 2024



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CARE

From Store Manager to Care Worker

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 Liz Jones from Ashridge Court Care Centre, part of Canford Healthcare, who went from store manager to care worker.



Liz Jones

Ashridge Court Care Centre's Care Assistant Liz Jones has reached the final of the Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards in the Rising Star category.

Liz has worked at the Bexhill-based nursing home since 2020, deeply impressing her manager, colleagues and residents as someone with a true passion for care. But what many people don't know is that she spent the previous 25 years in a very different industry – retail!

After leaving school with no fixed career ideas, Liz worked as a cashier in a local supermarket. She later moved to a new flagship Sainsbury's store in South London, where she spent 23 years rising through the ranks to become overall manager in charge of 560 colleagues, six deputies and 12 departmental managers. The store was biggest in the region, turning over £2.2 million per week (£3 million at Christmas) while Liz and her colleagues worked hard to achieve 18 tough key performance indicators.

By 2009 this was all about to change. Liz's husband's multiple sclerosis had progressed to the point where he needed full-time care. Although his needs were complex, Liz was determined to look after him herself and so, armed with some knowledge and plenty of determination, she approached CQC for help.

Thanks to their support, Liz was trained by urology, colorectal, respiratory and physiotherapy specialists, plus the IV access team, on such techniques as deep suction, postural drainage, peg feeds, catheters and IV antibiotics. She then cared for her husband single-handedly for seven years, until the last six months of his life when the couple received nursing care support.

After he died Liz took a year out. "When you care for someone, you lose yourself completely. For so long I was his voice, his arms and legs, so everything I stood for had gone," she says. Liz knew that she didn't want to go back into retail and so found work as a carer at nearby Ashridge. "I love it here and wouldn't want to work anywhere else," she says. "Everyone cares and the manager's door is always open."

She adds: "It feels good to make a difference to someone's life that they couldn't do without me. I love their life stories, too. Residents have led fascinating lives and deserve huge respect." Liz agrees that caring requires particular qualities. "Anyone can sell fruit and veg but not everyone can do what we do. You must be kind and compassionate, putting that person first. Above all, you should really love what you do. Care is never just a job."

Not one to let the grass grow under her feet, Liz is working towards becoming a Senior Carer/Medicine Technician and then intends to train as an Assistant Practitioner. She is also the home's Safe People Handling lead. This responsible role involves managing moving and handling equipment, carrying out risk assessments, confirming that residents have the right equipment and ensuring compliance with health and safety legislation. She is also near to completing the moving and handling train the trainer qualification.

"Liz knew that she didn't want to go back into retail."

"Liz is a great advocate for residents and so clear about what she needs for them," says Home Manager Julie Wills. "She has high standards and brings whole team up to meet these. She also keeps a cool head, even when others start panicking. Basically, Liz cares for everyone – residents and staff alike. She has such a strong vocation. Liz is popular with residents and an incredible support to colleagues, especially junior staff. She really does go above and beyond in everything she does, and is a valued member of the home," adds Clinical Manager Janice Gauld.



Liz Jones with resident at Ashridge Court Care Centre



CO-PRODUCTION COUNTS!

Sharing power in social care partnerships

Nathan Barnard

Operations and Quality Director
Happy Futures Support Specialists



Over the years, health and social care has seen many new ideas come and go. Consequently, many, when they look at co-production, think, oh, just another new fad, but co-production is far from that. The heart and central concept of co-production is working in partnership by sharing power between those who receive support and care, families, significant people, and those who provide support and care.

“We wanted the co-production team to work within our company’s quality framework.”

When co-production is done right, it empowers individuals to have a voice. It transforms care and support users from passive recipients to empowered and engaged people whose views and opinions are equally as important as anyone else. Consequently, such an approach requires a cultural shift, a change in mindset, that takes time but can be achieved through strategic planning and implementation, all of which should be done through co-production.

We at Happy Futures Support Specialists commenced this journey about a year ago, and it has been exciting to see the changes. Initially, we developed a shadow quality group to which all the individuals we support were invited. We provided easy-read invites and an agenda for the first meeting, during which a vote was done to nominate a co-chairperson.

Looking back over the past year, we have achieved so much. After the initial meeting, it was decided to meet monthly. The co-chairs, Ian, one of the individuals we support, and the quality director set the agenda. Invites are sent out before the meetings, and we all meet to discuss what is important. Since the first meeting, we have co-produced the company’s values: improving the quality of life, developing, and building new skills, partnership working and co-production, exceeding expectations, empowerment, and celebrating success.

As an organisation, we wanted the co-production team to work within our company’s quality framework; therefore, the shadow quality board assists with developing and checking things. Once we formulated the company values within co-production, we moved to our next phase, which we are excited to be implanting. Our values would be worthless if they did not apply to everyone at Happy Futures. Therefore, we are currently setting up a shadow board that allows us to work in co-production with all those who work at Happy Futures. This is because once a culture change has started, and co-production is embedded for those who receive support and care, it is only natural that we implement it with those who work at Happy Futures, as co-production becomes part of our organisation’s DNA.

Co-production is a valuable tool enabling an organisation to work in partnership with those who provide support and those who receive it. It is through co-production that a positive, empowering, and inclusive culture can be embedded within an organisation.

Therefore, where staff historically may have felt isolated, disenchanted, and disengaged from work, are now through co-production are engaged. We are now working with staff to remove barriers that are prevalent within all organisations, as power structures are dismantled and people are given a voice. It has been an exciting year; however, we know the next year will be equally challenging yet so rewarding. We still have a lot of work to do to dismantle old mindsets, but things happen as people embrace co-production and are empowered to work in partnership. So, what are you waiting for? Take the leap and start the co-production journey.





ASK THE EXPERTS

Making social care a career of choice



It is estimated that there is a shortfall of 152,000 vacancies in the social care workforce, with an increasing number of employers now recruiting from abroad*. With this in mind, we are asking a group of Care Newcomer finalists from this year's Regional Great British Care Awards: **"What was your motivation in choosing a career in care, and what makes you Proud to Care?"**

"I feel proud of the work I do, knowing I've made a positive impact on those who need care and support."



