

# Care Talk

The voice of excellence in social care

Let's Talk Social Care! Issue **130** | April **2024**

## The Reach of Social Care



### In This Issue:



**ON TRACK FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION**  
**Tandra Foster**  
Chair,  
Commissioning Network,  
ADASS



**WHAT'S 90 YEARS BETWEEN FRIENDS?**  
**Judith Ish-Horowicz**  
Co-Founder,  
Apples and Honey  
Nightingale CIC

**WHAT KEEPS ME AWAKE AT NIGHT**  
**Steve Veevers**  
Chief Executive,  
Hft



**UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC PERCEPTION**  
**Claire Lambert**  
Research Director,  
Ipsos



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*This month we're talking...*  
**4**  
 A message from the editor

**IN MY OPINION**  
**6**  
 Professor Martin Green

**TALKING**  
*The Reach of Social Care*  
**6**  
 On track for effective collaboration  
**10**  
 Social impact is more than just good intentions  
**12**  
 Understanding public perceptions  
**14**  
 What's 90 years between friends?



**16**  
 Community must be at the core for disabled people

**TALKING**  
*Social Care*

**18**  
 Fostering social responsibility  
**19**  
 Every Social Care Minister should undergo two weeks work experience  
**20**  
 The power of community services that care



**TALKING**  
*Learning Disabilities & Autism*  
**22**  
 Sex is not a taboo word at LDC



**TALKING**  
*Technology*  
**25**  
 What's stopping care businesses from going digital?

**REAL LIVES**  
**26**  
 Signing up to care



**27**  
 Making Space for the menopause



**28**  
 Enhancing lives through performing arts  
**29**  
 Hairdressing's loss is the care sector's gain!

**CHAT**

**30**  
**WHAT KEEPS ME AWAKE AT NIGHT**  
 Steve Veevers  
**32**  
**CO-PRODUCTION COUNTS!**  
 Meeting together at Autism Together



**34**  
**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CARE**  
 From NHS to Nursing Home  
**36**  
**HAVE YOUR SAY!**  
**38**  
**ASK THE EXPERTS**  
 Collaborative working two years on

**CARE TALK ON THE ROAD**  
**40**  
 Coming up...  
**42**  
 Living a Good Life at every stage  
**44**  
 Celebrating Best Practice, Continuing Professional Development  
**46**  
 Enhancing housing solutions for vulnerable communities

**SOCIAL CARE'S GOT TALENT**

**48**  
 Celebrating Excellence in Social Care!



*Leading the Way in Social Care*

**50**  
 Soft front, strong back and wild heart!  
**52**  
 Breaking societal labels

**LET'S LEARN**

**54**  
 Get involved with #CelebratingSocialCare in April

**BUSINESS BANTER**

**56**  
 Balancing safety, comfort and luxury in the care home model  
*This month Kirsty Meets...*  
**57**  
 Lucinda Jarrett  
*The Legal Bit*  
**58**  
 Collaboration or delegation?

Coming up for the April 2024 issue:

- CULTIVATING WELLBEING IN CARE
- THE ROLE OF FAMILIES IN PROMOTING WELLBEING
- CARING FOR YOUR WORKFORCE
- REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION

## 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 April issue of Care Talk which focuses on **The Reach of Social Care.**

In this month's issue we've reached out to some brilliant contributors who explore the influence of social care initiatives which extend beyond conventional boundaries. From grassroots community efforts to innovative policy interventions, we delve into the myriad ways in which social care is broadening its reach to touch the lives of individuals and communities.

One such example of this is, Apples and Honey Nightingale, an intergenerational nursery which has reshaped traditional perceptions of social care. Through their innovative practice, this collaboration between young and old has truly extended the impact and reach of social care with remarkable results. Read, Co-Founder's, Judith Ish-Horowicz's uplifting article, **What's 90 years between friends?** on page 14.

Another great example of extending the reach of social care is Tandra Foster's piece, **On Track for effective collaboration**, on page 8. In her dual role as Chair of the ADASS commissioning and a director of social care services, Tandra explains how partnership working between commissioners and providers can lead to fantastic outcomes.

