

CareTalk

The voice of excellence in social care

Let's Talk Social Care! Issue **128** | February **2024**

Shaping the Future of Social Care

In This Issue:



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IN THE
SPOTLIGHT
FOR 2024**
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Chief Executive,
Skills for Care



**HELPING EACH
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DELIVER
POWERFUL
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Chair, Social Care
Sustainability Alliance

**A VOICE FOR
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2024**
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**THE SOCIAL
CARE MARKET
IN 2024**
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Regional Director,
Christie & Co



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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 February issue of Care Talk.

As we tentatively dip our toes into the waters of 2024, we are filled with lukewarm anticipation for what's to come. What lies ahead for the sector over the next 12 months and what are the opportunities and challenges for *Shaping the future of social care*?

In this edition our fabulous contributors share their unique insights into the predicted market conditions, trends and innovations that will shape the social care sector in the coming year.

This new year brings a new way of regulating from the Care Quality Commission, which includes incorporating new environmental sustainability criteria to the inspection regime. In his article on page 6, Jonathan Freeman, Chair of the Social Care Sustainability Alliance, explains why eco-friendly practice is now at the core of care delivery and how the Alliance are, **Helping each other to deliver powerful change.**

Every new year brings an opportunity for change and with a General Election on the horizon, this presents optimal opportunities for *Shaping the future of social care* through influencing legislative changes. In this issue, Sarah Jones, Chief Executive at Anchor, explains why the sector has a responsibility to ensure that social care reform takes a prominent place in the national consciousness. Turn to page 8 to read her article, **New year, same challenges?**

As we enter 2024, we are delighted to announce the launch of two new awards events for the sector. **Care Talk's Dementia Care Awards** and **The Palliative Care Awards**, were born out of a need to recognise and celebrate excellence in these specialist areas of social care. Both events have already been well received by the sector and you can read some of the words of support on pages 50 and 51 respectively.

So if you work with exceptional colleagues, (and undoubtedly you do!), we urge you to share their stories and nominate them. We look forward to profiling some of these nominees in future issues.

Finally, we have introduced a new monthly feature for this new year, *Have your Say*, (page 46). We want to hear from care professionals and people who draw on services and will be sharing their thoughts each month, - so do get in touch!

Till next time

Lisa
 @lisa_caretalk



Shaping the future of social care

Professor Martin Green, Chief Executive at Care England shares his thoughts on reimagining and reforming social care to shape the future of the sector.

In recent years, the social care sector in England has faced numerous challenges, including issues of quality, funding, and workforce shortages. As a result, there is a growing recognition that the current system of social care regulation needs to be reimagined and reformed. A new vision for social care regulation in England should prioritise the following key principles.

“To achieve this new vision for social care regulation, it will be necessary to engage with a wide range of stakeholders.”

Person-centred care - The new regulatory framework should place the needs and preferences of individuals at the heart of social care provision. This means ensuring that people have a say in the care they receive and that their voices are heard in the regulatory process. It also means promoting choice and control and enabling individuals to live fulfilling and independent lives. This has to be at the centre of how we regulate commissioners as well as providers.

Quality and safety - The new regulatory system should have a strong focus on ensuring high-quality care and the safety of individuals. This includes robust inspection and enforcement mechanisms, as well as clear standards and guidelines for social care providers. It should also encourage continuous improvement and innovation in care provision.

Integration and collaboration - Social care regulation should be closely aligned with other sectors, such as healthcare and promote seamless and coordinated care. This requires greater collaboration between regulatory bodies, as well as improved information sharing and joint working. It also means breaking down the barriers between different types of care, such as residential and home care, to provide a more holistic approach.

Workforce development - The new regulatory framework should have oversight of the quality of staff, promote and champion a skilled and compassionate social care workforce and promote a culture of respect and dignity for all staff.

The new regulatory system should be transparent and accountable to the public, service users, and their families and engage professionally with providers.



Professor Martin Green OBE
Chief Executive, Care England



This means providing accessible information about the quality of care, as well as clear channels for raising concerns and complaints. It also means holding social care providers to account for their performance, but this requires the regulator to be transparent and deliver the highest quality service, and not to engage in double standards around communication transparency.

To achieve this new vision for social care regulation in England, it will be necessary to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including service users, carers, social care providers, social care, and policymakers. It will also require adequate funding and resources, as well as a commitment to long-term reform. By embracing these principles, we can create a social care system that is fit for the future and delivers high-quality, person-centred care for all and learn from regulation how to improve services.

“There is a growing recognition that the current system of social care regulation needs to be reimagined and reformed.”

@ProfMartinGreen @CareEngland
 careengland.org.uk

The Social Care Sustainability Alliance – helping each other to deliver powerful change



Johnathan Freeman MBE

Group Sustainability Director,
CareTech Ltd and Chair, Social Care
Sustainability Alliance

Jonathan Freeman, Group Sustainability Director at CareTech Ltd and Chair of the Social Care Sustainability Alliance, explains how by coming together, we can tackle the sector's contributions to climate change.

When I was appointed as the first ever Group Sustainability Director for CareTech, I felt rather a lone figure in the social care landscape working on this agenda. Fast forward two years and there has been an awakening across the social care sector about ESG and sustainability issues. But, still, many providers don't quite know where to start. And others, especially with recent Government policy changes on environmental issues, are hoping that this is all just a fad that that will pass. It won't!

The Care Quality Commission's (CQC), new *Adult Social Care* Single Assessment Framework introduces the new 'Environmental sustainability – sustainable development' criteria to the inspection regime. This puts environmental sustainability at the heart of what it means to provide a social care service in which the public can trust.

Increasingly, commissioners are asking providers to demonstrate their sustainability credentials in tender exercises, with more demanding asks of providers and with this element becoming far more important in tender evaluations.

“There has been an awakening across the social care sector about ESG and sustainability issues.”



“The Alliance aims to identify sustainability opportunities and share best practices across the sector.”

And don't overlook the changing expectations and demands of consumers who increasingly demand that the products and services they purchase must be increasingly sustainable, provided by ethically-driven organisations, and, that support their own increasingly-sustainable daily routines.

The social care sector has a big responsibility to tackle its contributions to climate change. For example, the 17,500-odd care homes in the UK have been estimated to contribute as much as 2.8 million tonnes of carbon a year. But this isn't just about environmental issues. As a highly-regulated sector, most care providers are good at the 'G' – Governance – of ESG. The 'S' in ESG, however, is often overlooked; social care delivers a huge benefit to society but just being a social care provider doesn't mean that you automatically tick the 'S' box.

The Social Care Sustainability Alliance was established in April 2023 to help social care providers make meaningful and impactful changes in delivering on their sustainability objectives. The Alliance recognises that the ESG approach within social care requires systemic changes beyond the capabilities of one individual company. Importantly, whilst the Alliance draws support from across organisations supporting the sector, its core membership comes from the senior leadership of providers and operators of all sizes, from across the whole sector and of all business types.

By fostering collaboration on key issues, the Alliance aims to identify sustainability opportunities and share best practices across the sector, enabling members to prepare robust, ambitious, yet realistic net-zero plans for longer-term sustainability results. The Alliance helps members to navigate the ESG landscape and provide a safe space to discuss the regulatory, operational and financial pressures that can often delay the implementation of the ESG commitments.

In December 2023, the Alliance published its first report which sets out the business case for sustainability in social care. This report contends that addressing the challenges of sustainability can reduce costs, improve care and at the same time accelerate the transition to carbon net zero and a more sustainable future. The report aims to provide those seeking to embark on or to deepen the sustainability journeys within their social care organisations with clear evidence to persuade Executive and Board teams of the financial as well as moral arguments for embracing sustainability at the heart of their organisations.

Sustainability is not a fad, nor a tick box exercise. All the evidence points to sustainable businesses being, quite simply, better businesses. So, if you'd like to learn more and get involved in the Alliance (and there are no fees!), please check out our website¹ and get in touch to play your part in this vital agenda.

✉ @jonathanfreeman@CareTechFdn
🌐 [addleshawgoddard.com/en/sectors/health/
social-care-sustainability-alliance/](https://addleshawgoddard.com/en/sectors/health/social-care-sustainability-alliance/)
🌐 caretechfoundation.org.uk

¹ www.addleshawgoddard.com/en/sectors/health/social-care-sustainability-alliance/

New year, same challenges?



Sarah Jones
Chief Executive
Anchor

Sarah Jones, Chief Executive at Anchor, shares her thoughts on the challenges and opportunities for the year ahead.

A new year but the same old challenges in the social care sector?

Maybe. But with the challenges intensifying and 2024 expected to be an election year, all of us in the sector have a responsibility to ensure that social care reform is at the forefront of the national consciousness.

We know that care providers face an ongoing challenge in terms of state support for a fair price for care, as councils face ever greater budgetary constraints. And with a relatively new Health and Social Care Secretary, we and the sector as a whole must continue to call for a consistent and sustainable approach to social care funding. We look forward to hearing more from Government on this.

At Anchor, we are passionate about social care being recognised as a highly skilled and specialised sector with a workforce that takes great pride in what they do every day.

We were proud to become the first large care and housing provider to be an accredited Living Wage Foundation employer, committing to paying colleagues the real Living Wage for the foreseeable future.

We have increased our training and career development pathways to help colleagues progress and continue to look at what more we can do to support our care workforce as part of a comprehensive package of benefits, which already includes shopping discounts and support for people's wellbeing.

“We are keen for government to prioritise the development of a dementia strategy, which must commit to a shared approach.”

More work with schools and colleges to promote careers in social care among younger people is vital if we are to inspire a new generation of people to join our workforce and shine a light on the difference that great social care makes to people's lives.

A further challenge we face, not only in the sector, but across society as a whole, is the growing numbers of people living with dementia. There are over 900,000 people living with dementia in the UK and this is set to rise to over one million by 2025. At an individual level, there are many ways we can improve the quality of life of a person living with dementia, through the provision of highly specialised and personalised care. At a system-wide level the partnership between housing, health and social care can be strengthened, particularly in terms of information sharing, to improve the experience of people receiving health and social care services and increase early diagnosis.

“This year provides an opportunity for us all to demonstrate the difference that our sector makes.”

This is why we are keen for government to prioritise the development of a dementia strategy, which must commit to a shared approach across housing, social care and the NHS.

As a not-for-profit care and housing provider, we reinvest every penny we make into our properties and services, building more and innovating for the future. We're proud of growing our care home portfolio to 120 care homes and look forward to opening more homes in 2024, to ensure we continue to meet current and future needs of residents.

In the modern, digital world, technology can have a hugely positive impact in our sector. Digital Care Planning, Digital Medication Management and introducing a Sign In app for visitors to our care homes all help to reduce the administrative burden. That means colleagues have more time to focus on what really matters, providing outstanding care for our residents.

So, yes, perhaps the challenges are as they have been for some time - only more intense. But this year also provides an opportunity for us all to demonstrate the difference that our sector makes and why it is something to be cherished.

2024: the long-deserved dawn of carer power



Amrit Dhaliwal
Founder and Chief Executive
Walfinch

Amrit Dhaliwal, Founder and Chief Executive at home care franchiser Walfinch, shares his thoughts on why 2024 could be a favourable one for care workers.

In 2024, the day of the carer will dawn. Employers who have built their business models on the assumption that cheap labour will always be available will be forced by the market to improve pay, working conditions, recruitment and retention. The whole sector will benefit.

The pool of easily-recruited care talent is almost drained away, and government threats to restrict immigration still further – whether serious or an election tactic – will not help. There were still 152,000 vacancies in 2022-23 according to Skills for Care.

The whole care sector must wake up to a new world, where candidates hold the power, rather than employers.

Care providers will be scrambling to boost their recruitment and retention skills, which will be new to many. Without higher and faster recruitment, and better retention of the carers they already have, providers will be short staffed, and many existing carers will leave, burnt out by increasing work pressures.

“In 2024 I hope that providers increasingly make this ‘mixed economy’ work successfully.”

As a result, more providers will be using recruitment experts, either external or in-house, who understand the special requirements of the care sector. Providers will learn more about what works in recruitment now. Putting a basic ad on the big internet recruitment sites will no longer work.

Clever care companies will use more varied recruitment methods, such as in-house recommendation schemes with financial rewards that really motivate carers to recommend friends, and staging recruitment events in local venues. Will we see widespread ‘golden hellos’ for carers?

“Providers who offer the minimum legal pay will be ignored by candidates.”

Meanwhile, pay for carers will improve. Providers who fail to address this could go under. The National Living Wage will rise by 9.8% to £11.44, an increase of £1.02 an hour, but relying on basic wages to attract care staff is no longer enough. Providers who offer the minimum legal pay will be ignored by candidates, so care homes and home care providers must change their financial models to increase pay rates.

Working conditions and benefits will improve – again, there’s no choice. In home care, pay for travelling time will no longer be a perk. Carers will expect it. Employers will increasingly find ways to build better employment packages, perhaps including benefits like car loans or retail discount cards for carers.

In 2024 more tech suppliers will target us with messages claiming their care technology will solve all our problems – but we must be careful. Seizing on these as a way to increase clients while ignoring service quality can be a false economy. Technology can be a huge benefit, but it cannot replace human carers, and in a sector where reputation and word-of-mouth are vital, the wrong tech solutions could cost us clients. More providers will be appointing in-house or external care technology experts to evaluate the real value of caretech solutions.

Meanwhile, providers will increasingly focus on better-paying private contracts, rather than taking on public sector work. The latter is easier to get but can be uneconomic to service. Some providers may use the profits made on private-client contracts to cross-subsidise public sector work. This shows the genuine caring aims of the care sector, but economically it means sacrificing parts of their own incomes.

In 2024 I hope that providers increasingly make this ‘mixed economy’ work successfully.

I remain optimistic about the future of the care sector – but providers of all types must increasingly co-operate in order to lobby the government to treat us and our clients fairly. It’s an election year, so now is our best chance.

 @walfinchfran
 walfinchfranchising.com

Keep learning in the spotlight for 2024



Oonagh Smyth
Chief Executive
Skills for Care

Oonagh Smyth, Chief Executive at Skills for Care, discusses the challenges and opportunities for recruitment, retention, and learning and development this year.

As the new year begins it's an important time to think about what opportunities lie ahead for the year, and what challenges will need to be addressed.

Moving into 2024 we know that one of the biggest challenges that continues for social care employers is around recruitment and retention of staff.

Our latest data, released in October 2023, told us that while there has been a positive change in the number of vacancies reducing and the number of filled posts increasing, vacancies do remain high with 152,000 vacancies on any given day.

Turnover has also slightly decreased on 2021/22 but again remains high at 28.3%. I have said before that we have a 'leaky bucket' in the sector, and this is something that needs to be fixed. We can't recruit our way out of a retention challenge; keeping the right people for the long-term must be a priority in securing and sustaining our workforce and leaders of the future.

Of course, learning and development of staff is something which links directly to retaining staff. Providing ongoing learning and development for staff allows them to build their skills and confidence and grow in their career within social care. It also shows that they're valued and recognised, which has a positive impact on morale and loyalty.

We know from our data that there are five key factors which impact retention. These are:

1

Being paid more than the minimum wage.