Tracy Dodds
Home Care Worker
Blossom Home Care Durham

"After caring for my terminally ill father, I developed a deep empathy and compassion for adults and their families who need to rely on the support, skills, and care that home carers can provide. When caring for my father, I came to the realisation that everyone should have an opportunity to live their life the way they choose, surrounded by a dedicated team who can ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. This inspired me to make a career move into care. Being a carer is a rewarding, fulfilling career. Not only do I meet amazing people, but I also develop my knowledge and skills daily. At the end of each day, I feel proud of the work I do, knowing I've made a positive impact on those who need care and support."



Joseph Glennon
Support Worker
Community Integrated Care

"I had lived experience and a passion for empowering people who access care and support to live fantastic lives."

"When I saw the job advert for a Support Worker at Community Integrated Care, I was instantly drawn to it. I'd never worked in care before but having a daughter with autism, I had lived experience and a passion for empowering people who access care and support to live fantastic lives. Pursuing a career in care felt like a brilliant opportunity to learn more, give back to the sector and put all my life skills to good use! I've now been a Support Worker since February, and already I'm finding a deeper satisfaction in this role than any other job I've had. I'm really proud to work in social care. What makes me feel most proud is seeing the joy and sense of accomplishment from people I support, when they've learnt something new or achieved a dream of theirs. You go home knowing you've had a real impact on someone's life, and you just don't get that from other jobs."



Paula Laws
Senior Carer
Mrs O's Caring Hands Homecare



“Even just a friendly chat can make a person’s day and this alone makes me feel as if I’m doing a worthwhile job.”

“My motivation for joining the care sector was seeing my Dad caring for my Mum. I knew how hard it could be sometimes, and it got me thinking that maybe I could make a difference to people’s lives if I became a care worker. I have worked in social care for two years now and it’s the best decision I’ve made. I can’t see myself doing anything else in the future and am incredibly proud to be part of such an amazing sector.

I enjoy helping people to remain independent in their own homes and being able to make a real difference to their lives. Even just a friendly chat can make a person’s day and this alone makes me feel as if I’m doing a worthwhile job. Being a care worker and having the privilege of being able to make a positive impact on the quality of a person’s life, is such a rewarding job. I’m so glad I made the decision to take this step in life!”

“Thousands of miles away from my family, in a foreign land, I found a new family – the residents I cared for.”



Joe Thomas
Care Assitant
Littleport Grange,
part of Minster Care Group

“Originally from India and fresh into my career, I faced daunting challenges with no prior experience. Being an introvert and not fluent in the language, I stepped into a world completely unfamiliar. Yet, amidst these challenges, I found my purpose – not just a job, but a thoughtful calling. Caring for others is not just a job for me; it is how I feel valued, connected, and fulfilled. Thousands of miles away from my family, in a foreign land, I found a new family – the residents I cared for. To me, they weren’t just individuals needing assistance; I treated them like I cared for my parents. I strongly understand that this is a phase of life too and old age is going to come to all of us.

Today, as I look back, I realise that my initial challenges were not hurdles to overcome but stepping stones guiding me toward a deeper understanding of humanity. This was made possible by the unwavering support of my team at Littleport. They make me feel valued and appreciated in every aspect of my job. Together, we dedicated ourselves to enriching the lives of our residents, not just meeting their needs, but embracing their individuality.”



Chathurika Warnakulasooriya (Nyomi)
Health Care Assitant
Fairburn Mews,
part of Exemplar Healthcare



“Some of the people we support don’t have family members, so it’s nice to be there for them.”

“I’ve worked at Fairburn Mews for around six months now, and it’s the best decision I’ve made. When I lived in Sri Lanka, I worked in a bank alongside caring for my mother and children. I love helping others and felt I had the right skills, and quickly realised I wanted to work in care. After six months working here, I’ve done lots of training and would love to become a Nurse.

I’m proud to care because I love sharing happiness with others. Some of the people we support don’t have family members, so it’s nice to be there for them and celebrate special days with them such as birthdays. We have a great team here and I’m always learning from everyone.”

*Skills for Care report, The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England, published October 2023

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

Coming up...

Great British Care Awards Regionals

Yorkshire & Humberside - 2nd November 2023

The Royal Armouries, Leeds

East of England - 3rd November 2023

Milton Keynes Dons

West Midlands - 4th November 2023

The ICC, Birmingham

North East & Scotland - 9th November 2023

The Grand Gosforth Hotel, Newcastle

North West - 11th November 2023

Kimpton Clocktower Hotel, Manchester

Wales - 16th November 2023

The Marriott Hotel, Cardiff

South East - 17th November 2023

Hilton Metropole Hotel, Brighton

London - 18th November 2023

Hilton Bankside, London

South West - 23rd November 2023

Ashton Gate, Bristol

East Midlands - 24th November 2023

East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham

Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards

21st November 2023

The Marriott Grosvenor Square Hotel, London

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



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The **Care and Support Worker** Award • The **Housing with Care Manager** Award

The **Housing Manager** Award • The **Team Leader** Award • The **Care Team** Award

The **Housing with Care Apprentice** Award • The **Chef** Award • The **Activities Co-ordinator** Award

The **Garden Landscaper** Award • The **Care Handyman/Person** Award • The **Housekeeper** Award

The **Workforce Development** Award • The **Housing Developer** Award • The **Building Design** Award

The **Care Commissioner** Award • The **Integrated Retirement Community Hero** Award

The **Frontline Leader** Award • The **Tenant Co-Production** Award

The **Outreach Community Service** Award • The **Supported Housing Innovation** Award

The **Tenant Participation** Award • The **Lifetime Achievement** Award

JUNE 2024 CENTRAL LONDON

NOMINATE NOW AT:

www.housingwithcareawards.co.uk

SUPPORTED BY



Who's top of the Social Care Charts?

12th October saw over 400 people come together to celebrate The Social Care Top 30, at London's Hilton Bankside Hotel. Hosted by BBC Breakfast presenter, Naga Munchetty, the evening included a panel discussion with esteemed sector leaders, dazzling entertainment and awards presentations.