With the General Election approaching, (we think!), public perception of social care's reach is crucial when it comes to shaping political agendas and discussions. In her feature, **Understanding Public Perception**, Claire Lambert of Ipsos reveals widespread discontent with current services and advocates for policy reform. Check out page 12 for details.

In recent weeks, Care Talk has been busy reaching out to different sectors across the social care landscape. At the annual Housing with Care seminar, we explored key insights around **Enhancing housing solutions for vulnerable communities** (page 46). Our Palliative and End of Life Care roundtable brought together experts representing community, care home and hospice care, asking the question, **Why are we, as a society, so reluctant to talk about death?** (page 42).

And finally last month's Great British Care Awards National Finals celebrated the achievements of the social care sector with over 1300 attendees from across the UK. The event showcased the reach of social care at its best, highlighting a diverse array of initiatives and collaborations. Turn to page 48, **Celebrating excellence in Social Care!** to see the category winners.

Enjoy this issue

Till next time

Lisa

 @lisa\_caretalk





# THE DEMENTIA IN CARE AWARDS

Celebrating Excellence in  
Dementia Care



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

Closing  
date for  
nominations  
**15TH APRIL  
2024**

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# Reaching out to volunteers

**Professor Martin Green, Chief Executive at Care England shares his thoughts on the role of volunteers in enhancing social care within care homes.**

*“I believe volunteers are an invaluable asset to care homes, bringing compassion and energy to the lives of residents.”*

Volunteers play a crucial role in care homes by providing essential support and companionship to residents. Their dedication and selflessness have a profound impact on the wellbeing of people living in care homes. In this article, I will explore the benefits of volunteers in care homes and how their presence contributes to creating a nurturing and vibrant community for residents.

One of the key benefits of having volunteers in care homes is the emotional support they provide to residents. Many people supported by care services may feel lonely or isolated, especially if they do not have regular visits from family or friends. Volunteers offer companionship, a listening ear, and a friendly face to brighten up residents' lives. Their presence helps reduce feelings of loneliness and boosts residents' overall mood and mental wellbeing.

Volunteers also play a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for residents by organising recreational activities and social events. From arts and crafts sessions to music performances and group outings, volunteers create opportunities for residents to engage in meaningful and enjoyable experiences. These activities not only provide entertainment but also promote social interaction, cognitive stimulation, and physical activity, which are essential for maintaining mental and physical health.

Furthermore, volunteers contribute to the personal development and growth of residents by encouraging them to explore new interests and hobbies. Whether it's learning a new skill, participating in a book club, or simply engaging in stimulating conversations, volunteers inspire residents to stay curious, active and engaged. This sense of purpose and fulfilment is invaluable in helping residents maintain a sense of identity and autonomy in a care home setting.

In addition to the direct benefits for residents, volunteers also support care home staff by lightening their workload and providing additional assistance. Volunteers can help with tasks such as serving meals, organising recreational activities, assisting with mobility, and providing one-on-one attention to residents. By relieving some of the pressure on staff members, volunteers contribute to a more efficient and supportive care environment for residents.



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



*“Volunteers support care home staff by lightening their workload.”*

Moreover, volunteers bring a fresh perspective and diverse skills to care homes, enriching the overall community and fostering a sense of inclusivity and belonging. Their unique backgrounds, experiences, and talents create a dynamic and vibrant atmosphere that benefits residents, staff, and fellow volunteers alike. Volunteers also serve as advocates for residents, raising awareness about their needs and promoting a culture of respect, compassion, and empathy within the care home.

I believe volunteers are an invaluable asset to care homes, bringing compassion, energy, and positivity to the lives of residents. Their dedication and generosity create a sense of community and support that is essential for the wellbeing of people in care services. By volunteering their time and talents, individuals make a meaningful difference in the lives of others and contribute to building a more caring and inclusive society. The benefits of volunteers in care homes extend far beyond the tasks they perform; they bring joy, companionship, and a sense of purpose to those they serve.