2

Not being on a zero-hours contract

3

Being able to work full-time.

4

Being able to access training.

5

Having a relevant qualification.

Where none of these factors apply, care workers are more than twice as likely to leave their jobs than when all five factors apply – a 48.7% turnover rate compared with 20.6%.

Looking individually at the impact of training and qualifications on retention we still see a positive correlation.

The average turnover rate was 9.0 percentage points lower amongst care workers who had received some form of training (31.6%), compared to those who had not (40.6%).

Of care workers that held a relevant social care qualification, 26.5% had left within the 12-month analysis period, compared to 37.0% of those that didn't hold a relevant qualification.

The impact which continuous learning has on staff retention is something we're exploring in our #KeepLearning spotlight running throughout January and February.

“Our latest data told us that there has been a positive change in the number of vacancies reducing.”

In January, the Government announced two developments set to take place in 2024 which will be fundamental in supporting both learning and recruitment and retention in the sector. These are the first iteration of the Care Workforce Pathway and the development of a new Care Certificate recognised qualification.

Currently there's no universal career structure or clear articulation of the level of knowledge, experience and skill that's required to deliver high-quality, personalised care and support.

The Care Workforce Pathway will help to better articulate what a career in social care means, supporting the development of a consistent understanding of what it is to be a professional working in adult social care.

This is an important step in ensuring that people working in social care are recognised as the professionals that they are and are supported to develop in their roles long-term. This is vital in shaping the future of social care and developing new leaders.

We recommend that everyone new to working in social care completes the Care Certificate as part of a robust induction process.

We know from our data that 65% of direct care providing staff who've started work in the sector since January 2015 have engaged with the Care Certificate.

Following feedback from people working in care, the Care Certificate is now being developed into a recognised qualification.

Skills for Care has been working on developing the content for this new Care Certificate qualification, in collaboration with the sector through a series of focus groups and meetings with stakeholders.

Awarding organisations will be using the content developed over the next few months to create and launch their qualifications.

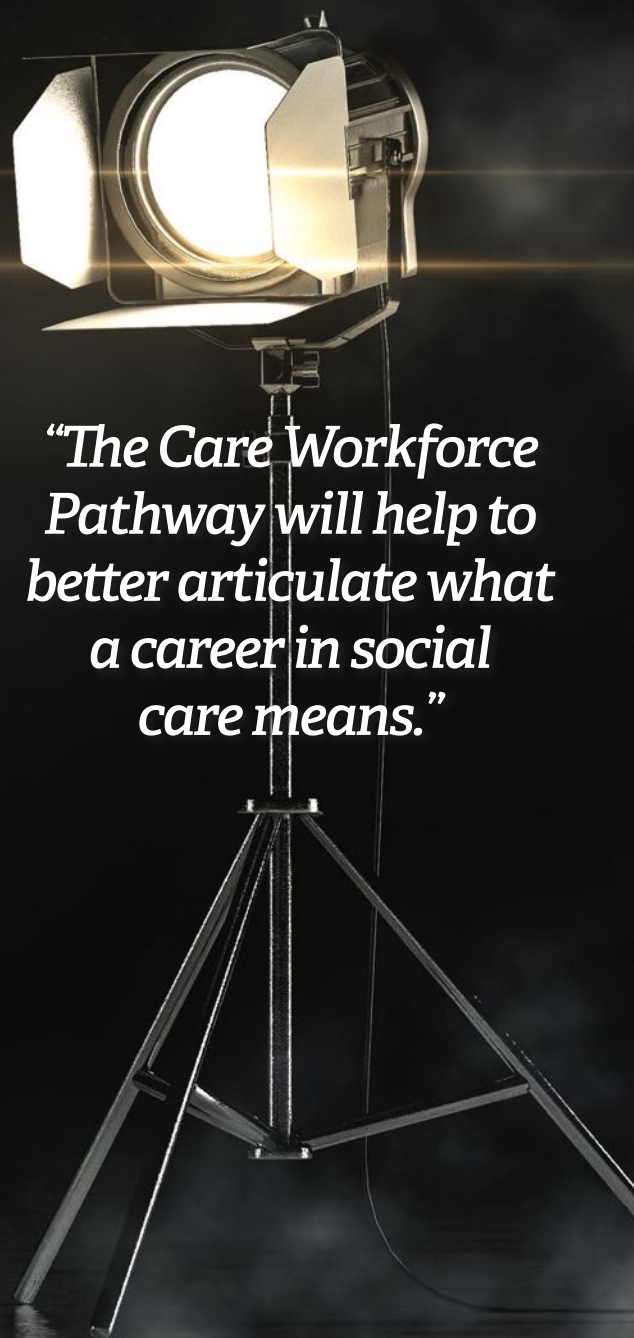
The new qualification reflects the existing content of the Care Certificate standards, with some updates based on emerging themes, such as personal wellbeing, digital skills and equality and diversity.

The new qualification will make the Care Certificate more portable between employers and create a more robust delivery, assessment, and standardisation process.

At Skills for Care, we'll also be continuing our work this year on developing the 'Workforce strategy for adult social care', which will be instrumental in supporting the sector to grow and maximise opportunities.

I look forward to providing further updates on that work and everything else that Skills for Care will be doing this year to support people working in care, in 2024 and beyond.

✉ @oonaghsmyth
🌐 [skillsforcare.org.uk](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)



“The Care Workforce Pathway will help to better articulate what a career in social care means.”

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Adult-Social-Care-Workforce-Data/Workforce-intelligence/
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/news-and-events/Spotlight-on/Keep-learning-for-success.aspx

More voice, more choice



Community
Integrated
Care

Joe Crammond

Quality Advisor
Community Integrated Care



Jamie Potts

Quality Advisor
Community Integrated Care

Joe Crammond and Jamie Potts, share their thoughts on why people with lived experience should be at the heart of social care planning, and how, in their roles as Quality Advisors at Community Integrated Care, they are involved in designing and developing services.

Jamie Potts and Joe Crammond have been employed as Quality Advisors for national social care charity, Community Integrated Care, since 2015. Both use their first-hand experiences of accessing care and support to inform meaningful developments across 450 UK services, as well as empowering people supported by the charity to do the same. Championing people's unique needs and perspectives is a fundamental part of the organisation's Best Lives Possible vision.

Jamie and Joe are firm advocates in the importance of fostering a culture of co-production across the sector and beyond, reflecting on the opportunities they have gained to influence change with national policymakers and through the charity's own Voice Groups platform.

Jamie shared the significance of his role in representing for people with care and support needs and making sure everyone is involved in service design, delivery, and development:

“When the charity has a big idea, they come to us to talk about it first.”



“ There are five Quality Advisors at Community Integrated Care, and we all get the chance to make a big difference to peoples' lives. It's our job to make sure people we support feel valued and connected. There is a Quality Advisor for every region we work and people we support can talk to us about anything that is affecting them. We share back ideas with the quality and leadership teams to act on.

I love my job, mostly because I get a chance to meet lots of interesting people but also because I have a lot of responsibility. When the charity has a big idea, they come to us to talk about it first. That's important because we understand exactly what it's like to be supported by a service. We can represent for people like us.

Quality Advisors have so much influence – we even interviewed our Chief Executive, Jim Kane! I don't think our charity would be the same without us, we give the view of the most important people and we're involved from the start. This makes a big difference to how things are set-up and makes services more person-centred.

Jamie Potts



Joe added his thoughts on how Community Integrated Care are championing inclusion through their Voice Groups meetings and how himself and others have been given opportunities to lead on change across the sector and nationally:

“Quality Advisors have so much influence – we even interviewed our Chief Executive, Jim Kane!”



“Quality Advisors host Voice Groups for people supported by Community Integrated Care, across the UK. These give people the chance to feedback about their care and support and we use these insights to improve our services. People we support are the reason we exist; they are the experts, so they should be the real leaders. Voice Groups help people change things for the better and support people to become more confident and independent.

We also get the chance to work with other organisations and influence the government. Sushma (one of our Quality Advisors) went to a roundtable at Parliament in September and talked about social care challenges. I meet often with ARC to discuss how we can improve social care and society for everyone. We get together online and talk about things like voting and elections, making public transport better and safe relationships. ARC take all these ideas to the people who make decisions about social care. This makes me proud.

People supported by the charity are given the power to recognise their rights and make a mark too. Our Promoting our Voting campaign helps people understand they have a right to vote. One of the people we support, Tauseef, spoke at a Future Social Care Coalition event in Parliament last December. It's so important that people with care and support needs are given this voice – in social care and across society.

Joe Crammond



communityintegratedcare.co.uk
@CommIntCare

Putting care workers first



Karolina Gerlich

Chief Executive Officer
The Care Workers Charity

In the dynamic landscape of social care, the spotlight is turning towards a critical and often overlooked factor – the well-being and respect of care workers, as Karolina Gerlich, Chief Executive at The Care Workers Charity explains.

On the frontline of compassionate care, these individuals play an indispensable role in shaping the sustainability and quality of our social care system. Looking at the future of social care, it is crucial to prioritise care workers, ensuring they receive the recognition and support needed to provide the best possible care for those who depend on their services.

Respect as the foundation

The five factors that Skills for Social Care has underscored as pivotal to retaining adult social care staff come as no surprise to me, a sentiment I am sure resonates with many in the sector. When reflecting on these factors focused around, fair pay, job and income stability and consistency, and training, one word stands out clearly: Respect. It is the cornerstone upon which any thriving workplace is built, and the social care sector is no exception.

It was disheartening to see that more than half of care workers who responded (57.06%) to the National Care Awareness Survey 2023 didn't think the public viewed care workers as skilled professionals. This emphasises the urgent need for increased understanding and recognition of their role.

Care workers shoulder demanding and emotionally taxing responsibilities. They deserve not only acknowledgement but also understanding and appreciation for the invaluable work they undertake.

Despite their unwavering dedication to providing quality care, care workers often grapple with job insecurity and financial instability challenges, directly impacting their ability to meet the needs of those they support.

Security and predictability in employment are fundamental for care workers, mirroring employers' desire for a committed and consistent workforce. Care workers need to receive fair pay, and contracts should offer both security and flexibility, in allowing care workers to meet other responsibilities in their lives.

Care providers increasingly acknowledge the integral relationship between the well-being of care workers and the quality of care delivered. When care teams feel valued and supported, they are best able to offer consistent and compassionate support to those drawing on social care. Fostering an ethos of respect within the workplace and, importantly, cultivating wider social respect for the role of care workers can be a catalyst for creating an environment where both care workers and those they support thrive.

“Creating a sustainable social care system necessitates a shift in how we perceive and treat care workers.”

Changing perceptions

Creating a sustainable social care system necessitates a shift in how we perceive and treat care workers. Care workers need to receive fair pay but investing in their well-being extends beyond financial compensation. It involves recognising the challenges they face, providing adequate training and support, and acknowledging the emotional toll of their work. By addressing these aspects, we contribute to creating an environment that nurtures not only the physical but also the emotional and mental health of care workers.

Respecting care workers is not merely a moral imperative; it is a strategic investment in the sustainability and effectiveness of social care. Providers prioritising their care teams' well-being can witness a positive ripple effect, leading to increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and enhanced quality of care for those receiving support. A culture of support ensures that care workers can approach their roles with enthusiasm and dedication, ultimately benefiting the entire social care ecosystem.

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Enriching lives through DementiAbility



Jewish Care

JEWISH CARE

Penny Johns
Dementia Practitioner
Jewish Care

Penny Johns, Jewish Care's Dementia Practitioner, talks about how their DementiAbility certification has promoted person centred wellbeing for people living with dementia.

"DementiAbility creates opportunities for people living with dementia to live engaged, meaningful and purposeful lives."

We are so proud that Jewish Care has recently become the first organisation in the UK to receive DementiAbility certification at Jewish Care's Kun Mor and George Kiss Home care home where we have created a flagship of an enriched, stimulating, and person centred home environment for people living with dementia.

DementiAbility is a Canadian-born programme that creates opportunities for people living with dementia to live engaged, meaningful and purposeful lives to the full each day.

According to Alzheimer's Research UK, there are currently around 944,000 people living with dementia in the UK and this figure is set to rise to 1.6 million by 2050.

The concept of DementiAbility was developed by Gail Elliot, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of DementiAbility Enterprises Inc. who had a vision of improving the quality of life for people living with dementia in care homes. Through education, carers and practitioners can understand the connections between the individual, their life story, the environment, and behaviour. The concept is evidence based, drawing on research from many disciplines including occupational therapy, activities, psychology, neuroscience, memory research, nursing, design features for dementia, social work, and person-centred care.

My background in Montessori education is based on core principles of trust, respect, and freedom. A Montessori environment promotes independence based on the needs of the individual and group. I was fascinated by how Montessori ideas were being applied within dementia care, especially as I was supporting my mother through her own journey with dementia.

As one of the Dementia Practitioners at Jewish Care, my goal is to develop, implement and support the best dementia care practice within care homes, based on the understanding that everyone has individual needs and the right to a personally stimulating routine that will help maintain their skills, self-esteem, and independence. The DementiAbility method offers opportunities for engagement and activity in the environment in addition to the planned activities scheduled, giving more autonomy and empowerment to the individual.

We have been educating our care home staff at two-day DementiAbility training workshops. Participating staff can understand and apply DementiAbility methods in their daily practice. We are piloting the programme at Kun Mor & George Kiss care home, which is at Jewish Care's Betty and Asher Loftus Centre, our care campus in Friern Barnet and at Jewish Care's Vi & John Rubens House in Ilford and have already seen some great results.

One of the techniques we use that works for some people is Doll Therapy. Research shows that life-like dolls can have great therapeutic benefits for some people living with dementia, such as promoting relaxation and providing familiar feelings of comfort. We've found that the success of Doll Therapy is not gender-specific and for some residents, the sensation of holding a doll, may remind them of a time when they held young children or grandchildren of their own. We created a calm, cosy nursery area in one of our lounges for this and we've found bringing the dolls to the residents also works when we feel that this would be welcomed.

We have also put the Breakfast Buffet in place. Instead of staff serving food, each person chooses what they'd like to eat, and serves themselves, with support from care staff if needed. The buffet can be put on a trolley to enable participation for all. This approach promotes independence, freedom, and choice, and is empowering people to make choices each day that they would have been making all their life in their own home.

Identifying personalised activities that bring a sense of purpose is a key part of the programme. Sorting items with a personal connection can improve cognition and stimulate memories. Identifying tasks relevant to everyday life in a care home that can be done by a resident can also lead to meaningful interactions.



“I was fascinated by how Montessori ideas were being applied within dementia care.”

Jewish Care

One resident didn't enjoy group activities, but we learned from his family that he had always taken a huge sense of pride in taking care of his car, washing it every weekend. The activity of cleaning brought him a sense of satisfaction, and he is very happy when he is giving the garden furniture a clean over the summer so the residents and staff can enjoy sitting out or cleaning up after flower-arranging or art activities. With the role of livening up the group and cleaning up, his needs are being met and his relationships have therefore improved.

I find it inspiring and rewarding to be part of this team, introducing the DementiAbility approach with my colleague Tamer Ali and supporting practice in our care homes. It's about finding the individual, meeting them

where they are, working sensitively and with empathy to meet human needs for connection, occupation, and autonomy. It's about creating an enabling environment where the emphasis is on ability and potential.