Social care needs strong innovative leadership more than ever at this time and The Social Care Top 30 provides a unique opportunity to showcase and recognise real leadership and excellence in the sector.

Finalists represented all areas of social care; influential movers and shakers with a national platform who's strong and innovative leadership has made a real impact for people in receipt of care and support.

The event also incorporated The Social Care Leadership Awards and The Social Care Premier Supplier Awards – an exclusive platform to celebrate national leadership and innovation in the sector.



The Winners!



The Executive Care Home Leader Award (large)
Gill Arukpe
 Social Interest Group

The Executive Care Home Leader Award (medium)
Samantha Crawley
 CEO, Bracebridge Care Group



Peter Kinsey
 Chair and Chief Executive Officer
 Iris Care Group

The Executive Care Home Leader Award (small)
Sanjay Dhrona,
 Managing Director,
 The Close Care Home

The Executive Home Care Leader Award
Camille Leavold
 Managing Director,
 Abbots Care Ltd

The Executive Home Care Franchise Leader Award
Dan Archer
CEO, Visiting Angels



The Executive Learning Disabilities and Autism Leader Award
Dan Gower-Smith
Director of Operations, The Avenues Group



The Executive Children and Young People Leader Award
Amanda-Jane Carey
Operations Manager, Kingdom Youth Services



The Dementia Care Leader Award
Ann-Marie Harmer
Head of Dementia Care, Excel Holdings



The Workforce Development Leader Award
Josh Hawker
Relationships Manager, AbleCare Homes



The Executive Clinical Leader Award
Simon Osbourne
Director of In-Home and Clinical Care, Right at Home



The Innovation in Social Care Leader Award
Alex Ball
Operations Manager, Stow Healthcare Group Ltd



The Wellbeing in Social Care Leader Award
Charlotte Driver-Young
Director of Operations and Registered Manager, Christies Care



The Quality Assurance Leader Award
Julie Rayner
Care Quality Governance and Compliance Director, Hallmark Care Homes



The Lifetime Achievement Award
Liakat and Nazira Hasham
CEO and Founders, CHD Living



Social Care
PREMIER SUPPLIER
AWARDS
RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE IN SUPPLIERS TO SOCIAL CARE
WINNER

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CORNERSTONE CARE SOLUTIONS LTD



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Manufacturers & Suppliers of Products & Services
GRACE CARES



PR & Marketing
PROSPERWELL



Recruitment
AJ RECRUITMENT



Technology (Care Home)
ONTEX



Technology (Home Care)
BIRDIE



Workforce Development
GREY MATTER LEARNING



Nutrition & Hydration
CREED FOODSERVICE



Property Consultants
ISAAC LIBERTY



Nominations for the **2024** Awards open soon!

www.socialcaretop30.co.uk #SocialCareTop30

Sector support for Care Talk's inaugural Dementia Care Awards

Care Talk are delighted to announce the inaugural Dementia Care Awards which celebrate outstanding practice in dementia services and recognise a commitment to deliver outcome focussed, person centred care for people living with dementia.

The Dementia Care Awards will pay tribute to accomplishments at all levels and from across the whole of the social care sector; including services for older people, people with learning disabilities and/or autism, inspirational people living with dementia and suppliers of products and services to the sector.



Here's what some of our supporters had to say:



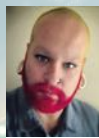
"Supporting people living with dementia to have good and fulfilling lives, is an area in which many services excel. I am delighted that Care Talk is developing the Dementia Care Awards, which will be a real opportunity to acknowledge the fantastic work in our sector and to recognise the individuals and teams that are transforming people's lives. Supporting people living with dementia to have good and fulfilling lives."

Prof Martin Green, CEO, Care England



"The Down's Syndrome Association is proud to support the inaugural Dementia Care Awards and is very happy to see that The Supporting People With a Learning Disability and Dementia Award has been included from the very start. Dedicated, innovative, person-centred care is, of course, the goal for people with a learning disability of any age, but for those who also have dementia it can be truly transformative. It is vital that we shine a light on and recognise best practice that is happening in our communities. And that we learn from and help others to learn from these successes."

Carol Boys, Chief Executive, Down's Syndrome Association



"As a Senior Lecturer in Health and Social Care at Newman University Birmingham. I am very proud to be supporting the development of the Dementia in Social Care Awards. These awards will highlight these incredible professionals who put their heart and soul into the fantastic work they do to support people with dementia to live full lives. Newman University Birmingham are a community-focused institution that values societal impact, respect for others, social justice, and equality. The University's ethos fits well with the awards as the professionals who are nominated and win, live and breathe these values and make a real impact in the world through the inspiring work they do."

Phil Harper, Senior Lecturer in Health and Social Care, Newman University Birmingham



"We are delighted that Care Talk has developed the Dementia Care Awards and in so doing has recognised the importance of intergenerational interaction for people of all ages. There are a growing number of examples of excellent intergenerational care across Britain which have been recognised by both the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted for their benefits for older and young people. These awards provide an opportunity to showcase and spread best practice. Bringing older and young people together in care homes and other locations can build relationships, meaningful activities and great fun, joy and learning."