@ProfMartinGreen @CareEngland  
 careengland.org.uk



Great British  
Care Awards



2024

HOST & COMPERE  
**STEVE WALLS**



# THE REGIONAL AWARDS

1st November 2024  
**EAST OF ENGLAND**  
Milton Keynes  
Dons

2nd November 2024  
**WEST MIDLANDS**  
ICC  
Birmingham

6th November 2024  
**WALES**  
Marriott  
Cardiff

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

14th November 2024  
**SOUTH WEST**  
Ashton Gate  
Bristol

15th November 2024  
**SOUTH EAST**  
Hilton Metropole Hotel  
Brighton

16th November 2024  
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Hilton Bankside  
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27th November 2024  
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# On track for effective collaboration



**Tandra Foster**  
Chair of Commissioning Network,  
ADASS, Director of Integrated Adult  
Social Care, Devon County Council

**Tandra Foster, Chair of the ADASS commissioning network and Director of Adult Social Care at Devon Council explains how effective collaboration between commissioners and providers can achieve significant results.**

As a Director of Adult Social Care, I've seen how good collaboration between commissioners and providers can achieve amazing things for people drawing on care and support.

There will always be some tensions and compromises required between councils and care providers, but I'm pleased to say that, in Devon, we have plenty of examples of successful outcomes. For example, we've worked with providers to move into the home care market, enabling us to support more people to continue living at home independently. This not only helps care providers maintain their sustainability by having a more diverse offer, including unregulated care and support such as enabling care, it also reflects the choices people want to make.

How has this good news story been achieved? We hold regular meetings and collaborative platforms with local care providers to ensure we are creating a culture of continuous improvement. I'm proud that we are collectively developing our Market Position Statement with significant engagement and contribution from providers. The success of these working relationships has been officially recognised by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which rated 82% of the 475 care providers in Devon as outstanding or good, better than all regional and national comparators.

*“We have seen a 95% reduction in the number of people waiting for their preferred package.”*


We've worked closely with care providers to move towards Social Care Future's vision, building on our own Promoting Independence Policy. This has required us all – council staff and providers alike - to reflect on how we work with people drawing on care and support. For example, we work together to discover what people can do for themselves already and what they aspire to do. Care providers are key to helping us use commissioned care and support to build on and develop people's existing abilities and skills. This hopefully means we enable people to maintain their independence for longer and in turn, reduce the need for long term care and support.

We play a proactive role in supporting our care providers to maintain good quality performance levels - that means understanding them and being ready to respond quickly with support if needed. It's only by genuine collaboration, co-production, and investing time in relationships that people are supported to have the best possible experience and outcome from social care.

Boosting our workforce through international recruitment has offered us the opportunity to deliver more care and support across Devon. We've worked with providers to help them navigate international recruitment and ensure ethically and this new capacity has encouraged providers to be active in areas with long standing sufficiency challenges. Providers have been encouraged to look at the unsourced care list, and the opportunity to pick up care packages within existing rounds. It has not only meant more people are receiving care, but existing rounds become more sustainable. Over the last 14 months we have seen a 95% reduction in the number of people waiting for their preferred package of care, and at the time of writing only one person in Devon is in a temporary care home placement waiting for home care.

Whilst this boost to recruitment brings many benefits, it also raises new challenges from a business planning perspective. Care providers have been able to increase their capacity exponentially, while there has only been a slight increase in people drawing on care across the county. Some personal care providers have seen healthy growth, whereas some have experienced reductions in commissioned care. We've been sharing data with the market to help inform their planning and to understand better both the opportunities for providers, and the risks. It's important for us to continue to create an environment where we can collaborate to maximise opportunities and find solutions to new issues.





***“We believe we’re  
on the right track  
through our  
collaboration with  
care providers.”***

Like most councils, one of our challenges is looking at how we can be more efficient and effective in delivering care. We know we’ve not got it right yet, but we believe we’re on the right track through our collaboration with care providers, including the Community Services Co-design Group. This ensures that when people access social care it is the right care for them, in the right place at the right time, and that might be for a short time to learn or relearn the skills and strengths they need.