As one of our residents said so perfectly, *“it's about respect for what people can do, not what they can't do, respect for what they're trying to do.”*

In the future, I would love for DementiAbility methods to spread across other care homes in the UK and to apply the ideas within retirement living and for other carers within the community.

 @Jewish_Care
 jewishcare.org

The Voluntary Care Professional Register: What the families think



Paul Featherstone
NACAS Founder and Director
and Data Protection Officer
Voluntary Care Professional Register

Paul Featherstone, NACAS Founder and Director and Data Protection Officer at the Voluntary Care Professional Register, talks to two family members about the need for a register for Care Professionals in England.

We've established a need for a register for Care Professionals in England. And have looked at what Carers themselves think and why Care Providers believe registration is important. We now turn our attention to the most significant group of people – those receiving care and their family network.

As we know, when a loved one is placed in care, the circumstances and the decision to do so are often hugely stressful for both the person being placed and their loved ones. With relatives often having to make the final decision on behalf of the service user. They will likely be a child, or a parent, a sister or brother. It is hugely probable that they love and respect that person immensely and any decision around getting support is not taken lightly.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the family members we have spoken to about the Voluntary Care Professional Register (VCPR) believe it can only be a positive thing for the sector.

“The family members we have spoken to believe it can only be a positive thing for the sector.”

I spoke two individuals to better understand their views on a care register, such as VCPR. These were:

1. **Victoria Hay** whose mother is receiving at home care.
2. **Kate Meacock** whose mother is in a nursing home.



Victoria Hay



Kate Meacock pictured with her much loved mother.

Here's how things went:

Were you aware that there is a register for Care Professional in Wales and Scotland, and a register for Nurses in England?

Victoria: No, I wasn't. I'm surprised the role of Carers is not already better regulated in England then.

Kate: Yes. I have volunteered in related areas, so I have a reasonable understanding.

How do you think Care Professionals are currently perceived by the average person?

Victoria: I think they're seen as an essential part of our communities. But they are under-valued and underpaid.

Kate: There are many mixed messages about Carers. Negative publicity over the few tarnishes the rest. For many, until you need to access social care you probably don't even think about it.

What is your opinion on the role of a Care Professional?

Victoria: Care Professionals perform an essential role in providing help and care which enables vulnerable people to remain in their own home.

Kate: They are some of the hardest working people I have been honoured to meet and who deserve a lot more. It seems to be a role that does not encourage a career path. Nor does it encourage progression and an opportunity to grow. It is long hours, few breaks, with often little thanks.

How important do you think it is that Care, as a profession, is regulated in the future?

Victoria: Very important because Carers need to be trusted and have good capability in their role. This capability should ideally include a knowledge of the persons health and well-being.

Kate: Very. By regulating, I would hope there is more training, better recognition and greater security for all who enter the care profession.

*“By regulating,
I would hope
there is more
training and
better
recognition.”*

Can you tell us about a particularly positive experience you have witnessed through the care given by a Care Professional to your relative?



Victoria: Two of the Care Professionals who visited my mother went beyond their role by singing and dancing which made her laugh and brightened her day. They regularly make it their mission to deliver person centred care and bring joy to her day.

Kate: On returning from hospital earlier this year, my mum arrived back at the care home. She was instantly surrounded by love. The care team's main priority was to make her comfortable in her chair, get her something to drink and eat and make sure that she was relaxed before doing all the checks back in observations.

The team recognised that the journey would have been distressing for my mother. The smile on her face on hearing the familiar voices - a similar smile to one she shows me - made me realise how important the role of permanent carers are for those with advanced dementia. The importance of having Care Professionals who really get to know those in care must never be underestimated.

Kate's much loved mum sadly passed away while this article was being produced. Our sincerest condolences to Kate and family.

The Voluntary Care Professional Register is currently free for all Care Professionals. To help raise the profile of the crucial part you play in society, you can register at <https://www.vcpr.co.uk/>.

 @NACASUK
 [vcpr.co.uk](https://www.vcpr.co.uk)



The evolving policy landscape of housing with care



Nick Sanderson
Chief Executive
Audley Group

Nick Sanderson, Chief Executive at Audley Group, looks at the role housing with care has to play in the future landscape of social care.

In November, Professor Chris Whitty used the Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report to impress upon the public, policymakers and the medical profession that despite widely held perceptions many, in fact most, people enter older age, and remain, in good health through their later years. With people enjoying independence and a high quality of life, and importantly experiencing ageing positively.

And if I were to urge the housing sector, from policymakers, planners, housebuilders to operators to remember one thing as we shape how people live it's this. For many people ageing is positive, a time to do the things they enjoy with cherished friends and loved ones.

It's evident from the conversations I have with our property owners in our Audley and Mayfield Villages. Many lead fascinating, active and independent lives and take part in a huge variety of activities – whether that's skydiving to raise money for charity, supporting local school children with reading or travelling the world.

I believe at very heart of enabling people to live these lives, is providing the right housing, in the right places. In 2022, the National Housing Federation said that "every decision about care should be a decision about housing" – and this is absolutely true.

By giving people choice over how and where they live, with the facilities to help them actively improve all aspects of their wellbeing, we can help people stay well for longer. And importantly remove that decision between living in a large family home or moving into care. Something that has become all too common, simply because we don't have a diverse enough housing mix.

In late 2022, the Mayhew Review made it clear that the UK has a chronic lack of appropriate retirement housing. At present just 7,000 retirement properties are built annually, out of 200,000 new build properties. Comparing this to the projected population growth of people over 65+, expected to reach 17.2million people by 2040, shows just how significant the shortfall is.

It's recommendations include an accelerated programme of retirement housing construction with up to 50,000 new units and significant expansion in the number of integrated retirement communities, to create a housing stock that can support a healthy population.

But for this to kick into gear, we need to see reform in other parts of our housing policy. Planning reforms, announced in the Autumn Statement as part of the levelling Up & Regeneration Bill lacked focus on age specific housing. Which isn't good enough. It needs to be acknowledged that age specific housing is needed to make up a diverse housing mix and meet the demands of our population. Retirement housing should be mandated in any new housing projects. It's also imperative that new policies tackle the root issues, as opposed to offering short-term solutions that paper over the cracks. Stamp duty changes for downsizers have been mooted for some time and while it would boost activity in the housing market, encouraging downsizing while there is an undersupply in the market would be a misstep. We need to ensure that sufficient properties are available to meet demand before incentives are introduced.

"At very heart of enabling people to live these lives, is providing the right housing, in the right places."

This is what the Older People's Housing Task Force is working to address and more will be shared in the coming months. Looking at barriers impacting growth and supply of appropriate housing for older people and providing recommendations as part of a report to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

This will contribute to ongoing progress which must remain at the forefront of policy reforms to allow the UK to increase supply and boost the housing with care market. As manifestos take shape in 2024 and the build up to the next general election, we must do what we can to ensure effective policy is already in place to make room for real, continual progress.





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Making an IMPACT with values based recruitment



Dr Laura Griffith
Deputy Director of National
Embedding, IMPACT –
Improving Adult Care Together

Dr Laura Griffith, Deputy Director of National Embedding at IMPACT, the UK centre for implementing evidence in adult social care, shares the outcomes of a year-long programme on values based recruitment.

Values-based recruitment is a relatively new term in the care sector, but has been used in retail and the health sector for some time. It essentially means working with people whose values align with the organisation or employer, rather than purely focusing on skills, qualifications or prior experience. At the centre of values-based recruitment is the idea that whilst skills can be taught, values are an individual trait that cannot easily be taught.

It is not news to anyone in the sector that adult social care has significant problems with recruitment and retention. One of the main issues identified by the Social Care Institute for Excellenceⁱ is that social care has difficulties in attracting individuals in the first place. Evidenceⁱⁱ has highlighted several reasons for a lack of interest in working in the sector, including: perceptions of care work, a lack of awareness of career pathways, low earning potential and the tendency for employers to ask for [particular] qualifications and experience. Values-based recruitment is often proposed as part of the solution to some of these issues.

“Evidence has highlighted several reasons for a lack of interest in working in the sector.”

IMPACTⁱⁱⁱ – a £15 million UK centre for implementing evidence in adult social care – set out to examine this issue throughout the UK. In late 2022 and early 2023, IMPACT brought together Networks^{iv}, led by Dr. Kate Hamblin, to share evidence to explore values-based recruitment, and help define what activities appear to work best in practice.

In a recent podcast about this Network, Anne Pridmore Chief Executive Officer of Being the Boss^v, Dave Beesley, Talent Director at Cohesion Recruitment^{vi}, and Jo Parsons, Co-production Manager at Drive^{vii} shared their insights.

“For me it’s more important that people come to the job with an open mind, and not having worked in a residential setting. [...] if someone says to me, I have worked for the past 20 years in a residential home, I’m afraid that’s a no no. Because I’ve found that I cannot break down those barriers because it’s too much hard work.

I like someone with a go-to attitude, the last person I recruited has been with me for two years and it is the first time ever that I’ve let them go [from the interview] for 20 mins and told them that they’ve got the job [...] I could just tell that this particular person was who I wanted on my team because she was just up for any adventure.”

Anne Pridmore
Chief Executive Officer of Being the Boss

Dave reflected that the use of values-based recruitment has been formalised within the sector within the last 5-10 years, but that it is not always practised consistently. He spoke about what it could do in terms of unleashing potential:



“Sometimes people are turned down by the sector, because they are too young, or because they don’t have enough experience, and I think values-based recruitment opens up the door to have conversations beyond this. So, if someone has the right values - with the right support and guidance, training and development, we can foster those values and allow them to be great at what they do.”

Dave Beesley, Cohesion Recruitment

“Values-based recruitment means working with people whose values align.”

Through the IMPACT Networks, individuals and organisations discussed practical approaches to the “how” of values-based recruitment, helping people to lead good lives and the range of resources and approaches there are out there from the recruitment of individual PAs up to approaches that worked for large recruitment companies. What was common to all, however, was that values-based recruitment shouldn’t be seen solely as a recruitment issue but required much larger changes in how we value and perceive care work more widely.

Have a look at the suite of evidence, resources, videos and insights into how values-based recruitment works in practice on IMPACT’s new value-based recruitment webpage.^{viii}

 @ImpAdultCare
 impact.bham.ac.uk

ⁱscie.org.uk

ⁱⁱscie.org.uk/almost-there

ⁱⁱⁱimpact.bham.ac.uk

^{iv}impact.bham.ac.uk/our-projects/networks/

^vbeingtheboss.co.uk

^{vi}cohesionrecruitment.com

^{vii}drive-wales.org.uk

^{viii}impact.bham.ac.uk/our-projects/networks/values-based-recruitment/

Cultivating compassionate leaders of the future



Johnathan Freeman MBE
Chief Executive,
CareTech Ltd

In his second piece of this issue, Jonathan Freeman, Chief Executive at CareTech, explains how their partnership with Youth Leads UK is empowering young people to become the sector's leaders of tomorrow.

“By investing in care-experienced youth, we're planting seeds for a future.”

Nurturing future leaders holds particular importance within social care due to the empathic nature of the sector. It is vital to mentor and empower the next generation of staff, fostering the growth of young minds for leadership roles in social care. Investing in these emerging leaders sets the stage for a more compassionate and effective approach to meet the evolving needs of our communities. Social care is evolving to embrace technology and that means building a workforce of staff today who embrace these changes tomorrow and lead with confidence. At the CareTech Foundation, we have partnered with Youth Leads UK to focus on this much-needed area.

Since February 2023, Youth Leads UK has been delivering the "Youth Leads the Way" programme. Youth Leads UK is a charity dedicated to empowering young people to become leaders in their communities. The programme focuses on providing training, resources, and support to help youth develop essential leadership skills, foster social responsibility, and create positive change. Over the next three years, Youth Leads the Way will support 72 care experienced young people across Greater Manchester to develop their skills, empower their potential and influence change by leading their own projects and planning their social care careers. These leaders will address challenges and make a meaningful impact in their spheres of influence.



At the heart of this programme is a curriculum rich in experiential learning, offering engaging sessions such as article writing for magazines, immersive industry experiences, and purposeful social action endeavours. These components not only serve as educational tools but also provide platforms for young leaders to actively engage, learn, and become proactive agents of change.

The impact of this initiative resonates deeply through participant feedback, highlighting its effectiveness in boosting confidence, refining job-related skills, and improving communication abilities. Empirical assessment further supports these findings, illustrating significant progress across pivotal domains crucial for effective leadership.

Consider the story of a 15-year-old female participant—a story emblematic of the programme's transformative influence. Her journey as a care experienced individual from reservation to confidence, from observer to an engaged leader, mirrors the profound transformations experienced by numerous others in the programme. Her narrative stands as evidence of the programme's capacity to nurture talents and instil leadership qualities in young minds. This young person is clear that they want to be a social worker in later life.





Social care leadership goes beyond hierarchical structures; it involves nurturing empathetic, resilient, and innovative minds capable of driving transformative change. Youth Leads the Way plays a vital role in nurturing a cohort of leaders equipped not just with technical skills but also with the compassion and adaptability needed to address the sector's complex challenges.

By appealing to and developing care-experienced young people to join the social care workforce, the conversation extends beyond just endpoints but rather acts as a catalyst for broader aspirations. It prompts crucial questions: How can we expand the reach of such transformative experiences? How do we ensure equal access for all aspiring leaders? These queries drive us to enhance the prospects of a better tomorrow, urging caregivers, stakeholders, policymakers, and all involved in the sector to magnify our impact, reach more aspiring leaders, and create lasting change in the social care sphere.

Developing leaders is a shared commitment—a dedication to nurturing potential, fostering talent, and building an inclusive future. By investing in care-experienced youth, we aren't just shaping leaders; we're planting seeds for a future where leadership thrives on empathy, resilience, and unwavering dedication.

Highlighting the significance of this vital initiative, it's crucial to delve into the multifaceted nature of leadership development programmes and their profound impact on shaping the future. At its core, this initiative strives not only to address immediate challenges but also to lay the groundwork for a sustainable and resilient future.

“Youth Leads UK is dedicated to empowering young people to become leaders in their communities.”



Saeed Atcha
MBE DL

Youth Leads UK Chief Executive Officer, Saeed Atcha MBE DL, said:

“I know from my experience growing up in care that we face many more challenges and barriers than our non-care counterparts. I’m proud that our partnership with the CareTech Foundation removes barriers in the way of care experienced young people getting

ahead. This programme will see care leavers become care leaders!”



@jonathanfreeman @CareTechFdn
caretechfoundation.org.uk

Uniting social care nurses



Department
of Health &
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Deborah Sturdy

Chief Nurse
Adult Social Care

Deborah Sturdy, Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care reflects on the achievements of 2023 and the opportunities for the year ahead.

“There is a growing interest in advanced practice for social care nurses.”

As we enter a new year, I think we should be proud of the milestones social care nursing has achieved and use them as a firm platform on which to build an even stronger specialism.

In 2023, Salford University was announced as host of the UK's first ever Professor of Social Care Nursing. The post, funded by the RCN Foundation, sets an important precedent in recognising the specialism of social care nursing in all its diverse settings and iterations.