Denise Burke, Director, United For All Ages

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN! www.dementiacareawards.co.uk

THE DEMENTIA CARE AWARDS

Celebrating Excellence in
Dementia Care



S U P P O R T E D B Y



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A w a r d C a t e g o r i e s

- ★ THE DEMENTIA CARE EMPLOYER AWARD ★
- ★ THE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITY PROJECT AWARD ★
- ★ THE DEMENTIA CARE HOME WORKER AWARD ★
- ★ THE DEMENTIA REGISTERED MANAGER AWARD ★
- ★ THE INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY AWARD ★
- ★ THE ACTIVITY COORDINATOR AWARD ★
- ★ THE OUTREACH AWARD ★
- ★ THE DEMENTIA TRAINER AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AWARD ★
- ★ THE INNOVATIVE SPACES WITHIN RESIDENTIAL CARE: DESIGN AWARD ★
- ★ THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AWARD ★
- ★ THE DEMENTIA'S UNSUNG HERO AWARD ★
- ★ THE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY BUSINESS AWARD ★
- ★ THE RESPITE HOLIDAY PROVIDER AWARD ★
- ★ THE DEMENTIA COMMUNITY CARE WORKER AWARD ★
- ★ THE INSPIRING VOLUNTEER AWARD ★
- ★ THE ADMIRAL NURSE AWARD ★
- ★ THE CREATIVE NUTRITION AWARD ★
- ★ THE DIVERSITY AND DEMENTIA AWARD ★
- ★ THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY AND DEMENTIA AWARD ★
- ★ THE LIVING WELL WITH DEMENTIA: CO-PRODUCTION AND PARTNERSHIP AWARD ★
- ★ THE CREATING SPACES FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA: DEVELOPER AWARD ★
- ★ THE INSPIRATIONAL PERSON LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AWARD ★
- ★ THE UNPAID CARER AWARD ★
- ★ THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO DEMENTIA AWARD ★

Closing
date for
nominations
**31st MARCH
2024**

N o m i n a t e N O W a t :

www.dementiacareawards.co.uk



LEADING THE WAY IN SOCIAL CARE

My pillars of leadership in home care

In essence, leadership in the home care sector can sometimes feel like we are steering a ship amidst stormy seas. As leaders we know we are responsible for the whole ship, we must ensure the welfare of all the customers and keep them safe, we must also ensure that our crew are well supported and competent so that we don't sink, we must adhere to all the different customs and laws (compliance and contracts). Yet as we traverse this challenging sea, we never know if the weather will clear and we will sail calmly to shore, or that we could hit a hurricane and barely survive....2020-2022 felt like a hurricane.

Despite all the challenges, home care is addictive and once you're in and committed to resolving the challenges, you rarely leave. My journey into this sector wasn't a calculated decision, but rather a fate I cherish. It began with an influential leader who exemplified compassion, resilience, accountability, kindness, and care. This leader, my Mum and the co-founder of Abbots Care, Stephanie Hyde, laid the groundwork for my perspective on leadership.



So what are my pillars of leadership..?

Shared Vision:

From Abbots Care's inception in 1995, our vision has been clear – to value every individual associated with us and to be the care provider of choice.

Passion & Compassion:

Passion and compassion are essential for leaders in social care, ensuring that we possess the right heart and consistently communicate with empathy not only about customers but about our whole workforce. We speak with fervour, ensuring our care workers' well-being stay at the centre of the service alongside the customers.

Communication & Well-being:

Through our well-being app, care workers can connect with us daily, ensuring a consistent communication line for support and recognition.

Integrity:

In our sector, leading with integrity is non-negotiable. We maintain transparency at Abbots, ensuring an open, no-blame culture where mistakes are lessons we learn from.

Resilience & Adaptability:

The ever-changing landscape of Social Care demands resilience. With ongoing changes from political, compliance, and government funding angles, adaptability is paramount, and we encourage and enjoy change.

Innovation:

We promote a culture that rejects complacency. For example, by constantly seeking better operational methods, we've adopted innovative workforce contracts offering guaranteed hours and above-average industry pay which has helped our growth.

Partnership:

Our collaboration with Local Authorities has led to reduced waiting lists and faster discharge times, enhancing service delivery.

“My Mum laid the groundwork for my perspective on leadership.”

From a young age, witnessing Steph's unwavering commitment to address the injustices of the 1970s institutional care system where she worked, moulded my ideals. Her guidance extended beyond formal teaching – she instilled in me a sense of responsibility through phrases like “it's not your fault, but it's your responsibility.” Such lessons were instrumental in shaping Abbots Care's vision, my leadership approach, and our unique culture.

...and the outcome?

Our leadership ethos has delivered tangible results:

- **Quality Care:** Adhering to regulations and being receptive to feedback has allowed us to be rated as Outstanding by CQC twice in succession and provide quality services.
- **Stable Workforce:** We've built and nurtured a motivated workforce that feels valued and is constantly growing with good retention rates.
- **Business Operations:** Our proactive approach translates into fewer disruptions and more sustainable and resilient business model, where we have partnered with Local Authorities to clear long lists of people waiting for home care.

At its core, leadership encompasses all these foundational pillars. As we navigate the tumultuous waters of the sector, our unwavering objective is clear: to provide our Service Users with exceptional care, ensure our staff feel truly valued and appreciated, and to foster Abbots Cares continue to thrive — hopefully, at least another 28 years.

“Home care is addictive and once you're in and committed to resolving the challenges, you rarely leave.”

Camille Leavold
Managing Director
Abbots Care Ltd





A NATIONAL VOICE

Why good care leadership is more important than ever

The promise of social care is the provision of effective support to arguably the most vulnerable individuals in our society. To do this, and do it well, good leadership is essential.

It is no secret that the UK's care system today is impacted by seemingly intractable factors – from workforce shortages to the cost-of-living crisis. And that it is at times like this when leadership is particularly tested – and when strong, innovative, across-the-board leaders are most needed.

What value does good leadership bring to care?

As I learnt of the humbling honour of being recognised among the Social Care Top 30, I've been reflecting particularly on this question.

Below is what I see as the greatest contributions of leadership. I believe care already has some of the most resilient, self-effacing and compassionate leaders you will find anywhere. So rather than see this as a list to beat anyone up with, my intention is to offer reasons for recognition and inspiration.

At its best, care leadership:

■ Drives quality through culture-building.

In care and beyond, leadership arguably sets the tone. Leaders hold the levers to create cultures where teams are motivated and supported to deliver high standards. This is a particularly urgent priority in the UK where a challenged sector is met with a rapidly rising demand for care, with an ageing population and increasing complex needs. Building (and rebuilding) quality-driving cultures takes time and consistency, but it is a non-negotiable.

■ Retains talent by prioritising wellbeing.