We also know that there are increasing numbers of people requiring more complex care than ever before. This requires working with our care providers to recruit and training greater numbers of care workers with specific skills to deliver this type of care and support. So it’s important we work with providers in both getting things right for the here and now, but also developing a care market that will meet all of our needs in twenty years’ time.

 @1adass @DevonCC  
 [adass.org.uk](http://adass.org.uk) [devon.gov.uk](http://devon.gov.uk)



# Social impact is more than just good intentions



TRISTONE  
HEALTHCARE

**Rob Finney**  
Chief Operating Officer  
Tristone Healthcare

**Rob Finney, Chief Operating Officer at Tristone Healthcare, a provider of adult and children's services, discusses the importance of incorporating social impact into social care.**

*“Social Impact is becoming something of a buzzword both domestically and internationally.”*

Social impact, or making a difference, was a theory born in 1969 – one that's steadily grown in prominence over fifty-plus years. However, it's only in recent years that it's really begun to take on true meaning, becoming something of a buzzword both domestically and internationally.

Some might argue that in social care the term is part of the fabric of organisations – or at least it should! The difference now is that in a world that's rightfully intent on acting purposefully and delivering positive social and environmental outcomes, there's a greater need not only to measure it, but also to understand what we mean by it.

The lack of either risks organisations being seen as artificial and lacking a genuine desire to achieve real change. After all, it's not only about good intentions, but also about the effect organisations have on all stakeholders, whether that's the people we care for, the communities where we're based, our employees, or the people we partner with.

## Social impact in social care

In theory, social care and social impact should go hand in hand. Everything we strive to do as a sector should always have the best interests of the people we care for at the centre of everything we do.

But to truly be a purpose driven organisation, social impact has to be embedded into the culture of a business, it has to cascade from the top down, and you have to have buy-in from everyone within the organisation. If not, achieving social impact will fail.

The truth is, acting in the best interest of all stakeholders can deliver on many levels – durable profitability that can, in turn, be reinvested back into an organisation, sustainable value, as well as positive outcomes across the board.

But how can you achieve sustainable social impact in social care?

## Values, mission and vision

These three elements form the bedrock of any organisation and provide everyone within the guiding principles in which to deliver social impact. Each are unique to a business, whether they're centred around excellence, compliance, ethics, or value creation. Defining and communicating these forms an important platform on which to develop a long-term social impact proposition.

## Leadership

Having a strong and transparent management team in place that understands and stands by the purpose of any social care organisation is vital. To be successful in delivering social impact, it must come from the top and senior teams must lead by example. Without a guiding light, the rest of the organisation will struggle to understand and buy-in to its *raison d'être*.