This new position will be critical in delivering work around workforce as well as practice-based research. There will be a steering committee of interrelated organisations and individuals to make sure the role delivers the greatest impact.

This, coupled with the appointment of the first Nurse fellow for social care nursing at the NIHR (National Institute of Health and Care Research) will really help to scope out what is needed for social care research. In terms of access, career shaping and as consumers of research ourselves, this is a fundamental shift.

The QNI (Queen's Nursing Institute) have led the development of the first standards of social care nursing. For the first time, we have the opportunity for a Specialist Practitioner Qualification (SPQ) on the NMC register. This is another essential element, helping us build a strong specialism and fundamental to the positive changes we want for our profession.

We have a second cohort of registered nurses recruited to the Florence Nightingale Foundation Global Majority Leadership programme. I hope we will see this programme roll forward and continue to provide an opportunity for the large numbers of diverse colleagues working in social care to realise their leadership potential.

It was a real pleasure to see the first cohort graduate and hear their plans for sharing their experiences as they plan to write a series of essays for publication. We need strong visible role models and I will watch their progress with keen interest.

There is a growing interest in advanced practice for social care nurses and I am working with colleagues to build interest, gather evidence and explore how we can further unleash the talent of the social care nursing workforce in 2024.

Social care nursing voices needs to be heard locally as well as nationally. The work in establishing social care nursing councils in every ICS continues to gain strength, led by social care nurses.

I am hearing about more nurse leadership roles in local authorities and ICS's being established and this ground swell of interest helps us all.

At the end of 2023, in association with the Foundation of Nursing Studies we announced a social care nursing programme of resilience based clinical supervision, which will be cascaded across regions in the coming year. This is a critical part of how we support our workforce and create useful connections.

The “We are Social Care Nursing” newsletter, published by Skills for Care, is an insight into all that is going on and I strongly encourage you to sign up for it. We need to keep connected and as the saying goes “there is strength in numbers”.

We need to build our community and strengthen our narrative about the positive, creative and rewarding careers available in social care nursing. Our expertise is needed now more than ever so let's make sure our voices are heard.

“We need to strengthen our narrative about the creative and rewarding careers in social care nursing.”

✉ @sturdy_deborah

🌐 [gov.uk/government/organisations/
department-of-health-and-social-care](https://gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-of-health-and-social-care)

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A voice for children in 2024



CHILDREN'S
COMMISSIONER

Dame Rachel de Souza

The Children's Commissioner
for England

Dame Rachel de Souza, The Children's Commissioner for England, outlines her thoughts on transforming the lives of children living in care.

“*...Everyone should have a safe place to live. They want somebody to love them and treat them well like their family.*”

Girl, 10 (Living with foster family)

As Children's Commissioner, I speak to thousands of children every year and thankfully the majority of children tell me they feel safe, loved and secure at home. However, this is sadly not the case for all children.

In the Big Ask survey, which I conducted in 2021, those children living in care told me they were less likely to feel they have a place to call home, and to feel loved by those they live with.

Children with social workers and those in care deserve to have lives that are as fulfilling, rounded and happy as any other child, but recent analysis by my office shows that we still have some way to go until this is the case.

Since I took up post, I have visited children across the country, and carried out a range of research, to really explore in detail how children experience family life, and the challenges that families in England face.

“Too many children's voices are being ignored and their opportunities diminished.”

I am due to release the results from most recent survey, The Big Ambition, from the middle of February onwards which will provide further evidence. It will also shine a spotlight on what children think would improve their lives and the lives of other young people.

While I have been going across England over the last few months, I have made it a priority to speak to children in care and I look forward to sharing those results which will look at children with a social worker, children in foster care, children in kinship care, and children living in children's homes.

I have also been conducting a separate survey asking people whether they think care should be a protected characteristic and I will be sharing these findings as soon as I can.

The children in care who responded to The Big Ask survey which I carried out when I became the Children's Commissioner were generally happy. Among those aged 9 to 17, the majority (63%) said they were happy with their life, and 68% said they were happy with their family life. They were less likely to be happy with life at school or college, their mental health, and the choice of things to do in their local area – but, still just over half said they were happy with each of these.

My key reflection is how neglected children's social care has been, particularly in comparison to the education system, which has been through lots of reform and received plenty of money and challenge from Government.

We need Government to give children's social care reform the commitment, funding and attention it gave school reform back in 2010. Because children's social care is the most important function of the state. It is about how to keep children safe. And that's why we must aim for a system that is consistently brilliant.

Sadly, the stories of individual children that are included in this response will demonstrate that while there are dedicated, compassionate and thoughtful people working across the country with our most vulnerable children, things are still not good enough. Too many children's voices are being ignored, their needs overlooked, and their opportunities diminished.

It's welcome that the Government has a plan for reform, following Josh MacAlister's review into social care, but they need to be moving much further and faster. I want to see a really ambitious reform programme, that is not just about testing different ideas. There needs to be real accountability in place, with a robust outcomes framework that lets us know if things are working or not.

We need to start from the point of view of the child, ensuring that they are always listened to, and their needs are prioritised.

We need to start from the point of view of the child, ensuring that they are always listened to, and their needs are prioritised.

The top three issues that children in care (aged 9–17) were most likely to say they were unhappy with were their mental health (23% unhappy); the choice of things to do in their local area (20% unhappy) and life at school or college (19%). This is remarkably similar to the top three issues that other children aged 9 to 17 – not in care – were unhappy with. It's important to note that children in care reported similar future aspirations to other children, namely to get on in life.

However, there are also some issues where children in care (aged 9 to 17) were significantly more likely than other children to be unhappy. For example, the office found that 14% of children in care were are unhappy with their family life, compared to 6% of other children.

I have carried out several major pieces of research with children in care, for example on siblings who are separated in the care system, looked after children who are not in school, 16- and 17-year-olds who present as homeless, and children's access to advocacy.

What came through clearly in those reports was:

- **children not being listened to**
- **a lack of sufficient, loving homes**
- **children not having access to consistent and loving relationships**
- **a system which is overwhelmed, and unable to responsively meet the needs of children**

Throughout my work I have set out five over-arching outcomes that I want for every child, namely that they are safe, healthy, happy, learning and engaged in their community. I think for us to achieve that within the context of children's social it will mean achieving some key ambitions.

Broadly speaking, I believe that all young people involved with children's social care must be truly listened to and we need to ensure that their views are really heard and taken into consideration.

All families get consistent, effective help to improve children's welfare. This would mean a range of measures including clear national thresholds for families being offered Child in Need plans; greater investment in

children's social care to allow for earlier intervention and plans should be integrated in cases where children are receiving help from social care and also have an Education and Health Care Plan.



“My key reflection is how neglected children's social care has been.”

I would like to see all children in care have a loving stable home without a cliff edge of care at 16 or 18. My ambition is for those children who need secure care to receive it in an integrated, homely environment.

It is simply not acceptable that children are being placed far from home, separated from siblings etc because there are not enough good, loving homes.

Over the next few months, I will be sharing the results from the Big Ambition which will analyse in detail what children in care have told me and I will be spelling out what young people have told me they want to see from decision makers. I will then be working really hard to make the case for change so that every child feels like they have a safe place to live with people to love them and treat them well.

As we stand on the brink of a General Election there is an opportunity for all parties to set out how they plan to enhance the lives for children in care. It's time to ensure their dreams are not just heard but championed. The power to create a brighter future is in our hands.

 [childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](https://twitter.com/childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)
 [@ChildrensComm](https://www.facebook.com/ChildrensComm)



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The National
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Awards

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL CARE

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Navigating the nuances: Data protection beyond safekeeping



Mel Judd
South West Regional Coordinator
Better Security, Better Care

Mel Judd, South West Regional Coordinator for Better Security, Better Care explains the importance of actively sharing data.

In the fast-evolving landscape of data protection, the focus has predominantly been on safeguarding sensitive information. While ensuring the security of data is undeniably crucial, there's another facet that deserves equal attention—the requirement to share data responsibly.

“In reality it goes beyond just locking away sensitive information.”

There are many myths which are common in the social care sector such as data protection is solely about keeping information safe when in reality it goes beyond just locking away sensitive information. It also encompasses the responsible sharing of data, a critical but often overlooked aspect of managing information in today's interconnected world.

In the realm of social care and support services, sharing relevant data is fundamental to providing effective and coordinated care. From healthcare providers collaborating on patient records to social care providers sharing information for better service delivery, responsible data sharing is the linchpin of a connected and efficient system. It is frequently cited as a major issue in discussions about the future of integrated health and care.

Achieving the delicate balance between sharing and safeguarding requires a nuanced approach. Providers need to navigate legal and ethical considerations, ensuring they adhere to data protection laws while facilitating the exchange of information for the benefit of service users.

Consider a scenario where a care recipient transitions from a healthcare setting to a social care environment. Effective data sharing between the two entities ensures a seamless transition, with vital information about the individual's health history, medication, and specific needs readily available to the new care provider.

Gloria is worried about phishing scams

Gloria works in the office for Elm Home Care. She regularly uses email and the internet for work.

She needs your help. She is worried about falling for a phishing scam at work and wants to know what the danger signs are.

What should Gloria look out for to spot a scam? Choose all that apply.



☒ Select the correct responses, then click Submit

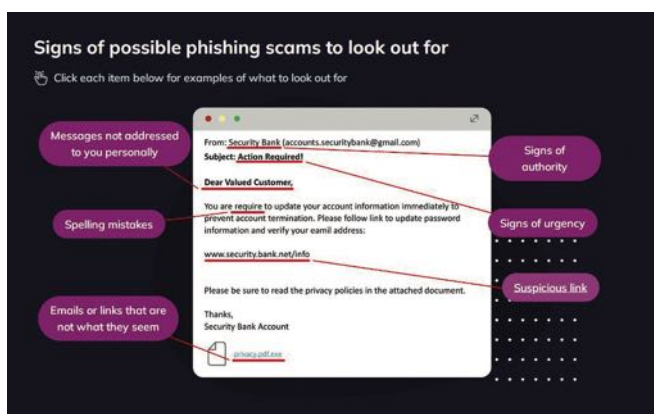
☐ Spelling mistakes in the message

☐ Messages not addressed to her personally

☐ Signs of urgency or authority

☐ Emails or links that are not what they seem

Submit



“Help is now at hand via the nationally funded Better Security, Better Care programme.”

Despite the clear advantages, challenges persist. Concerns about privacy breaches, data misuse, and the potential for information falling into the wrong hands are valid. However, these challenges can be mitigated through robust data protection frameworks, secure communication channels, and access controls. Establishing transparent policies and procedures for data sharing ensures that all stakeholders are aware of the guidelines, promoting accountability. Of course, you will also need to obtain explicit consent from service users regarding data sharing, clearly outlining the purposes and entities involved.

In the dynamic landscape of social care, where employees are a cornerstone of service delivery, the significance of robust data protection practices cannot be overstated. Frontline workers, while invaluable assets to care providers, can inadvertently pose risks to data security, especially in the absence of comprehensive training programmes. From mishandling physical records to falling victim to a phishing attack or not sharing information at the appropriate time, frontline workers can inadvertently become sources of data breaches. Lack of awareness about the latest cybersecurity threats, the importance of password hygiene, and the need for secure communication channels can amplify the risks.

Fortunately help is now at hand via the nationally funded Better Security, Better Care programme¹ who have released the only free elearning resource² on this topic specifically designed for social care staff. The scenarios reflect situations that staff face within adult social care settings – including care homes, supported living, home care and community services. It covers all client groups, and all staff with access to personal data. Care providers can use this course to improve and assess their staff's knowledge of data protection and cyber security – including their individual responsibility to keep information safe. The course also meets the training requirements within the Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT).³

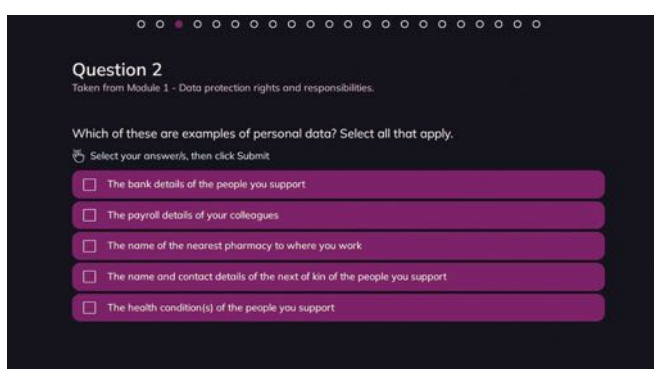
In conclusion, a holistic approach to data protection goes beyond the traditional emphasis on safekeeping. Responsible data sharing is an integral component, fostering collaboration and enhancing the quality of care. By acknowledging this dual aspect of data protection, social care providers can navigate the complexities of information management in an increasingly interconnected world.

 @DigiSocialCare
 digitalcarehub.co.uk

¹digitalcarehub.co.uk/bettersecuritybettercare

²digitalcarehub.co.uk/elearning/

³digitalcarehub.co.uk/dspt



Rising stars in abundance at Majesticare!



Every year at Majesticare, we eagerly anticipate our Annual Star Awards—an occasion dedicated to rewarding, recognising, and celebrating the exceptional contributions of our magnificent teams and dedicated care workers. Over the years, each event has been uniquely themed, creating memorable experiences for all.

This Christmas, we embarked on an interstellar journey with a theme that resonated across the cosmos—our Star Wars Awards Night, set in a galaxy far, far away! The force was truly with us as we transformed our venue into an otherworldly realm, blending the magic of the holidays with the iconic elements of the Star Wars universe. From the likes of Chewbacca, Han Solo, Princess Leia, Darth Vader, and a squad of Storm Troopers joining us in our awesome photo booth... the night was set to be out of this world!

As the anticipation grew for our prestigious award celebrations, we dined on a three-course meal accompanied by delicious drinks, galaxy-inspired music, and a celestial atmosphere. A spellbinding magician, donned in the iconic attire of Luke Skywalker, captivated our esteemed guests with table side tricks in between courses.

Behind each glimmering award lies a thoughtful curation by our central team. Each category was handpicked to explore elements of care, ancillary services, leadership, happiness, remarkable recognition, long service, and unwavering commitment. In a momentous ceremony, the deserving winners were presented with their gleaming star trophy—a symbol of their stellar achievements and dedication.

“We embarked on an interstellar journey with our Star Wars Awards Night.”

The crescendo of our spectacular night unfolded with an electrifying performance by the sensational Big Ian and his band, dressed as super Storm Troopers adding an element of surprise to their performance! The stage came alive with the harmonious melodies, setting the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable conclusion to our celebration. As the festivities continued, our teams took centre stage with spirited karaoke renditions. The pièce de résistance came in the form of a flawless performance by our Chief Executive Officer, Angela Boxall, leaving the audience in awe. The dance floor continued with infectious beats as our Majesticare Family danced the night away.