We know team morale and effective training and support impact quality of care. Yet, it can be difficult to focus on that when so many other things may feel like a bigger priority. Different organisations will have different approaches. For us at Greensleeves Care, ensuring colleagues are well rewarded, supporting their mental wellbeing, giving access to free, properly accredited training and apprenticeships, offering ways to boost career progression and celebrating long service are all ways of encouraging our people to be their best self and deliver excellent care.

■ Breeds public trust with transparency and accountability.

Modern leadership calls for greater-than-ever-before openness. It is the responsibility of every manager and leader to ensure that they, and their services, uphold ethical principles and promote compassionate practices - no matter how stretched. This multi-layered responsibility becomes even more important in larger and devolved organisations.

■ Adapts and helps others adapt.

Today's care leaders are asked to meet challenges that have their roots elsewhere – in wider health, ageing, work, migration and the economy. This requires work and steering at every level of an organisation, and so the leader's main job becomes helping others change, innovate and strive for better.

■ Fosters person-centred solutions through collaboration.

No service is an island. Our care system is intricately interconnected with other health, care and community services. Creating a seamless web of care that truly works for people takes social care leaders with the will and skill to work with healthcare providers, local authorities, community organisations and more. This is an increasing area of focus where I believe we, as leaders, must test our preparedness.

■ Promotes wide-reaching change.

The current context also asks that many of us become advocates for increased resources, a fairer public perception of care, greater support for the sector and even reform, on our doorstep and beyond. I've been fortunate to contribute to the BSI's work to set better standards for older people and carers globally. I see the role of leadership as steering the wheels through the bumps while also working to improve the road for the future.

■ Mirrors self-care by looking after themselves.

– Ironically, self-care is often in short supply in care. Remaining steadfast as a leader is vital in tough times - yet, it takes its toll. To carry the load, managers and leaders must turn inward, often. To me, this means checking in, challenging bias, recognising shortcomings and supporting others to do the same.

Like every other leader I know, I'd like to think I demonstrate these behaviours, at least some of the time. I certainly strive to. Almost as importantly, I try to encourage them in others too.



“I believe care already has some of the most resilient, self-effacing and compassionate leaders you will find anywhere.”

Paul Newman
CEO
Greensleeves Care



Resources and support to drive social care forward



With this issue focusing on changing perceptions of social care, Skills for Care shares the support and resources they have available to drive forward positive developments for the social care workforce.

“When recruiting people aged 16 and 17 there are considerations which need to be made.”

Moving Up programme

Social care has a diverse workforce, with 26% of the workforce being from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic backgrounds. However, this same level of diversity isn't seen at a senior level, with only 16% of managerial positions being held by people from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic backgrounds.

It's really important that social care is a sector which people from all backgrounds can thrive in and reach senior positions in order to be a career of choice.

Skills for Care's popular Moving Up programme is aimed at supporting managers and aspiring managers from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic backgrounds to take the next step in their careers.

It covers topics including personal branding, self-belief and identifying your own strengths and weaknesses. These are key attributes in developing and progressing in your career.

Find out more:

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/movingup>

Creating an inclusive organisation programme

Skills for Care's 'Creating an inclusive organisation' programme also aims to develop further diversity among the social care workforce.

The programme is primarily aimed at people from a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background and provides support and tools to help people tackle challenges they may have faced in the workplace.

It's an eLearning programme which aims to develop everyone's confidence to improve equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across their organisation.

Find out more:

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/CreatingAnInclusiveOrganisation





Encouraging men into careers in care

As stated in Skills for Care's latest 'State of the adult social care sector and workforce in England' report, this year there has been a slight increase in the number of men working in social care, from 18% to 19%. However, women do still make up the vast majority of the workforce.

It's vital to encourage more men to work in social care to change perceptions of the sector and to ensure the workforce represents the people it supports.

On the Skills for Care website, you can find blogs and articles discussing why it's important to encourage more men into care, how to encourage more men to work in care, and case studies from men about why they love working in social care.

Recruiting younger people into care

Some employers may be unsure whether they can hire younger people, but hiring people aged 16 and 17 is not only legal it's also beneficial for organisations. It's vital that we start recruiting more younger people to begin a career in care to sustain the workforce of the future.

When recruiting people aged 16 and 17 there are considerations which need to be made around working hours, pay and learning and development. Having more younger people in your organisation will bring fresh ideas and energy and can help you to grow the leaders of the future for your organisation and the sector as a whole.

Find out more with Skills for Care's guide to employing 16 and 17 year olds.

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/EmployingWorkers16and17>

Developing digital ways of working

Digital technology has the power to transform services and provides adult social care with a huge opportunity. Technology also offers opportunities to help people maintain independence and improve outcomes using tech enabled care.

To continue driving social care forward and to make the care sector a career of choice it's really important to keep updated with new digital innovations. As part of this, managers need to support their staff to feel digitally confident.

Throughout November Skills for Care is running a spotlight focused on improving digital confidence. This will include resources, learning opportunities and blogs and articles to help increase digital understanding and confidence.

Find out more:

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/digitalconfidence

“This same level of diversity isn't seen at a senior level, with only 16% of managerial positions being held by people from BAME backgrounds.”

Navigating recruitment and retention: strategies for success



Jo Guy
CEO
AJ Recruitment

The UK's social care sector is no stranger to the persistent challenges of recruitment and retention. Here, Jo Guy, CEO of social care recruitment specialists AJ Recruitment, shares insights into the UK adult social care recruitment market and provides valuable tips on how to improve staff retention.

A fluctuating market

Between April 2022 and March 2023, we witnessed the number of filled posts increase modestly by 1%, following a 4% drop the previous year. The vacancy rate also saw a slight reduction, dropping from 10.6% to 9.9% in 2022-23. One of the factors behind this vacancy rate drop is due to the surge in international recruitment after care workers were added to the shortage occupation list in February 2022.

Market predictions

In 2022-23, 8.4% of posts were filled by agency and/or bank staff compared to 7.9% in 21/22. However, I expect that reliance on agency and bank staff will decrease slightly over the coming year due to organisations investing in technology to enhance internal efficiency. To support organisations making this transition, we have launched Total Talent Partnership – a three-tier package which provides levels of consultancy to improve recruitment strategies and processes from within, reducing reliance on agency supply and reducing costs.