## Measurement

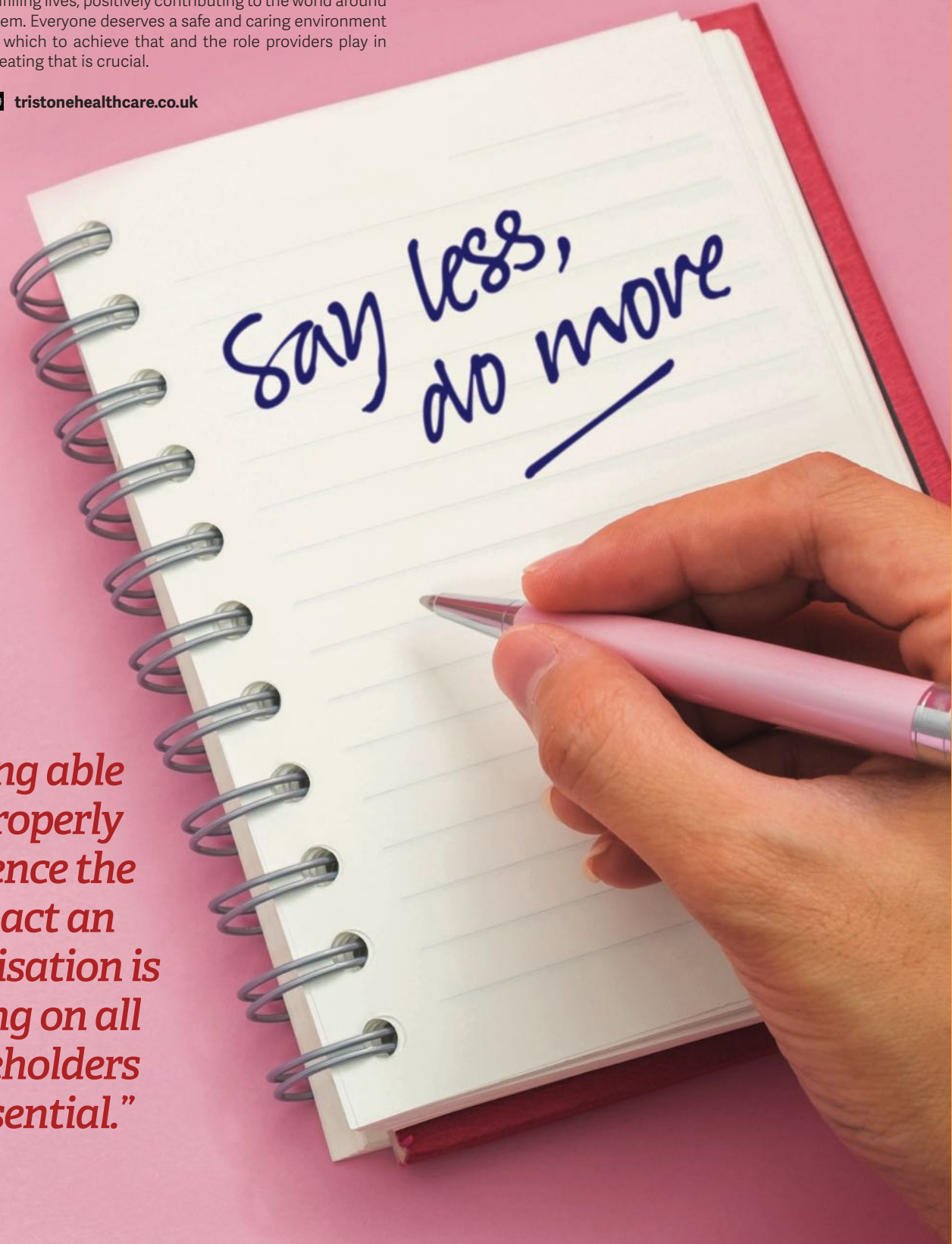
A gut feeling is one thing, but being able to properly evidence the impact an organisation is having on all stakeholders is essential, particularly in today's economic and social climate. Utilising technology is one method of measuring the impact an organisation is having; equally, capturing qualitative evidence is important. The stories, the case studies, the soundbites, the testimonials, all help to create a compelling story.



Unsurprisingly, in the last five years, the term 'social impact' has been an extremely popular search term, peaking in late 2023. There's no question that its popularity will continue to thrive as governments, regulators, organisations, consumers, and investors strive to deliver both social and environmental outcomes.

In social care, this has never been more important. Whatever challenges young people and adults are faced with, everybody is entitled to lead healthy, happy, and fulfilling lives, positively contributing to the world around them. Everyone deserves a safe and caring environment in which to achieve that and the role providers play in creating that is crucial.

 [tristonehealthcare.co.uk](https://tristonehealthcare.co.uk)



Say less,  
do more

*“Being able to properly evidence the impact an organisation is having on all stakeholders is essential.”*



# Understanding public perceptions



**Claire Lambert**  
Research Director  
Ipsos

With a General Election on the horizon, Claire Lambert, Research Director at the independent research and evaluation agency Ipsos, explores the public's views on the current state of social care.

*“Despite the public expressing concerns over social care, it is clearly not a priority for them.”*

The public are far from positive when asked about care and support services for adults: very few (only 6%) think the government has the right policies in place for social care. Nearly three in five (59%) think the standard of social care services has got worse over the last 12 months – on a par with public perceptions about the standards of care in the NHS. One of the key challenges facing the sector is workforce shortages, and the public realise this is an issue: three quarters (76%) recognise there are too few care workers in Britain relative to the need for social care.