The Galactic Photobooth



Our Rising Star Newcomer Winner Award, was awarded to the wonderful Manish Karki from Oaktree Court Care Home. Manish has become an invaluable member of our Majesticare Family. Joining as a Healthcare Assistant in February 2023, Manish's journey from overseas, facilitated by Recruit2Care, showcases his exceptional talent at Oaktree Court in Wellington, Somerset. Since his arrival, Manish has demonstrated extraordinary kindness and generosity, earning admiration from both the team and residents, becoming a truly deserving winner of our Rising Star Award.

We reached out to Recruit2Care to share the news of Manish's achievements. Director, Joe Desmond shared a comment about Manish's success:

“ **Recruit2Care** was founded 14 months ago in response to labour shortages in the UK social care sector, recognising the vital role played by overseas care staff. It has been an incredibly fulfilling journey up to this point and I have forged some strong relationships with employers up and down the country.

For any recruiter, the importance of taking time to understand each employer's own values and ethos should not be understated. This is the key to taking a personalised approach and means the provider can focus on exceptional care provision for it's clients.

Manish was one of the first candidates I placed, so he has always held a special memory for me. It was such a joy to hear that he won an award! It's my firm belief that overseas staff like Manish have contributed to a more well-rounded social care workforce by bringing a diverse set of skills, knowledge, and experience to this country.

Recruit2Care's philosophy is that overseas staff should be treated as valued human beings and respected members of their care team - not just a business solution. Majesticare have demonstrated this through a strong commitment to supporting their overseas staff far beyond the onboarding process. It is great to see them reaping the rewards!



Joe Desmond, Director, Recruit2Care



“Manish was one of the first candidates I placed. It was such a joy to hear that he won an award.”



Manish Karki, accepting the Rising Star Award from Sponsor **Ben Hewitt**, Marr Procurement

Majesticare value's all our team members equally. We pride ourselves on equal opportunities and recognising the hard work and dedication of all our team members. We can't wait to see where will we end up at this year's Star Awards!

The winners!

The Interstellar Heads of Department Award:

Alina Duta, Head Housekeeper, from Cavendish Park Care Home

The Legendary Leader Award:

Victoria Hornibrook, Deputy Manager, from Milton Ernest Hall Care Home

The Starship Crew Ancillary Award:

The Housekeeping Team at Cavendish Park Care Home

The Cosmic Care Award:

Kelly Munns, Healthcare Assistant, from Milton Ernest Hall Care Home

Apollo's Wellbeing and Lifestyle Award:

Ellie Lucas, Activities Lead, from Cavendish Park Care Home

The Jedi Recognition Award:

Lucy Kemp, Administration Services Manager, from Cavendish Park Care Home

The Flying Saucer of Happiness Award:

The Activities Team at Cavendish Park Care Home

Above and Beyond Shooting Star Award:

Ben Dishart, Healthcare Assistant, from Cavendish Park Care Home

Rising Star Newcomer Winner Award:

Manish Karki, Oaktree Court Care Home, Somerset

@Majesticare_ch
 majesticare.co.uk
 recruit2care.co.uk

Sarah cuts short maternity leave to support sector in crisis

When Sarah Vaughan was appointed the manager of a newly established 24/7 community response service, not only had she recently given birth to her second son, but the country was in the midst of a pandemic, nothing like it had ever experienced before.



Sarah Vaughan

Sarah, aged 29 at the time, remembers it was a frightening and uncertain time, but it was an opportunity she couldn't turn down. And like the people it serves, it has changed her life for the better.

Sarah had worked in the care sector for over 10 years when she saw Delta Wellbeing's advert for a response manager, as part of a pioneering new service called Delta CONNECT that was set to transform the way health and social care was being delivered across west Wales.

Sarah had two young children, her second son Elis was only 7 weeks old, and the UK was in lockdown. But Sarah was extremely passionate about her work and

"I decided to cut my maternity leave short - the sector was on its knees."



the people that she supported, and she could see that this service was unique; and could make a difference to thousands of people across the region. She said she had to be a part of it.

"I decided to cut my maternity leave short. I knew that if I didn't take this opportunity, I would regret it," she said. "The social care sector was on its knees, recruitment was a problem, and the pandemic was causing all sorts of issues. I knew I couldn't stay at home and do nothing. I wanted to help as much as I could, I wanted to make a difference. I knew this service had the potential to change lives, helping people to stay at home, which is where they want to be, and to remain as independent as possible. We make sure they are safe, and that help is at hand 24/7 if they need it."

So, in July 2020, Delta Wellbeing appointed the newly qualified manager who had the drive, ambition and passion to lead their newly established emergency and welfare response service.

A local authority trading company, owned by Carmarthenshire County Council, Delta Wellbeing provides assistive technology and proactive monitoring to support older and vulnerable people to live independently at home for longer. Set up in 2018, it has expanded its services to provide a range of Technology Enabled Care solutions in the health and social care sector and providing innovative services to support patients leaving acute settings as well as in the community.

Sarah worked incredibly hard during the first nine months in post to achieve registration with Care Inspectorate Wales in March 2021, the first of its kind in Wales. It allowed the service to respond to urgent assistance for care and support needs and the ability to provide emergency bridging care in a crisis to avoid unnecessary calls to 999 and avoid inappropriate hospital admissions or inappropriate and unfamiliar placements being arranged as the only alternative.

"The bridging service is critical in maintaining the safety of vulnerable residents when in crisis, often out-of-hours," said Sarah. "This early intervention gives residents the best possible chance of regaining their independence and becoming less reliant on long-term statutory services."

Sarah has a set of personal and professional values that make a real difference to patient outcomes and is committed to implementing the principles of health and social care to ensure the person is always at the centre of all decisions.

Three years on, the service has gone from strength to strength. Sarah has an impressive staff retention rate and low turnover which has retained the skills and experience of employees, but also doubled the workforce. Sarah has designed new patient pathways through innovation and collaboration with key partners and made various improvements which have benefitted thousands of residents across the region.

"Her son Elis was only seven weeks old, and the UK was in lockdown."



"I knew this service had the potential to change lives, helping people to stay at home."

 @DeltaWellbeing
 deltawellbeing.org.uk

Walking the Wash with autism

For the past two years, Chris, a 51-year-old man from Lincolnshire with autism spectrum disorder, has embarked on a unique challenge: Walking the Wash. Living in supported living accommodation run by national charity, Ambient Support, Chris took on the 42-mile journey accompanied by his dedicated care workers, with the goal of raising awareness for autism and advocating for the Wash to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Chris

“Chris took on the 42-mile journey accompanied by his dedicated care workers, with the goal of raising awareness for autism.”

Chris says: “I lived in London for 24 years. The countryside is so different. Being outside helped me to feel a part of my community and it helped my fitness. And I learned more about my ancestors and where I have come from.”

Stretching from Skegness to the Norfolk town of Hunstanton, the Wash is the largest national nature reserve by area covering almost 8,800 hectares. Five major rivers flow into the North Sea at the Wash, creating a dynamic and ever-changing environment.

Supported by his care workers, Chris overcame many challenges throughout his journey, from logistical obstacles to fitness limitations, including his asthma. By dividing the walk into legs of around one-hour and 5000 steps each, Chris persevered with the help of the Ambient team.

Chris’s support worker says: “At Ambient, we are committed to providing person-centred, responsive support, following an ‘Active Support’ approach that helps people gain skills, confidence, and control of their lives. Helping Chris achieve his dream of walking the Wash was incredibly important to us as a team.”

Chris commenced his walk in April 2021 and completed the challenge last year in 2023, covering approximately 42 miles and visiting the mouth of every river along the way. Encountering diverse wildlife, from otters and seals to geese and ospreys, Chris actively participated



in environmental conservation by collecting litter during his journey. He also tried out some wild cooking, sampling fresh samphire from the marshes.

“My favourite parts included crossing the river Great Ouse by ferry and exploring King’s Lynn. We met lots of people along the way, including foreign tourists, a nice HM prison guard who took us across HM Prison North Sea Camp, and we even helped search for a lost dog,” shared Chris.

The UK government’s recent announcement proposing England’s east wetlands, including the Wash, as a potential UNESCO World Heritage Site aligns with Chris’s hopes that his walk will raise awareness of the campaign. The bond between Chris and his keyworker was strengthened during the challenge, by a shared love for adventure and the great outdoors.

Chris’s keyworker expressed, “I feel honoured to have shared this journey with Chris. The sheer distance was an enormous challenge for him, and over the two years, we experienced all kinds of weather, sometimes four seasons in one day. It was tough at times, but we were disciplined, and Chris never gave up—his perseverance and enthusiasm were inspiring.”

Chris plans on continuing his walking adventures and has invited along Ambient Support staff, supported individuals and members of the public to join him in a bid to foster a sense of community and inclusivity, ensuring accessibility for all.

 @ambientsupport
 ambient.org.uk



Steeping River



Helping the environment



Snettisham Beach

Pat steers the way to independence at Iris Care Group

Patrick McMahon (or Pat as he's known to his friends and colleagues) is the Deputy Manager at Wentwood Court, one of Iris Care Group's residential homes.



Patrick McMahon

Patrick has over 22 years' experience in the care sector, which includes various roles within residential settings, mental health services and learning disability hospitals. Pat is an influential role model to the team at Wentwood Court and to staff across Iris Care Group.

Pat's work with Motability, a charity organisation that provides accessible vehicles for people with disabilities, has also impacted the lives of people across the UK.

Pat became aware that some of the people he supports were lacking sufficient access to the community and were reliant on sharing the home's vehicles. While they were eligible for Motability vehicles, they were not receiving the necessary support to apply. In discussion with these individuals' Local Authority teams, it became clear that they were being discouraged from supporting Motability applications because of the perceived difficulties and extra workload.

To overcome this issue, Pat researched the process and was able to complete much of the paperwork for the local authority teams independently, only requiring the teams to sign off the final forms. Seven of the individuals that Pat supports have now received specially adapted Motability vehicles as a result, which has increased their independence, and provided them with greater freedom to visit friends and family more frequently.

Pat said: "it's far more than moving a person from point A to point B. It's important that they're in a comfortable environment that's tailored to their needs."

Pat has continued his work with Motability on a larger scale, with the goal of improving access to the scheme for people with complex needs across the UK. Pat has helped the Motability team develop a greater understanding of the needs of people with learning difficulties and behaviours that challenge, and these learnings are currently being utilised by Motability to provide a wider range of adaptation options for their entire customer base.

In addition to his work with the Motability scheme, Pat has also made an incredible impact on the Wentwood Court team with the work he has done to improve the staff induction process.

Starting a new role at any service can be daunting, especially when working with individuals with complex conditions. Leading with integrity, empathy and compassion, Pat provides a tailored induction for all new team members – he personally mentors each staff member for their first two weeks, supporting them from day one of their employment, through to signing off on their probationary period.

After ensuring that new team members have developed the appropriate skillset and feel confident and comfortable with their responsibilities, Pat supports them with their future learning and development goals and their Social Care Wales registration.

This level of mentoring goes above and beyond the industry standard and is acknowledged as one of the reasons why staff satisfaction at Wentwood is so high.

Part of this induction programme is aimed at ensuring that staff fully understand the principles of Positive Behaviour Support and Active Support. Pat's mentoring also contributes towards improving quality of care – staff apply their learnings when creating individualised plans for the people they support, with the goal of leading happy, active lives and developing independent living skills.

Pat said: "a good manager is there for the team, the people we support, and is committed to finding the perfect balance between the two."

"While they were eligible for Motability vehicles, they were not receiving the necessary support to apply."

Iris Care Group, which includes Wentwood Court, is the largest independent health and social care provider operating across the Southwest of England and South Wales, providing the full pathway of services for people with a range of complex needs.

@iriscaregroup
 iriscaregroup.co.uk

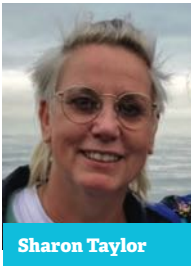


IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CARE

From Acting to Care!

Sharon takes centre stage in supporting people

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 Sharon Taylor, from Creative Support, who was inspired during the pandemic to go from acting to care.



Sharon Taylor

Sharon Taylor is a Support Worker for Creative Support in Doncaster, who has had an interesting journey to care. Starting off as a self-employed masseuse, Sharon then made waves in the acting industry, even attending a red carpet premiere. However, caring has always been in Sharon's nature, and taking a part-time role as a

support worker was one of the 'best things she's ever done in her life'. Despite her success, Sharon's not letting the fame go to her head, and always makes sure to count her blessings.

"I've been on *Ackley Bridge* and *Emmerdale*, and I was a punk rocker in an 80's-themed film where I had a few lines," said Sharon. Most recently, Sharon was standing in for Monica Dolan in *Typist Artist Pirate*, where she got to walk the red carpet in Scotland.

Sharon's hard-working attitude, warm character and talent is a recipe for success in the acting world, but also in her role in care.

"When people were feeling down on set I'd try to bring them up or sing with them, have a bit of a joke, and hopefully that's what I do at Creative Support! It's in my nature, I'm just a very giving person. I like bringing positives out of the negatives, as you've only got one life. I think I get my attitude from my dad, he was such a positive soul. He had struggles, but there was always humour and happiness. We didn't have a lot of material things but we had the love and

happiness of a wonderful father. My dad had leukaemia, and I nursed my mum in the last three years of her life, so I also have my caring side from there. My sister's a nurse and so are my aunts, I think it's just in my blood!"

When Sharon first started out acting she was a self-employed masseuse.

"Covid knocked my business for a while, and I thought I have to get out of this rut and give back somewhere." She saw the opportunity to take a part-time position at Creative Support, meaning she could continue her massage and acting work.

"My gut was telling me to go for this job, and it's one of the best things I've ever done in my life. I love the staff, my manager Hannah and all the residents. I feel that I'm at home when I walk into the service in the morning. It's such a wonderful place to work and I would never leave. I love giving my support to people, we'll sing and dance and there's a lot of joy and love."



Sharon always makes sure to count her blessings and realise her full circle moments.

"It's so lovely, I feel like a lot of doors are opening for me. I don't know where it's going to take me, but I just go with the flow. Life is amazing. I've got a roof over my head, food in my belly, what more could you want? I never yearn for massive houses, all I want is love and happiness and beautiful people around me. If you've got that you're a rich woman. I'm a millionaire!"

"It's one of the best things I've ever done in my life."



WHAT KEEPS ME



AWAKE AT NIGHT



SJOG
Hospitaller Services

Paul Bott
Chief Executive
SJOG Hospitaller Services

Paul Bott, Chief Executive at SJOG, a national charity providing services to support those in greatest need in the UK, shares his thoughts on the current state of social care and hopes for the future.

“When our colleagues move on to other roles in social care they are better placed to be of real benefit.”

What keeps me awake at night? I’m tempted to say uncomfortable sofas, but if we’re talking about social care then the single thing that plays on my mind in the wee small hours is people.

I’m Chief Executive of SJOG, a charity where people support people. We’re not a single issue charity but support a wide range of people with housing and support. This includes people who have experience of homelessness, older people, disabled people, and people who have been trafficked or subject to modern day slavery. These though are not the people that keep me awake at night.

In a charity where people support people, we need to be able to find good people to do the supporting, and to support them so that they can focus on delivering the best outcomes for the people that we are here to serve.