The wider economy will continue to significantly influence recruitment in social care. We saw this at the beginning of the pandemic when there were fewer job opportunities in the wider economy. This contributed to a fall in vacancy rates in adult social care as people losing jobs elsewhere took up roles in the social care sector. In March 22, as the economy reopened, there were more job opportunities in the wider market and so social care sector faced increased competition for talent.

Despite a slight reduction in vacancies in the wider economy to 3.4% in April 2023, the rate remains historically high and the number of opportunities available in other sectors continues to challenge adult social care employers in their search for staff. I think this trend is likely to continue over the coming 12 months, despite more organisations recruiting from abroad.

Retention tips

Looking ahead, it's important for social care providers to not only attract but also retain their valuable workforce. Here are three practical tips to help you improve employee retention:

■ Leverage employee referrals and past employees:

Companies can expand their talent pool by up to 10 times by recruiting through their own employees' networks. In addition, according to Skills for Care research, employee referrals see 50% less year one attrition than the sector average.

■ Implement a values-based recruitment approach:

Ensuring that personal values align with organisational values is a powerful retention strategy. According to a recent Skills for Care case study, a values-based recruitment approach can lead to 62% reduction in absence rates and a 52% improvement in punctuality.

■ Invest in non-mandatory development opportunities:

Whilst mandatory training is vital, offering additional learning and development opportunities is equally important. Recent CIPD research revealed that 94% of employees who were satisfied with their organisation's learning and development opportunities were more inclined to stay. Additionally, 76% of UK employees considered non-mandatory training and development offerings as crucial factors in their decision to remain with their employer.

"We have launched Total Talent Partnership which provides levels of consultancy to improve recruitment strategies."

Care providers must remain adaptable and open to innovation to find and keep the people they need in their organisations. By understanding the recruitment landscape and implementing effective recruitment and retention strategies and having a proactive agency partner, organisations can rise to the challenges and ensure the continued provision of vital services to those who depend on them.

Jo Guy is CEO at social care recruitment firm AJ Recruitment. Connect with Jo on LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/in/joguyaj/

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Managing the complexities of diabetes in social care settings



Nellsar
Care Homes
Est. 1988

Leni Wood
Head of Nutrition and Wellness
Nellsar Care Homes

According to the latest figures released by Diabetes UK, an alarming diabetes crisis is growing in the UK, affecting more than five million individuals, with an additional 850,000 remaining undiagnosed. This highlights the immediate need for comprehensive diabetes care that tackles the varying challenges faced by these individuals head-on.

How does diabetes impact older adults?

The British Dietetics Association encourages people with diabetes to steer clear of processed foods and refined sugars while also emphasising hydration and embracing a whole-food diet consisting of protein, healthy fats, complex carbohydrates, and a healthy dose of vegetables. However, following these guidelines for diabetes proves to be complicated, particularly for older adults. Many seniors living with diabetes may suffer from undernutrition or being underweight, rendering the blanket reduction of calories, fats, salt, and sugar inappropriate for their individual needs.

Always seek nutritional expertise

A range of factors can reduce the appetite of older individuals, such as the side effects of medications, oral health complications, dehydration, social isolation, as well as a range of illnesses. To make sure older individuals with diabetes receive the most thorough support possible, it is essential that they receive a comprehensive nutritional assessment from a registered dietitian.

“A key term for diabetes management in care homes is ‘moderation’.”

As is the case within the 13 care communities within Nellsar Care Homes, an in-house nutritionist emerges as an indispensable resource in supporting residents living with diabetes. These experts work closely with care home kitchens to create bespoke menu plans, offer culinary recommendations, and provide educational

sessions for staff and residents alike. The key here is the promotion of a “food-first” approach that ensures residents have access to delectable meal choices rich in nutrients and flavour.

More efforts can be made to elevate the dining experience for care residents living with diabetes. Simple strategies like coaching catering teams to signpost balanced and healthy options on menus and tea trolleys, are often effective. In a bid to foster inclusivity, at Nellsar, we opt for the term “healthy choices” instead of constricting them as “diabetic options”.

“Optimal diabetes care it should consider enhancing the quality of life for those living with this condition.”

Something that can't be ignored is the residents' existing food preferences and their previous approaches to self-managing diabetes in their own homes. While some may have adhered to diabetes-specific diets, it's important to understand that sugar-free alternatives do not appease everyone's palate or individual requirements. For those dependent on insulin, meticulous blood sugar level management will always be essential, yet the task assumes added complexity for individuals living with conditions such as dementia, who often have a preference towards sweeter foods.

Embracing the principle of moderation

A key term for diabetes management in care homes is 'moderation'. Striking a delicate balance is challenging and as much as it's important to acknowledge reduced sugar alternatives, we now have access to an abundance of tasteful recipes that offer nutritional balance and great flavour.

Optimal diabetes care needs to look beyond merely controlling the condition; rather, it should consider enhancing the quality of life for those living with this condition. As an industry, we must forget the outdated notion that “sugar is forbidden” for individuals living with diabetes, urging instead to embrace a person-centred approach that recognises the profound impact of dietary choices on overall well-being.

Leni Wood is Head of Nutrition and Wellness at Nellsar, a family-run group of 13 care homes throughout Kent, Surrey, and Essex. Built on strong foundations, Nellsar has worked hard to build the trusted reputation of its homes and prides itself on being approachable, accountable, and empathic in its relationships with the families it supports.

Enabling independence in complex care residents



Becs Page
Regional Manager
CHD Living & Rehabilitation

Complex care residents, who may have multiple and severe health conditions, should not be deprived of their autonomy and the ability to make choices. Given that residents typically have complex health conditions that require round-the-clock attention and support, it is essential to differentiate between necessary support and over-dependence – as the latter can inadvertently hinder independence.