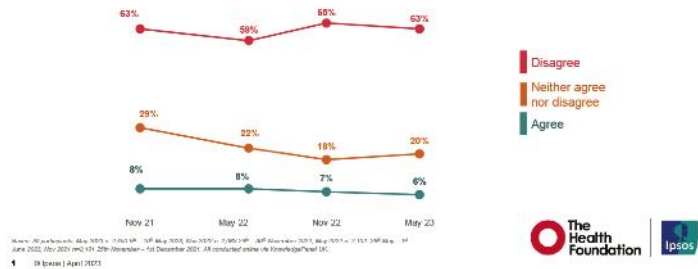
These perceptions very much reflect what we hear when we engage with the social care workforce, with the issue of not having enough time to do their job well coming up frequently in discussions. This has significant implications for staff wellbeing, impacting on their ability to look after themselves while at work, on their stress levels and how much they worry about work outside their working hours.

Yet despite the public expressing concerns over social care, it is clearly not a priority for them: fewer than one in twenty consider adult social care as the most important issue facing Britain (4%). In contrast, the NHS tops the list, with a third of people (34%) considering it as the most important issue facing the country.

So although the public realises that the social care sector is in crisis, they do not share the sector's sense of urgency that this crisis needs to be dealt with and prioritised.

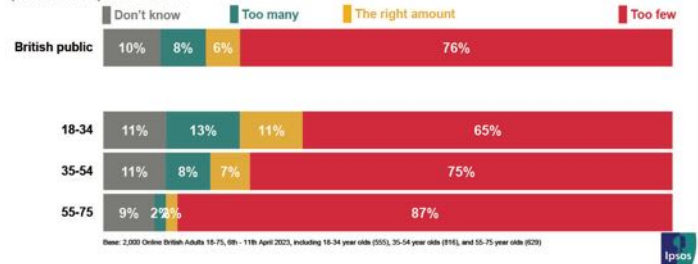
Around two-thirds of the public think that the government does not have the right policies in place for social care

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements... The government has the right policies for social care.

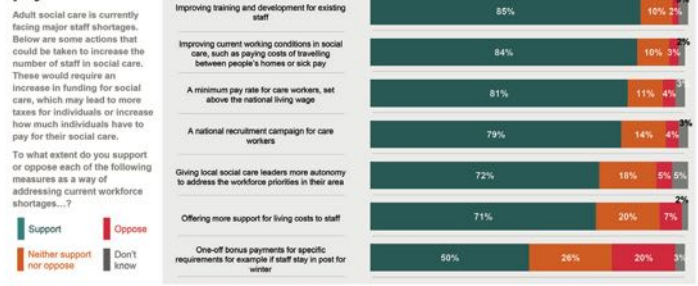


3 in 4 Britons (76%) feel there are too few care workers within Britain relative to the need for social care. Fewer than 1 in 10 (6%) feel there are the right amount

Based on what you have seen or heard, do you think there are too many care workers within Britain relative to the need for social care, too few care workers, or the right amount? By care workers, we mean workers who provide care to those who are unable to care for themselves, including older and disabled people. The care may be provided at a care home, or may be provided at the person's home.



There is strong support for most measures to address current workforce shortages in social care, although there is less support for one-off bonus payments







***“Tying social care to the problems faced by the NHS could help.”***

This comes partly from a lack of knowledge and understanding of what social care is, and how it is delivered and funded. Ipsos’ polling for the Health Foundation demonstrates that a sizeable minority incorrectly believe that the NHS provides most social care services for older people (31%), and that these services are free at the point of use (38%). As we know from the discussions we have with the public about social care, many are surprised to hear that they are likely to have to pay for the care they may need in old age.

In addition, there are mixed views about how fair the current system is: just half of the public think that it is unfair that social care is largely means tested (51%) and a third consider this to be fair (34%). The public is equally divided about whether there should be a lifetime limit on how much people pay for social care, with some not accepting they should pay for care at all. And there is also no consensus on where any additional funding for social care should come from (as is also the case for additional funding for the NHS).