I’d like to think that we are good at supporting our colleagues, not just to get the job done, but also so that they can flourish. We provide the support and the tools they need but then have learning pathways for every role. This means everyone becomes more skilled and more knowledgeable whilst they are with us, and can make better informed decisions, which in turn leads to better outcomes for the people that we are here to serve. It’s a win all round.

We’re investing in level 2 and level 3 qualifications for colleagues who are new to the sector, right through to post-graduate study and doctorates for those who are further on in their career, and everything in between.

We invest because it feels like the right thing to do; because it helps with retaining good people; and because it helps to ‘grow our own’ people with the skills, knowledge and values that we treasure. This all feeds into the way we do things around here (which is my favourite definition of ‘culture’).

We also benefit from the investment that others have made, and recognise that others will benefit from the investment we make. It’s all part of the common good and when our colleagues do move on to other roles in social care they are better placed to be of real benefit.

We take care of the people in SJOG, but we’re a growing charity, having created over 200 new roles, and I don’t know if there are enough professionals in the social care sector to meet the growing demand for good people to support people.

The work that we do is at times a long way from glamorous. At times it’s pressured, and it requires our colleagues to engage with people that most others would avoid. In return, as a sector, for entry level roles we pay just a touch above minimum wage, because our funders are financially pressured.

There used to be a poster that I’d see on the underground on my way home. It was for a recruitment agency and said “If you think recruiting a professional is expensive, try recruiting an amateur.” It made me smile every time, and it stays with me almost 20 years later.

We do good work. We have good people doing good jobs, but we need more special people to join the sector, and at a rate that meets the growing need for social care in a country with an ageing workforce and an increasingly restrictive immigration position.

“Where people support people, we need to be able to find good people to do the supporting.”

In this environment, finding great people to support the people that we are here to serve, and finding ways to support them to flourish is what keeps me awake even on the most comfortable of sofas.

@PaulbottSjog @SJOG_uk
 sjog.uk



CO-PRODUCTION COUNTS!

It's a landslide!

Empowering people to register to vote for the first time



Alternative
Futures
Group

Paul Dee
Team Leader
Alternative Futures Group

Paul Dee, Team Leader at Alternative Futures Group, explains how the organisation empowered the people they support to vote for the first time.

We know that the best outcomes come when people play an active part in the design and delivery of their own care and are empowered to use their own voice.

A great example of a successful co-production initiative from the last year was encouraging the five residents at our adult care home to participate in the local election in May 2023 – something they had never done before.

First steps

When the local election was announced we immediately wanted to encourage people we support to use their vote, so I explained the importance of the democratic process and citizens having a say.

Initially we were met with objections from all five of the gentlemen we support that there would be no point in voting as it would not result in any change.

I explained that voting is one of their rights and responsibilities, which is something we regularly discuss in our service, and how people have the right to choose their representation.

I compared voting with activities we do in service, like when we ask them to choose representatives to voice their opinions at wider team meetings, which helped with their understanding.

“Comparing voting with activities we do in service, helped with understanding.”

Overcoming hurdles

We quickly realised that none of the people we support were registered to vote, so we needed to register for voter authority certificates first.

This meant organising formal ID for each of the gents and various administrative processes to get them set up to vote.

We were keen to keep motivation levels high throughout this lengthy process and found one of our most impactful conversations was on the candidates and their policies, which sparked a lively discussion about what was important to each of them. They were also very interested to learn about the option of spoiling a ballot and this still counting as having your say.



On the day

When voting day arrived there was a lot of indecisiveness about people not wanting to go out in the cold, but once I had talked through how far we had come to get to this point and reiterated why voting was so important, everyone was on board! I am proud to say we all exercised our right to vote.

A lasting impact

We had great feedback and pride from the gentlemen we support following this experience. One of the gents, Stephen, decided to follow it up by writing to his local MP to request an increase in funding for care homes. We received a standard response, but this really empowered Stephen that his voice matters.

He explained what the experience meant to him: *“I’m glad I voted, and I didn’t spoil my ballot. I haven’t done this before. I understand now why everyone votes. I wrote to the politician.”*



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Northern Ireland Hilton Belfast
16th MAY 2024
The ICC Birmingham
21st JUNE 2024

THE BEST — OF THE — BEST

IN SOCIAL CARE AND SUPPORT

— THE CATEGORIES —

- The Employer Award ● The Employer of People With a Disability Award
- The Newcomer Award ● The Support Worker Award
- The Manager Award ● The Learning Disability Nurse Award
- The Making a Difference Award
- The Oliver McGowan Training Award ● The Frontline Leaders Award
- The Supported Housing Award ● The Breaking Down Barriers Award
- The Sporting Chance Award
- The Supporting Older People With Learning Disabilities Award
- The Great Autism Practice Award ● The People's Award
- The Award for Outstanding Contribution
- The Positive Behaviour Award
- The Supporting People With Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities Award

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN
www.nationalldawards.co.uk





ASK THE EXPERTS

“What resolutions should the Government and other political parties set for Social Care for the year ahead?”

Social Care has faced significant challenges in recent years with successive Governments failing to commit to promises to fix the sector. With a General Election on the horizon for 2024, we are asking a group of stakeholders the question:

“What resolutions should the Government and other political parties set for Social Care for the year ahead?”

“We need the government and all political parties to think social care first, as they develop policies fit for the future.”



Prof Vic Rayner OBE
Chief Executive Officer
National Care Forum

The Sector Body

“As the bells fall silent and 2024 is upon us, we need the government and all political parties to think social care first, as they develop policies fit for the future. It is imperative that the next government prioritises meaningful reform to adult social care within the coming parliament. There can be no doubt that care provision needs to be better funded, empowering providers to pay and retain staff and enabling the sector to build a sustainable workforce. The economic potential of care should be recognised in the development of a growth strategy placing not-for-profit provision, and the people who deliver it, at its centre. Finally, the rights, fairness and choice people who need care deserve should be enshrined in a National Care Covenant, because after all, social care matters to us all.”



Dan Archer
Chief Executive Officer
Visiting Angels



“The principle focus for government for the new year has to be better funding for the sector as a whole.”

The Home Care Provider

“I would say that the principle focus for government for the new year has to be better funding for the sector as a whole. The impact of the current landscape is that too many home care workers are low paid and forced to accept Zero hours contracts. My business has found retention and recruitment easier with better pay, proper contracts and in work benefits. For the sector as a whole to solve the workforce crisis which gives us 152k vacancies, care needs to be commissioned in a fairer way. Workforce development plans, specified job roles and carer career development are important steps but unless the skill and commitment of our modern workforce is also paid and recognised better it is just window dressing. Sadly this will likely not be addressed in an election year. I would challenge Labour and Conservative alike to make Care an election campaign issue.”

“ Make utility providers like BP and Shell who make millions in profit supply free, renewable energy to health & care providers.”



Helen Gore
Chief Executive Officer
BCOP

The Care Home Provider

"We need properly funded care. To constantly make savings when we know pressures will increase due to our aging population, increased poverty and related societal ills serves only to reduce availability or standards in care. Close big business tax loopholes, give us access to unused corporate apprenticeship levies and find appropriate taxes for the rich.

It's right that real living wages are increasing. We want to fairly reward carers, nurses and other staff who deliver excellence, but salaries push up fees making them unaffordable to many. Funded care, or a significant contribution, should be available from Local Authorities for more people.

Exempt us from the apprenticeship levy - we'd save a minimum of £15k per year. Exempt us from having to dedicate 20% apprenticeship hours for learning, it increases salary and serves as a barrier for apprenticeships.

Make utility providers like BP and Shell who make millions in profit supply free, renewable energy to health and care providers. This is not something taxpayers should pay via government grants.

Enable key Housing Services to be eligible for Housing Benefit.

Fund the digitalisation of systems dependent on telephone systems – eg pull cord/emergency alarms and other devices which enable people to live independently for longer in their homes."



Matthew Lester
Expert by Lived Experience
Dimensions



“ Show me you're committed to improving social care by talking with me (not about me) in a way I can understand.”

The expert through lived experience

"This Autumn I'll be watching the election results come in, eating my popcorn... it's my Eurovision..."

I'm Matt. I'm supported by Dimensions and also employed by them as an expert by lived experience. I'm autistic, with a learning disability and mental health needs. I volunteer in a food bank, I know local politicians from the four main parties, and right now no political party represents me. My vote is up for grabs. Here's what I tell political door-knockers:

You want my vote? Show me that I matter to you by appointing a senior disabilities minister. Show me that you care by delivering on promises to reform the Mental Health Act. Show me that you're serious by presenting a funded plan to fix social care. Show me you're committed by talking with me (not about me) in a way I can understand. Some days I feel like we've gone back to the 1980s. Let's get back to the future together. Want some popcorn?"

HAVE **YOUR** SAY!

3 Wishes!

Amaan Sadiq, Director of Compliance and Quality Assurance, Langdale Care Homes

1 Accessible, high-quality care for all

Imagine a society where financial constraints are no longer a hurdle and where people can receive accessible, high-quality care the care no matter the cost.

2 A culture of appreciation and recognition

Imagine a society where the value of social care and the tireless efforts and commitment of care professionals, are truly celebrated.

3 Greater collaboration and communication

Imagine a society where knowledge and best practice could be seamlessly shared across health and social care. Let's break down barriers and work together to improve lives!

While my magic wand may exist only in my imagination, we all have the power to make a difference to the social care sector. Let us advocate, support, and work together to bring about positive change, ensuring that the sector becomes a beacon of hope and compassion for all.



In The Spotlight

The Reception Team, LDC Care

As an organisation, your receptionist is often the first face people see, they give the first impression of you as a company. That is why LDC Care's reception team are made up exclusively of people they support. They are the centre of all that supported living provider, LDC Care, do - so it only makes sense that they are the 'Face' of the organisation too.

The reception team welcome visitors to the office, make teas and coffees and keep the shredder busy, all the things you would expect from a receptionist. And they do an amazing job! Interacting with other departments in the office and making sure everyone works just as hard as they do. LDC Care have seen all 15 team members grow in confidence and have been told that working on the reception team has given them a purpose in life.

The team have used their wages to purchase everything from new outfits to saving for a holiday abroad. Many of the team have felt empowered to try other new things, including being involved in staff induction and staff interviews both internally and for the local authority.

LDC Care's Director, Lara Bywater said: "We are looking forward to seeing what the reception team do next with their newfound confidence and skills!"



Movers & Shakers

Lucy Weller, Business Administration Apprentice Graduate, Hilton Nursing Partners

Having just graduated from her Level 3 Business Administration Apprenticeship at domiciliary care provider, Hilton Nursing Partners, Lucy celebrated this achievement at an elaborate ceremony held at Rochester Cathedral – a brilliant way to acknowledge all her hard work throughout the course.



This success story has been recognised in an 'Apprentice Spotlight' feature by EKC Training, a provider of apprenticeships and adult training across East Kent. This feature showcases Lucy's journey through the apprenticeship program, and notable achievements along the way. Post-graduation, Lucy has moved into a vital finance role within the company, putting her newfound skills and knowledge into action. Her progression from an apprentice to a valued member of the finance team is a significant achievement and a great example to any aspiring apprentices out there!

Ann Taylor, Chief Executive Officer of Hilton Nursing Partners said: "Lucy's story underscores the value of apprenticeships as a viable and rewarding pathway to professional success. As Lucy moves on to the next phase of her career, it's been amazing for us to witness where ambition, hard work, and quality training can lead."

Lightbulb Moment

Keeping it real for young leaders in social care

Alex Ball, Operations Manager, Stow Healthcare Group

In social care many of the leaders of tomorrow are emerging today, they may already be people in your service. It is our job as the leaders of today to spot and nurture the next generation of talent who will bring a fresh perspective, a desire for improved technology and whose commitment to creating sustainable solutions is shaping the future of social care.



My lightbulb moment is that as leaders, it is often easy to underestimate your own experience and knowledge and how quickly things become second nature.

It is important to remember the simple things can be overwhelming for someone who is new to the world of work or starting out in a new industry, even for people progressing into the realms of leadership. Whilst hands on personal care may come naturally to some, the same person my struggle with audits, rotas and other responsibilities that come with progression to management.

My advice, particularly for younger people in the industry, is that it is perfectly okay not to know these things or to have the answers, after all it is part of the joy of being young!



Now have your say!

Do you have any thoughts you'd care to share? Care Talk want to hear from you! Email kirsty@care-awards.co.uk for the opportunity to appear in upcoming editions.

The Sector's Premier Event For Leaders and Influencers in Social Care

Social Care TOP 30

RECOGNISING INFLUENTIAL LEADERS IN SOCIAL CARE

2024

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Autumn 2024
Central London Hotel

CareTalk
The voice of excellence in social care

CareTalk
Business

N O M I N A T E N O W A T

www.socialcaretop30.co.uk

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 National Finals

22nd March 2024 ICC, Birmingham

Housing With Care Awards

7th June 2024 Hilton Bankside, London

The Dementia Care Awards

13th June 2024 Royal Lancaster, London

Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards

21st June 2024 ICC, Birmingham

The Palliative Care Awards

28th June 2024 Marriott Regent's Park, London

Social Care Top 30 Awards

15th October 2024 Grosvenor Square Hotel, London

The Children & Young People Awards

24th October 2024 ICC, Birmingham

Great British Care Regional Awards

1st November 2024 East of England TBC

2nd November 2024 West Midlands ICC, Birmingham

7th November 2024 North East Grand Hotel Gosforth Park, Newcastle

8th November 2024 Yorkshire & Humberside Royal Armouries, Leeds

9th November 2024 North West Kimpton Clocktower Hotel, Manchester

13th November 2024 Wales Marriott Cardiff

16th November 2024 London Hilton Bankside, London

29th November 2024 East Midlands East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham

Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards

28th November 2024 Hilton Bankside, London

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



A brighter future for young people



Emma Carrington

Managing Director
for Residential Services
Horizon Care and Education

Finalist in last year's Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards, Emma Carrington, Managing Director for Residential Services at Horizon Care and Education, shares her approach to empowering colleagues and young people to reach their full potential.

The value of female leadership in social care provides children and young people with positive role models for what can be achieved and a view of women as high achievers. This is an important social value that helps children to view all as equal regardless of gender identity. Within my role, this also inspires the wider business workforce and young people we look after that female leadership is one to be celebrated. I always encourage my colleagues and young people to remain determined so they can progress in their careers to reach senior leadership.

In my various roles within social care, I have always promoted the need to celebrate achievements however big or small. I encourage individuals working with children and young people to always promote positive outcomes and allow young people to experience new things, celebrate diversity, and reach their full potential in education and within their social and emotional developmental journey. Young people who are looked after in social care settings deserve the same opportunities as their peers and for all their achievements to be celebrated. I have always empowered my team to lead change, share ideas and learn from others to better inform practice.

"I encourage young people to remain determined so they can progress in their careers."

"Young people who are looked after settings deserve the same opportunities as their peers."

I am proud of my progression within social care over the last 20 years within various care roles, management and senior leadership, and proud of those whom I have supported to develop their paths within their roles. I am also immensely proud of the achievements of the children and young people I have cared for over the years, watching them grow and develop their sense of identity and belonging. I hope this will inspire others to celebrate their outcomes within social care and to have the same sense of achievement and to celebrate this.