Here, we'll look at 4 key strategies for enabling independence in complex care residents:

1

Person-centred care plans

Individualised care plans that focus on the unique needs and preferences of each resident are essential. Collaborate with residents, their families, and healthcare professionals to develop care plans that empower residents to make choices regarding their daily routines and activities. Recognising and harnessing residents' existing strengths is pivotal to the journey towards independence. By identifying what individuals can already do and building upon those abilities, we empower them to take on more responsibilities in their daily lives. For instance, if a resident has good hand-eye coordination, caregivers can encourage activities like art, crafting, or cooking, where this skill can be put to use. Celebrating these small victories fosters a sense of accomplishment and self-worth, further motivating residents to take on new challenges.

“It is essential to differentiate between necessary support and over-dependence – as the latter can inadvertently hinder independence.”

2

Skill development

Invest time and resources in skill development programmes tailored to the abilities of residents. Occupational therapy and rehabilitation services can help residents regain or improve their functional skills, promoting independence in daily life. Within this, also consider positive risk-taking, which involves assessing the benefits of an action versus the potential drawbacks of avoiding it. Encouraging residents to take calculated risks can lead to personal growth and a sense of empowerment. For instance, if a resident wishes to participate in a cooking class but has a mobility impairment, caregivers can work together to ensure safety measures are in place. By focusing on the benefits, such as improved self-esteem and a sense of achievement, we can help residents make informed choices that align with their goals.

3

Encourage decision-making

Autonomy thrives in an environment where residents feel confident and capable. As caregivers, our role extends beyond physical care; we must nurture emotional and psychological well-being. Identifying the factors that boost residents' self-confidence is essential. This might involve setting achievable goals, providing positive feedback, and acknowledging their efforts, no matter how small. Involve residents in decisions related to their care and daily activities. Even seemingly small choices, like selecting a meal or choosing an activity, can provide a sense of autonomy. Establishing an equal partnership between caregivers and residents is the cornerstone of promoting independence. This partnership is founded on open communication and active listening. It entails taking the time to discover what motivates each resident, what their individual goals and dreams are, and how we can collectively work towards achieving them.

4

Supportive environment

Create an environment that encourages independence. At CHD Living, for example, we ensure that common areas are accessible, provide clear signage, and offer opportunities for residents to engage in social and recreational activities. Part of this involves observation, a vital tool in promoting autonomy. While it's natural to want to assist when residents face challenges, it's equally important to step back and allow them to attempt tasks on their own. Even when a resident encounters difficulty, encouragement and patience go a long way. For example, if a resident is relearning how to tie shoelaces, caregivers can observe the process and provide verbal guidance rather than taking over. This approach encourages self-reliance and problem-solving skills. Remember to regularly reassess residents' needs and abilities to adapt care plans accordingly. As their condition changes, their level of self-sufficiency may also evolve, requiring adjustments in care and support. Independence is a fundamental human right that should not be compromised, regardless of one's health status. As caregivers and healthcare providers, our mission is not only to provide essential care but also to empower individuals to live with dignity and self-determination, regardless of the challenges they face.

The Recruit2Care success story

Transforming Home Care through strategic international recruitment



In today's fast-paced world, many businesses face the challenge of aligning their operations with the constantly changing needs of their clients. Among these, the home care industry is no exception.

For "In Safe Hands," a prominent home care company situated in rural Cheshire, the challenge of staffing weighed heavily on their operations, to the point where future goals of expansion were at stake. As demand for their services increased, they were on the brink of having to decline new business due to insufficient staff. The struggle to maintain high standards of care while battling recruitment issues became the albatross around their neck.

In more isolated regions, recruitment can be a monumental challenge. With a smaller pool of potential employees and fewer resources at their disposal, In Safe Hands faced the uphill task of attracting the right talent. Many recruitment services promised the world but delivered very little, leaving In Safe Hands dismayed and on the brink of compromising the high standards of care they are known for.

Enter Joe from Recruit2Care.

"From the very beginning, Joe presented a different picture. He wasn't just another recruiter; he was a strategic partner who understood In Safe Hands' unique challenges and aspirations" said Rachel Wright, Managing Director of In Safe Hands Recognising the recruitment bottleneck that stifled the company's growth, Joe made it his mission to unblock this hindrance.

"He wasn't just another recruiter; he was a strategic partner who understood In Safe Hands' unique challenges and aspirations."

International recruitment, with its myriad of complexities, might deter many. However, Joe demystified the process. The focus shifted from why In Safe Hands couldn't expand to how Recruit2Care would

ensure they did. With meticulous planning, Joe handled every facet of the recruitment drive - from e-learning for potential candidates before they entered the UK, to organising transition into housing, transportation needs and faith connections.

Moreover, the personalised approach Joe took was unlike any other. *"Instead of adopting a one-size-fits-all model, he invested time in understanding the ethos of In Safe Hands. This was not merely a transaction for him. His commitment to finding the right fit for the company culture was evident in his every move."* Said Rachel.

The results spoke for themselves. With the staffing challenge addressed, In Safe Hands could once again focus on what they did best: providing top-notch care. The influx of dedicated and well-trained staff meant that the company could expand its business without compromising on quality.

In the world of recruitment, understanding a client's needs goes beyond just filling vacancies. It's about comprehending the heart and soul of a business, its culture, and its aspirations. Joe from Recruit2Care exemplified this. His relentless efforts transformed In Safe Hands, allowing them to not only meet but exceed the expectations of their clients.

To those in similar positions, hesitant to venture into international recruitment, the story of In Safe Hands stands as a testament to what can be achieved with the right partnership. As an advocate of Joe's methods, Safe Hands firmly believes that with the right understanding and approach, every challenge can be turned into an opportunity.

While the global recruitment landscape may be vast and often daunting, companies like Recruit2Care, with their dedication and bespoke solutions, are ensuring that businesses like In Safe Hands can continue to shine, making a difference one recruit at a time.

Ultimately, Recruit2Care's international recruitment strategy is all about ensuring the continuity of service. The social care sector is a crucial pillar of our society, and its efficiency and effectiveness can significantly impact the quality of life for many. The company has never had to resort to the use of agency staff thus improving retention rates, Recruit2Care is laying the groundwork for a more stable, reliable, and caring social care system.