In this context, making the case for reform is politically difficult. A way around this could be to focus on measures for which there is strong public support, for example measures to address workforce shortages in social care. The public are particularly supportive of improving training and development for existing staff (85%), improving current working conditions such as paying costs of travelling between people’s homes or sick pay (84%), and a minimum pay rate for care workers set above the national living wage (81%). Additionally, tying social care to the problems faced by the NHS could help: a fifth of the public think that lack of capacity in social care contributes to NHS problems (20%).

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# What's 90 years between friends?



Apples  
& Honey

**Judith Ish-Horowicz**  
Ambassador, Co-Founder  
and Intergenerational Lead  
Apples and Honey Nightingale CIC

**Judith Ish-Horowicz, Co-Founder of intergenerational nursery, Apples and Honey Nightingale gives an uplifting insight into the value of intergenerational practice in social care.**

*"What's 90 years between friends?"* So said Fay, who never had children, as she cuddled a baby on her lap during our intergenerational baby and toddler group. Apples and Honey Nightingale (AHN) daycare and pre-school opened its doors in the grounds of Nightingale House, the South London site of Nightingale Hammerson Care Homes, in 2017.

From small beginnings, we now cater for 80 babies and infants, both in the garden bungalow and in a new space within the care home itself. Together we enjoy daily activities with the Nightingale residents, or 'grandfriends', as the children call them. These interactions are carefully planned and delivered to provide most benefit to all involved, from the tiniest babies, through the care staff and teachers to the residents and their families.

20% of our places are reserved, highly subsidised, for the children of the care staff which helps with recruitment and retention, and to cement closer relationships between carers and residents, who become like family to the children.

Relatives see that their loved ones have stimulation and purpose and are living in a vibrant, safe, multi-generational community. They have news to share rather than sitting passively during family visits. Our intergenerational relationships offer stimulation, purpose and love and have transformed many people's perceptions of life in a care home.



*"20% of our places are reserved, highly subsidised, for the children of the care staff."*





*“We enjoy daily activities with the Nightingale ‘grandfriends’.”*

And the children benefit equally as they learn from living history, secure in their sense of belonging and being a link in the chain of existence.

Intergenerational (IG) programmes are not confined to care homes. Any safe, community space can host one. Downshall Primary School in Redbridge welcomed ‘grandfriends’ six years ago, benefitting from the attention, conversation and life experiences they can share with the children who provide purpose and relationships in return.

Nightingale House (NH) is a centre of excellence for dementia and end of life care. The impact of having the children around; laughing, running, playing, chatting is illustrated in the words of a relative:

*“There’s something magical about little children singing. It was more effective than any medicine or any treatment in returning the twinkle to my mother after dementia hit.”*

The skills and strengths that a child needs to develop to prepare for life are identical to those that residents need to maintain their independence. Therefore, the teachers, carers, activity coordinators and therapists liaise closely to ensure that the rich and varied programme is cognitively, physically, emotionally and sensorially of equal benefit. It ranges from ballet to baking, buddied reading to singing, poetry to gardening.

NH is a co-located model. Hammerson House, its partner site does not have an onsite nursery, so it has partnered with local primary and secondary schools to enjoy regular visits. The crucial word here is ‘regular’. Effective intergenerational work is relational, and relationships can only be formed through regular, sustained contact.



‘Sparkle’ has developed intergenerational community centres with a mission to ‘spark’ relationships between old and young for mutual benefit. Meeting weekly, they include a warm, nutritious lunch and a carefully designed programme.

At the intergenerational Sustainable Skills Cafés project, older members of the community are happy to demonstrate traditional skills to young children and their families. All these models demonstrate reciprocity and relationship.

However, it’s not the venue that informs the quality and the sustainability of these intergenerational projects. AHN has developed NCFE accredited qualifications in intergenerational practice to ensure that those responsible for the sessions have the breadth and depth of knowledge to plan and deliver high quality programmes with greatest impact. The time is ripe for intergenerational expertise to be an essential skill for care staff, and for Intergenerational Leads to be embedded in the staffing structure of care homes, another step in their career progression.