Leadership is about recognising the strengths and development areas of others and being part of a team with a shared objective to achieve the best outcomes. There are many challenges within social care, and it is important to be present, available, approachable and to share knowledge and learn from each other to achieve success. Recognising and supporting future leaders of tomorrow and sharing my knowledge and experience will assist emerging leaders in navigating the current challenges and opportunities for social care and help them build rewarding careers that enable young people to reach their full potential.

 @TweetsofHorizon
 horizoncare.co.uk



Let's bring care back to healthcare



SOLSKEN

Fosia Sødning

Director
Solsken Limited

Finalist in last year's Social Care Leadership Awards, Fosia Sødning, Director at Solsken Limited, a national provider of nurse-led care, provides insights on leadership in social care.

For me, leadership excellence in social care stands as a foundational element. Quality leadership is instrumental in fostering empowerment within teams. Good leaders cultivate settings where professionals feel esteemed, backed and driven. Prioritising staff development and well-being nurtures a dedicated team, committed to providing quality and heartfelt care.

At Solsken, we acknowledge the paramount importance of quality leadership, empathy, and unwavering dedication in our mission to deliver exceptional care and support, recognising that without these crucial elements, our capacity to ensure and maintain the highest standards of quality care becomes compromised.

My decision to found Solsken stemmed from witnessing the growing emphasis on financial gains at the expense of individual welfare and quality care within the healthcare sector. Reflecting on my time with other care organisations, I envisioned reshaping the industry, alongside a group of like-minded and passionate professionals. The mission being, "Let's bring care back to healthcare".

My leadership philosophy in the realm of complex care centers on empowerment. Having personally observed the insufficient support accessible to care managers and frontline personnel, my goal has been to establish

and foster a nurturing ambiance at Solsken that not only acknowledges the challenges faced, but also actively empowers individuals at all levels to contribute to a more supportive and effective care environment. This involves attentively listening to my teams and fostering inclusivity in decision-making processes.

This leadership ethos trickles down, empowering the individuals we support to make informed decisions, championing their autonomy and fostering responsible risk-taking. We customise our care approach, ensuring it resonates with each individual's unique needs. Such personalised attention holds immense significance, underlining our commitment to adaptability and attentive listening.

"Numerous senior managers within Solsken commenced their journey as caregivers."

I am an advocate of leadership through personal example, championing straightforward values such as kindness, maintaining a cheerful demeanour, embracing honesty, and exhibiting integrity. Through embodying these principles in my own actions, it is my aspiration to serve as an inspiration for others to emulate these qualities and take up the helm of leadership roles themselves.

Nurturing and inspiring our rising stars and leaders of tomorrow is something I am passionate about. I champion opportunities for those demonstrating merit and this ethos continues to thrive in our teams. Numerous senior managers within Solsken commenced their journey as caregivers.

The acknowledgment and recognition of potential within our workforce not only serve as the foundation for professional development but also open avenues for various opportunities. Through a real understanding of the ambitions harboured by our frontline staff, we actively foster and nurture these aspirations, creating an environment where individuals can flourish in their roles and eventually emerge as the leaders of tomorrow.

 solskencare.com

"Leadership excellence in social care stands as a foundational element."

Support continues for Care Talk's Dementia Care Awards

Support continues for Care Talk's 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.

With support from Care England, the Down's Syndrome Association, Newman University and United for All Ages, the Alzheimer's Show and The Outstanding Society are the latest sector bodies to endorse this event.

The 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.

"We're further strengthening our commitment to promoting excellence in this area of the sector."



"The directors of The Outstanding Society (OS) perceive it as an immense honour to support the Unsung Hero category as part of these pivotal awards. Within this field, there exist countless unsung heroes whose invaluable contributions often escape the spotlight. These individuals selflessly dedicate themselves to transforming the lives of those under their care, leaving a profound impact on the individuals, their families, and fellow team members. This distinguished award serves as a beacon, shedding light on the profound daily contributions made by individuals in this field."

Zoe Fry OBE, Director, Outstanding Society CIC

THE DEMENTIA CARE AWARDS
Celebrating Excellence in Dementia Care

13TH JUNE 2024

**ROYAL LANCASTER HOTEL
LONDON**

S U P P O R T E D B Y

THE ALZHEIMER'S DEMENTIA & CARE SHOW | CARE ENGLAND | CareTalk | DOWN'S SYNDROME ASSOCIATION | Newman University | OUTSTANDING SOCIETY | United for All Ages



"The Alzheimer's Dementia and Care Show is thrilled to partner with Care Talk's Dementia Care Awards for 2024! As the UK's leading dementia & care event, The Alzheimer's Dementia and Care Show is tailored for care providers, health and social care professionals, family carers seeking support, or anyone interested in the field. Join us in June for an immersive two-days featuring cutting-edge exhibitors, expert speakers, training sessions, and unique experiences including the Virtual Dementia Tour. Through our collaboration with Care Talk's Dementia Care Awards, we're further strengthening our commitment to promoting excellence in this area of the sector."

Josh Waddell, Commercial Director, ROAR B2B

"It as an immense honour to support the Unsung Hero category."

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN! www.dementiacareawards.co.uk

Sector support for Care Talk's inaugural Palliative Care Awards

Care Talk are delighted to announce the inaugural Palliative Care Awards which aim to shine a light on the importance of good, person centred palliative care, pay tribute to individuals and organisations who provide this, recognise accomplishments at all levels and as such, enable people to have a Good Death.

The Palliative Care Awards will pay tribute to accomplishments at all levels and from across the whole of the social care and hospice sectors.

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



"What could matter more a good death, both for the person passing on and those left behind? Those of us who have been privileged to be present at a peaceful, dignified ending will find it both incredible and unforgettable. It may give new meaning to our own lives and a gracious closure to the life that is done. No one knows when the moment will come for them, but the damage done when this is not treated with respect or where meaningful participation is denied, leaves a bitter legacy. We applaud Care Talk's efforts to celebrate those whose professional practise shows their understanding of this unrepeatable human experience."

Julia Jones, Co-Founder, John's Campaign



"On behalf of NCF and our members I'm delighted to lend our support to the Palliative Care Awards. The care and support delivered every day within social care settings and the compassion shown to people nearing the end of life, or in their very last days, makes such a lasting difference. I'm thrilled that in these inaugural awards the skills and expertise displayed by staff in social care settings is being recognised as it rightly should be. The difference this kindness and care makes to people and their families at an incredibly difficult time can't be underestimated, and the professionalism shown by care workers, managers, ancillary staff and others should rightly be celebrated. I applaud everyone nominated in these awards and thank them for their tireless commitment to excellence. Best of luck to all."

Prof Vic Rayner OBE, Chief Executive Officer, National Care Forum



"Support for people who are dying and those close to them is an important and growing element of social care. The contribution of domiciliary agencies and care homes cannot be underestimated in enabling people to die in a place they call home. When high quality care is available then people feel safe, valued and dignified as they approach the end of their life. Importantly "dying well" enables those left behind to survive the loss and move on, despite inevitable sadness. So, the efforts of Care Talk to recognise and reward best practice and efforts on the part of individuals and organisations to deliver and support such care is most welcome. And its focus on social care is absolutely right. This is vital recognition of often unsung heroes. Lets hear more about them and celebrate all that they do in order that they are sustained and others encouraged to follow in their footsteps."

Heather Richardson, Director of Academic Learning and Action, St Christopher's Hospice



The directors of The Outstanding Society (OS) consider it an immense privilege to serve as judges for these vital awards within Adult Social Care. Providing care for individuals at the end of their lives necessitates exceptional individuals and a proficient team spanning various departments. We acknowledge that these awards will highlight the remarkable qualities that individuals and team members possess, ensuring not only the residents' high-standard care but also supporting their families, friends, and colleagues through this challenging phase. Achieving excellence in palliative care is a tremendous accomplishment. It is an honour to be entrusted with the care of someone at the end of their life, ensuring not just a good life but also a dignified passage. Teams should take immense pride in this aspect of their work

Zoe Fry OBE, Director, The Outstanding Society CIC

THE
PALLIATIVE
CARE AWARDS
Celebrating Excellence in
Palliative Care



28TH JUNE 2024

MARRIOTT REGENT'S PARK, LONDON

S U P P O R T E D B Y



NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN! www.palliativecareawards.co.uk

Developing the learning disability sector leaders of tomorrow



My home life.
England



Steph Thompson
Deputy Director
My Home Life England

Steph Thompson, Deputy Director at My Home Life England shines a light on a new leadership development programme for leaders in the learning disability and autism support sector.

“Leaders were able to share their challenges, feel supported, and learn a variety of tools, skills and strategies.”

Social care leaders work in a role that is incredibly important and socially significant, but also very complex.

These leaders are often time-poor, telling us that they are “running on empty”.

Given multiple and often conflicting pressures, it is somewhat unsurprising that the annual turnover rate for managerial staff within the sector is a shocking 23.2%. The vacancy rate for the registered manager role is higher than other posts at 10.6% (there are currently 3,000 vacant posts across the UK)¹. We’ve heard many stories of care leaders finding themselves in managerial positions overnight, with little experience or confidence in their leadership approach.

So how can we change this?

To develop the leaders of tomorrow we must start by investing in the leaders of today.

People working in these complex roles need support. This includes space to consider how they:

- Encourage others to flourish
- Connect emotionally, collaborate, compromise and celebrate²
- Create a sense of security, belonging and purpose³

Being able to let go, in a safe space with others who also work in the same complex, confusing and creative world, is something that people value most about leadership development that’s rooted in positive social care practice.

This is not easy. We know it is much simpler in the short term to tell people what to do and how to do it. But by nurturing and investing in the leaders of today, they have the time to support the leaders of tomorrow.

ARC England have been working with My Home Life England (MHLE) to create a bespoke leadership programme for people who work alongside people who have a learning disability autism and autistic people.

Recent analysis of programmes run by MHLE for over 200 people shows that by participating in a programme, leaders were able to share their challenges, feel supported, and learn a variety of tools, skills and strategies to support them in the workplace.

By the end of their programme, 98% reported an increase in the quality of their management and leadership. 91% said that their confidence as a professional had increased. A further 85% of the care leaders surveyed saw an increase in job satisfaction, and 74% reported an increase in enthusiasm for working in care settings over the last 12 months.

This increased confidence and enhanced resilience has a knock-on effect on teams, relatives and people who draw on services. Other team members (deputies, team leaders, senior carers, etc) are supported to excel and move more confidently into their own leadership roles.



A programme participant told us: “Before [doing] My Home Life England I used to do all things. Now I am starting to delegate more of my work to other members of the management team.”

To keep our great leaders in the sector, and to keep them supporting the next generation, we need to acknowledge the amazing work they do, as well as giving them space and support to reflect, process and grow.

“Before joining the programme, I was really wavering about social care and whether I would leave. Joining the programme showed me that people valued what I had to offer and that I was an OK manager. Without the course I would have left social care.”⁴

✉ @ARCEngland
🌐 arcengland.org.uk

✉ @MyHomeLifeUK
🌐 myhomelife.org.uk



“To keep our great leaders in the sector we need to acknowledge the amazing work they do.”

¹Skills for Care 'State of the Adult Social Care Workforce' 22/23

²MHLE Caring Conversations and positive practice framework:
<https://myhomelife.org.uk/research/>

³Nolan et al, The Senses Framework: <https://myhomelife.org.uk/research/>

⁴My Home Life England Professional Support and Development Programme - Insights and Outcomes 2023: <https://myhomelife.org.uk/resilience-retention-quality-key-outcomes-of-my-home-life-england-professional-support-development-programmes/>

Find out more at <https://arcengland.org.uk/leadership-support-and-development-programme-2024-arc-england-and-my-home-life-england> or contact bookings@arcuk.org.uk

What to expect from inspections



Rob Hargreaves
Information Services Manager
Skills for Care

Rob Hargreaves, Information Services Manager, Skills for Care shares what providers need to know about the new approach to inspection.

It's now three years since the Care Quality Commission (CQC) started talking about a new approach to inspection, 18-months since they published the Single Assessment Framework, and 3-months since the Single Assessment Framework began to be rolled out. We've had plenty of warning, but do we know what is needed?

The introduction of the Single Assessment Framework represents the biggest change to inspection processes in almost a decade. There have been a few bumps along the way, including delays that pushed back initial roll out, but the old inspection process will now be replaced by February 2024.

To guide or not to guide?

Whilst the CQC gave significant advance notice of what regulated providers would need to demonstrate to achieve the 34 new Quality Statements, guidance has been a long time coming. As the CQC remains non-prescriptive, we never expected them to offer a "step-by-step" guide to achieving 'Good' or 'Outstanding' that some providers might crave for, but their online guidance is a helping hand.

Based on feedback around the introduction of the earlier Key Lines of Enquiry inspection model, Skills for Care recognised a need to support providers on what the CQC might be looking for that goes beyond their online guidance.

This led to the creation of our 'Good' and 'Outstanding' care range of resources, which now includes guides, tools, seminars, eLearning modules, checklists, and action plan templates.

not be radically different, but you'll need to evidence some things that have previously not featured. Think about what evidence you currently have to demonstrate to the CQC around the following: workforce wellbeing, how you promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in the staff team, how you ensure equity of outcomes and experience, and how you empower people to speak up. If you're brimming with confidence on these matters and can't wait to share what you do with inspectors, you should be in a good place. If you have doubts, then Skills for Care's newly-updated resources may help you to reflect on what might be needed.

Tooling up

Skills for Care's GO Online: Inspection toolkit represents our own evolution of what providers wanted around CQC inspection. Building upon earlier guidance and advice, the Inspection toolkit is a free online source of recommendations, practical examples and resources related to each part of the Single Assessment Framework, including trusted resources from scie, NICE, The Outstanding Society, and others.

Whether you're looking for a short two-minute introduction to get your head around a particular Quality Statement, or you want to take a deep dive into what you could be doing to demonstrate compliance to the CQC, the Inspection toolkit is a regularly updated source of good and best practice.

Released in March 2023 to encourage providers to start gathering evidence for the Single Assessment Framework, over 15,000 users have begun using the Inspection toolkit to benefit their business. Access via www.skillsforcare.org.uk/inspect

A trusted companion

Skills for Care's Good and Outstanding care guide has also received a major overhaul due to the new inspection changes. Co-produced with The Outstanding Society for the first time, the guide showcases what you can do to embed the changes into your service. The guide acts as a companion to the Inspection toolkit, helping frontline managers and those tasked with ensuring the service meets CQC inspection understand what's needed.

There's insight into the practical ways you can discuss the changes with the people you support, other managers and your staff teams to tease out what you could evidence. You can learn more about how to develop expertise on each Quality Statement topic, strengthening skills at different levels across your workforce. For those involved in quality assurance, there's downloadable checklists to use or embed into your own processes.

The Good and Outstanding care guide is exclusively available to Skills for Care's Registered Manager Members as a free PDF resource.

Find out more about Membership via
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/membership

 skillsforcare.org.uk

"The Single Assessment Framework represents an evolution of CQC inspection."