In a sector often defined by its challenges, Recruit2Care is carving a new path, demonstrating that ethical, international recruitment and a commitment to permanent, reliable staff can deliver much-needed stability and quality to the field of social care.

“Joe handled every facet of the recruitment drive - from e-learning for potential candidates to organising transition into housing, transportation needs and faith connections.”



Joe Desmond
Director
Recruit2Care



Rachel Wright
Managing Director
In Safe Hands

Top tips on avoiding a data breach



rwk goodman

Carl Selby
Partner, Head of Tech Sector
RWK Goodman

Data breaches are now headline news. Whether it is Meta (Facebook) being fined €1.2bn or MGM in Las Vegas suffering a ransomware attack, data breaches are in the spotlight like never before.

They are also inevitable; it is very much a case of when, not if, a data breach happens. A data breach is a “breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data”. All of the following are data breaches:

- **Service user records being accessed by a hacker;**
- **Ransomware preventing access to service user records;**
- **Leaving documents containing personal data on a train; and**
- **Sending an email or post containing personal data to the wrong recipient/address.**

However good your systems and processes are, human error and criminals who are one step ahead of security providers mean there will always be a risk of a breach. Data protection legislation requires controllers who process special category data (including health information about service users) to put in place higher levels of protection, so care providers need to take extra care.

Minimising the risk

If you have to report a breach (or someone complains) the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) look at your data protection compliance processes. The ICO does not expect perfection, but they do expect you to demonstrate that you have taken data protection seriously. To do this:

- Keep a record of processing (often called a data map) recording the personal data you collect, how it is processed, the lawful basis on which you process it.
- Tell services users and staff how you process their personal data in a privacy notice and keep it up to date.
- Implement, follow and regularly update your policies (you would be amazed how many clients draft a policy and then do not follow or update it).
- Consider getting cyber insurance that covers the cost of responding to a breach as well as the potential fines and damages.

- Implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to safeguard personal data. Simple steps, such as:
 - using strong passwords and multi factor authentication,
 - having appropriate firewalls and cybersecurity software,
 - keeping (and testing) proper backups,
 - encrypting data at rest and in transit;
 - implementing policies on securely storing physical documents;
 - access controls to limit who can access personal data; and
 - patching systems with security updates promptly, can go a long way.
- Train your staff regularly on their data protection obligations and what to do if a breach (however minor) happens.
- Complete due diligence on third parties who process personal data for you and make sure your contract with them has appropriate data processing clauses.
- Have a plan to respond to a data breach. If a breach is notifiable, you have 72 hours to report it to the ICO; working out what to do will waste valuable time. You should test the plan by simulating a breach to identify areas that can be improved.

“It is very much a case of when, not if, a data breach happens.”

The consequences

The ICO can impose fines of up to £17.5m or 4% of worldwide turnover, whichever is higher. But this is not the only risk. Data subjects are making more direct claims arising from data breaches, often through claims management companies. CQC are increasingly taking data protection seriously and the reputational damage may make a prospective service user twice when selecting a care provider.

Given the risks, taking specialist advice to prepare for a breach will help significantly reduce the impact when it happens. Proper preparation really does prevent poor performance (and penalties!).

Carl Selby is a partner, head of the tech team and member of the health and social care group at law firm RWK Goodman.

www.rwkgoodman.com



This month,
Kirsty meets...

Nuno Almeida
Founder and CEO
Nourish Care



Each month I meet key stakeholders and business leaders in the social care sector. This month I met Nuno Almeida, Founder and CEO of Nourish Care. I caught up with Nuno to discuss what makes a start-up successful, technology, and the future of care.

So Nuno, can you tell us a little bit about how and why you started Nourish Care?

It's very much a human story for me. I grew up near one of the largest mental hospitals in Portugal, my parents shared a boundary with the place. The neighbourhood was full of people walking around in their pyjamas and my parents never passed judgement. They were part of our community, our neighbours and we interacted with them on a daily basis. I was a child taught to care about people and I was also good at maths and building things. I studied computer science and AI but surrounded myself with artists and misfits. I started my first business at 16, created another at 18 and by the time I went to university, I was working for NASA. I ended up working in defence and aerospace, but I wasn't passionate about it. I wanted to build software that made a difference. My wife had always worked in healthcare, so I started reading about social care and felt drawn to the sector, so much so, I worked undercover as a care assistant for three months. When I saw what care was like on a ground level I knew I wanted to build software that would make the job easier for carers and improve the experience and outcome for those in their care.

“It's very much a human story for me.”

Why do you think Nourish has been so successful?

My hypothesis for our success is that we didn't follow the route that most software start-ups do, which is to identify how the product will be used, identify who is going to pay for it and optimise the functionality with those factors in mind. In social care, the carers don't pay for the app and neither do the people in care, but they are pivotal. It takes a lot of legwork to understand the ecosystem and the dynamics of how a care team operates. Understanding the mindset of the key people and designing software that is holistic enough to unite everybody to a common end is vital to improve the well-being of the person in care.

“Understanding the mindset of key people and designing software that is holistic enough to unite everybody to a common end is vital to improve the well-being of the person in care.”

Nourish has recently announced the acquisition of CarePlanner – can you tell us a bit more about this?

This partnership was done with a view to improving our product, which in turn, improves levels of adult care. As such, it is set to radically improve the safety of the health care system for residents and staff. The entire sector will benefit from this, including the NHS. And finally, CarePlanner is homecare planning software and this is a timely acquisition for us as the community is the place where magic needs to happen. People who are being discharged from hospitals, for example, need to be supported by a platform that is used by both care workers and hospital care teams. We are in the process of constantly evolving these integrations so that we can continue to deliver greater value in the future.

How is care going to change in the future?

Alzheimer's and dementia were barely mentioned 20 years ago and are becoming increasingly prevalent. This is going to shape our culture and we need to come up with solutions that enable us to care well for our ageing population.

And finally Nuno, where can we find out more about Nourish Care?

You can visit us here: <https://nourishcare.com>

Kirsty Hollins Communications Executive, Care Talk

Care Talk

Business

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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