Something new

The Single Assessment Framework represents an evolution of CQC inspection, both in terms of process and what inspectors will be looking at. If you've been through an inspection previously, the experience will



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Professor Vic Rayner, Chief Executive Officer, National Care Forum

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Achieving recruitment and retention goals in 2024



Recruit2Care

Joe Desmond


Director
Recruit2Care

Joe Desmond, Director at Recruit2Care outlines his top tips for recruitment and retention for the year ahead.

As 2024 unfolds, the social care sector is navigating a critical juncture, particularly following the UK's migration policy revisions announced by Home Secretary James Cleverly. These changes amplify the importance of domestic recruitment, a challenge recognised by Care England's Chief Executive, Professor Martin Green. With a growing need to revitalise domestic recruitment strategies, the sector must also focus on making care work an attractive and fulfilling career choice.

The government has recognised the critical role of domestic recruitment in bolstering our care sector. As part of this acknowledgement, they have earmarked additional funds for training and development initiatives, highlighted by the Care Workforce Pathway ambitious goal to train nearly 40,000 staff members. The infusion of resources is a positive development, yet it has been met with cautious optimism. Professor Vic Rayner, Chief Executive of the National Care Forum, commented on the funding announcement: *"The news that additional funding will become available for training and development in the sector is also welcome, although without details of what this will mean in practice it is difficult to determine impact. The commitment to train nearly 40,000 staff is a step up from the current position but represents under 10% of all new starters in the sector, and of course none of these commitments come with any focus on moving us closer to a set of pay terms and conditions that match the skills and expertise laid out in the new pathway."*

"The sector must position itself as a profession capable of attracting individuals from diverse backgrounds."



Helping you navigate this path here we share four key steps you should look at for your recruitment and retention goals this 2024:

- **Creating an attractive and fulfilling career**
- **Values-based recruitment**
- **Positive and energised work environment**
- **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

To thrive, the social care sector must position itself as a profession capable of attracting individuals from diverse backgrounds, offering clear paths for career advancement, quality leadership, and extensive training opportunities.

Values-based recruitment (VBR) is a cornerstone in this strategy. As evidenced by Skills for Care's data, VBR leads to more engaged and committed staff, with a 62% reduction in sickness and absence rates and a 72% improvement in performance. This approach, when coupled with learning and development initiatives, has been shown to significantly improve workforce metrics, including lower staff turnover and higher ratings from the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Implementing VBR effectively, as outlined in Care England's 'Savings, Solutions and Sustainability' by Damien Wilkins, is crucial in addressing the sector's high vacancy and turnover rates, making social care a more attractive career option.

Creating a positive and energised work environment is vital. This involves not just offering job security and benefits but also highlighting the opportunities for improvement and growth that the sector offers. Showcasing real stories of career progression, leadership development, and the impact of quality care can inspire more individuals to consider a career in social care.

An Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme is another key aspect of this strategy. Such programmes support the overall wellbeing of staff, offering both preventative and immediate solutions to challenges like financial stress, burnout, and bereavement. This holistic support not only aids in retention but also in making the sector more appealing to potential recruits.

In 2024, the social care sector faces the dual challenge of adapting to new recruitment realities while making the sector an attractive career choice. By focusing on values-based recruitment, fostering a positive and energised work environment, and providing comprehensive support systems for staff, social care can transform into a sector that not only attracts but also retains a diverse and dedicated workforce, ready to meet the challenges and embrace the opportunities ahead.

For those seeking knowledgeable assistance or guidance on navigating these recent announcements, Joe Desmond invites businesses to reach out for support in managing this evolving landscape.

✉ joe@recruit2care.co.uk
🌐 recruit2care.co.uk

Social care shouldn't be ashamed of making a profit



Dara Ní Ghadhra
Chief Operating Officer
Cornerstone Healthcare

Last year's conference in Iceland, 'Older and Better', brought to light how providers are universally facing the challenges of ageing populations with a growing prevalence of neuro-degenerative conditions like dementia. Keynote speaker, Dara Ní Ghadhra, Chief Operating Officer at specialist care provider, Cornerstone Healthcare explains.

"The conference opened the door to discussions about how care in Iceland is financed."

Populations the world over are getting older and with that comes higher incidence of ill health. Private providers play a key role in caring for people with physical and, increasingly, cognitive degeneration, yet the question of who pays, how much and whether profits are morally acceptable is an ongoing debate.

The 'Older and Better' conference in Reykjavik brought together more than 250 delegates from countries such as Canada, Sweden and the UK, to look at how adult social care operates, how it's financed and what could be learned from each territory.

Iceland was the location because, currently, independent providers are not permitted to make profit from the care services they offer. The Icelandic health minister, Willum Þór Þórsson, was in attendance, for the first time at a conference like this, a suggestion of the challenges and whether time for change has come.

Iceland is certainly not alone in struggling with a growing need for care, and increasing numbers of adults who are physically fit but are living with neuro-degenerative conditions. Delegates shared that specialist facilities such as Cornerstone Healthcare Group were not common, so there was great interest in how we have developed a service that meets the specific needs of this client group.

Discussions also highlighted how, in the UK, we enjoy a relatively privileged position of having privately operated care facilities that are profitable and can reinvest in the services they offer.

Some do find it unpleasant that discussing the care of our most vulnerable members of society goes hand in hand with talk of financial gain, but the stark fact is there is little investment coming from elsewhere.

Independent providers and their investors have plugged a gaping hole in the sector. In the 1980s, virtually 100% of care settings were operated by local authorities. Now, that's virtually zero. This model has ensured a continuation of supply but also allowed for the development of care environments tailored to the needs of individuals, both in terms of building design and the care provided.

Tailored care is essential to give residents the quality of life. It minimises the need for medication or additional staff because complex behaviours are well-managed. Most importantly, it prevents placement breakdowns which can be costly and very distressing both for residents and their families.

Staff in complex specialist settings are often more skilled because, for a greater part, homes are now providing a service, previously provided by hospitals, and their level of training, and ability to make independent decisions needs greater financial reward. Without private investment, we wouldn't be able to offer our staff the remuneration they deserve.

And we, like many other providers, can only attract inward investment because of the return that's available. That profit can then be re-invested in new care services, such as our new facility we are opening in Wincanton in early 2024, and another that will follow in early 2025.

Of course, it's not a perfect system here in the UK. There will always be those who take too much out of the system while care and levels of staff pay are pitifully low. But this is why the sector needs top level, independent regulation and realistic fees from funding bodies.

The 'Older and Better' conference opened the door to discussions about how care in Iceland is financed and structured, and we will continue to share our experience and expertise as that conversation continues.

But what is clear is that the time has come for the sector to lose its embarrassment about making money from care through people who are willing to re-invest.

"Independent providers and their investors have plugged a gaping hole in the sector."

The social care market in 2024



 **CHRISTIE & CO**

Rob Kinsman

Regional Director – Care
Christie & Co

Rob Kinsman, Regional Director for Care at Christie & Co, gives an overview of the social care market for the year ahead.

“Capital market activity will increase with a more stable interest rate environment.”

In many ways, 2023 was a year of consolidation, with the majority of operators reporting that occupancy had returned to pre-pandemic levels. Staffing issues eased slightly due to the successful recruitment of foreign staff via the sponsorship licence, although this may be impacted by recent immigration policy changes. The demand for bed spaces remained high, particularly for dementia care places, and fee increases predominantly kept pace with inflation.

The transactional market adjusted to an environment of significantly higher interest rates, placing greater emphasis on debt serviceability. Deal volumes were robust, whilst buyers scrutinised staffing costs, any reliance on agency, and utility contracts. Positively, we didn't see a material deterioration in asset values for going-concern deals, and the performance of the sector fared well compared with other asset classes such as retail and offices.

Deals in the healthcare investment market reflected the higher cost of capital, with yields moving out relative to the peak of the market in 2022.

The development market faced stronger headwinds due to construction cost inflation and the availability of debt. However, the need for future-proof care beds remains undiminished and the underlying ESG credentials, together with future bed demand needs, remain compelling for investors.



We saw a greater number of developments in the regions, and this will continue into 2024 as the demand for elderly care spaces continues to exceed supply in most parts of the UK.

In 2024, we expect that:

- Values will remain stable with strong occupancy levels and investor demand offsetting higher debt costs
- Capital market activity will increase with a more stable interest rate environment
- There will be an increased number of OpCo transactions, as operators seek to expand their portfolios without tying up capital in real estate
- We'll see an increase in distressed smaller assets as higher interest rates bite, particularly for those care homes in converted, period properties which are unable to leverage economies of scale and are often reliant on local authority fees
- New build development activity will increase across broader geographical regions as developers seek less competitive operating markets. However, the rate of new care home openings is unlikely to match the pace of closures and we will therefore see a further reduction in bed capacity across the country which will ensure robust occupancy levels for providers but also place greater pressure on the NHS
- There will be an ongoing rationalisation from larger providers and third sector providers, providing growth opportunities for acquisitive regional operators
- Continued protracted and uncertainty in the planning system will constrain supply of consented care home development sites
- We believe the Government announcement in December that overseas social care workers can no longer bring dependants into the country will not have a material impact on investor confidence and transaction volumes

“We'll see an increase in distressed smaller assets as higher interest rates bite.”

For a wider review of the care market in 2023, and outlook for 2024, read Christie & Co's Business Outlook 2024 report: christie.com/business-outlook-2024

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This month, *Kirsty meets...*



CareTalk
The nation of care professionals

Kirsty Hollins
Communications Executive
Care Talk

Each month I meet key stakeholders and business leaders in the social care sector. This month I met James McLoughlin, Head of Partnerships at Thank and Praise (TAP). I caught up with James to discuss workplace wellbeing and the power of gratitude.

“When staff are more regularly thanked, it’s resulted in improved job satisfaction, an enhanced sense of well-being and greater levels of resiliency.”

So James, tell us a little about TAP – Thank and Praise?

TAP stands for ‘Thank And Praise’ and is a social thanking platform created in 2019 to enable the public to more easily show their appreciation to keyworkers.

Our mission is to make thanking the norm and to cancel a culture of complaining in order to make keyworkers feel more appreciated.

The well-being of keyworkers is of paramount importance and vital to the success of the social care sector however a survey by the Institute of Health and Social Care Management has revealed that 90% of care professionals don’t believe that they receive the recognition that they deserve.

Why is thanking so important?

Everyone who works for TAP are great believers in the power of gratitude. We know that thanking someone is a simple act and yet it can have a profound impact. It makes people feel good and increases feelings of self-esteem and wellbeing.

Gratitude itself is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, lowering levels of depression and anxiety, supporting our perceptions of positive relationships and fostering a sense of social connectedness.

However, the positive effect of gratitude is relatively short-lived and for praise to have a long-lasting impact on staff well-being, it needs to be given regularly.

TAP
thankandpraise.com



James McLoughlin
Head of Partnerships
Thank and Praise (TAP)

That’s why TAP was created, to make it easier to share messages of thanks, quickly, easily and securely with those people that deserve it.

How does TAP work?

TAP has been designed to make sending a message of thanks to a keyworker really simple and it takes just a minute to do this, whether you’re on TAP’s website or the TAP App.

Reassuringly all messages are moderated for positivity before being shared on our public-facing thanking walls for organisations like the National Association of Care and Support Workers, while TAP App users receive in-app notifications when organisations they follow have been thanked.

TAP’s brand-new app also features a wellbeing section containing feel-good articles, podcasts, videos and top tips designed to support the mental wellbeing of TAP’s community.

How effective is TAP?

TAP is designed to improve the wellbeing of keyworkers through the sharing of messages of thanks and access to a valuable resource of wellbeing content. So, I’m delighted to say that TAP user organisations have told us that when their staff are more regularly thanked, it’s resulted in improved job satisfaction, an enhanced sense of well-being and greater levels of resiliency. All of which support the retention and recruitment of keyworkers.

Paul Featherstone, Founder of National Association of Care and Support Workers gave us the following feedback: *“It’s vital that our social care colleagues are properly recognised for the incredible work they do every single day and TAP is an ideal way to achieve this.”*

Ensuring that staff feel both recognised and appreciated for the work they do has a positive effect on the way they feel which directly impacts on their mental health and well-being.

And finally James, where can we find out a little more about TAP – Thank and Praise?

If you’d like to find out more about TAP, then please visit www.thankandpraise.co.uk where you can download the TAP App. If you’d like your care organisation to benefit from having its own digital thanking wall, then please contact info@thankandpraise.co.uk

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 thankandpraise.co.uk

Holiday pay reform: are you ready?



James Sage
Employment Partner
RWK Goodman

James Sage, Employment Partner and Head of the Health and Social Care Team at RWK Goodman, talks about holiday pay reform and the implications for care providers.

The Government has published the Employment Rights (Amendment, Revocation and Transitional Provision) Regulations 2023 which significantly change how holiday entitlement and pay can be calculated for irregular hours workers. The reforms will simplify holiday pay and entitlement calculations and are likely to be welcomed by care providers.

How did we get here?

Last year the Supreme Court decided in *Harpur Trust v Brazel*, that irregular hours workers are entitled to 5.6 weeks' holiday, and do not accrue holiday entitlement on a pro rata basis in accordance with hours worked. This effectively banned the 12.07% accrual method for calculating holiday entitlement that had commonly been used in the sector and led to many workers being entitled to a greater amount of holiday.

This caused alarm in the health and social care sector where zero hours and casual worker contracts are commonplace. Following the ruling, the Government launched a consultation to review how holiday entitlement and pay are calculated.

What is changing?

The Regulations reverse the decision of the Supreme Court in *Harpur Trust* and provide a statutory basis for irregular hours workers to:

1. Accrue **holiday entitlement** at a rate of 12.07% of the hours worked.
2. Receive rolled-up **holiday pay**. This enables providers to pay workers an enhancement to their regular pay rate to reflect their holiday pay entitlement instead of them taking paid annual leave. Workers must still be permitted to take leave, but it will be unpaid. Rolled up holiday pay has previously been ruled unlawful, so this is a significant change. However, it is not compulsory, and providers can continue to offer paid leave and calculate holiday pay by reference to average weekly pay in the 52 weeks preceding annual leave being taken.

When do the changes take effect?

The new Regulations apply to leave years which start on or after 1 April 2024. For leave years starting before 1 April, the existing rules, including the *Harpur Trust* ruling continue to apply.

Comment

Given the preference for a simplified and practical approach, the reforms will likely be welcomed by care providers. However, it will be important to ensure that they are implemented correctly in practice.

We recommend that providers:

1. Decide whether to make changes to holiday entitlement and pay for irregular hours workers, taking into account potential legal risks of making changes to the contracts of existing employees and the risk that rolled-up holiday pay will disincentivise workers to take holiday as it will be unpaid, and the impact this could have on wellbeing, health and safety and staff retention.
2. Review who in your workforce meets the new definition of an "irregular hours worker" and is therefore in scope for the changes implemented under the Regulations;
3. Decide which holiday pay calculation method will be adopted;
4. Ensure payroll teams are involved in any changes and that they are reflected in your HR and payroll processes, systems, policies and workers' payslips; and
5. Review and update employment contracts and holiday policies irregular hours workers.

"This caused alarm in the health and social care sector where zero hours and casual worker contracts are commonplace."

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