We have observed multiple benefits for our grandfriends:

- Giving purpose
- Motivation to get up in the morning
- Feeling valued and useful
- Reassuring them that they are still integral to society
- Combatting isolation, loneliness and depression
- Seeing movement all around, giving energy
- Having multigenerational relationships with interesting activities and programmes that go beyond basic daily needs

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# Community must be at the core for disabled people



homes together

**David Ashton-Jones**  
Chief Executive  
Homes Together

**David Ashton-Jones, Chief Executive at Homes Together, a provider supporting younger disabled adults, discusses why disabled people need close connections with their community.**

Community sits at the core of our experiences, offering a sense of belonging, support, and identity. I'd go as far as to say this: having a sense of community and interconnectedness is essential for our mental wellbeing and everyday happiness. Unfortunately, accessing local amenities remains a significant challenge for disabled people. Simple activities like visiting the shop, going out with friends, or just engaging in community events can be fraught with difficulties, from physical barriers to a lack of transport options.

At Homes Together, we're committed to making sure everyone has a chance to form these vital connections within their local communities. We provide care for adults living with disabilities in our homes in Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon, and Gateshead – and in doing that, our focus is on not only meeting the practical needs of our service users, but also enriching their social and emotional lives.

## Why community is so important for wellbeing

The positive impact of community integration on disabled people cannot be overstated. Through regular community interaction, people build confidence, foster a greater sense of independence, and develop essential life skills. Social inclusion is especially important. It's about more than just occupying the same space – it's about being accepted and forging connections. Feeling you belong in this way is a cornerstone of wellbeing for anyone.

Additionally, being an active community member means more chances to participate in the joys of daily life – from pursuing hobbies to attending social gatherings. These activities aren't just a way to pass time; they help to lift the spirits and broaden horizons. In other words, they're key aspects to living a richer, more purposeful life.

## Supporting community engagement at Homes Together

At Homes Together, we actively encourage service users to be a part of the local community. That means trips to local eateries, swims at the pool, arts and crafts

workshops, picnics in the park and even singing with the local choir. So much of this is down to the commitment and support of our teams, without whom many of these activities wouldn't be possible. We believe everyone deserves to live life to the fullest, no matter their abilities. We champion physical activity especially, with service users taking part in fitness classes and scuba diving, for instance. They also join specialised swimming classes – a great low-impact exercise for those with limited mobility.

By recognising the importance of organisations that cater to individuals with different needs and supporting them through sponsorships, we're always making sure there are plenty of options for those who need them.

## How community interaction can benefit society at large

There are 6 million disabled people in the UK, but many of them still find it very difficult to access facilities and services in local communities.

Yet the truth is, making these amenities universally accessible will benefit everyone. With more interaction, members of the community gain a better understanding of the unique challenges faced by those with disabilities, breaking down biases and stereotypes and instead encouraging empathy, acceptance, and inclusion.

Added to this, education and awareness efforts championed by caregivers can be transformative, leading to shifts in cultural attitudes. And that in turn can lead to improvements in infrastructure, policies, and services – benefiting all of us equally.

## Community connections

Being part of the local community is crucial for disabled people, positively impacting their social inclusion, access to support networks, opportunities for participation, and developing independence.

At Homes Together, we remain committed to facilitating the connections between disabled people and the local community. It's through these connections that we can build a more inclusive and accessible environment – and a better life for all.

*“Having a sense of community and interconnectedness is essential for mental wellbeing.”*

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# Fostering social responsibility



**Lorna Fearon**  
Managing Director  
Cambian East Residential Services

**Lorna Fearon, Managing Director at Cambian East Residential Services, part of the CareTech group, shares her thoughts on the role of social responsibility and the initiatives that have had proven results.**

In today's dynamic landscape marked by persistent societal and environmental challenges, the significance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) cannot be overstated. At the forefront of driving positive change stands CareTech LTD, spearheading initiatives such as the CARE4 One Planet Living programme. This year, we've introduced this innovative programme, providing a structured framework for each of our services to develop action plans and targets. These plans empower our staff and those they care for to contribute to sustainability goals within their respective communities.

Based on Bioregional's One Planet Living sustainability framework, our programme encompasses ten fundamental principles supported by detailed goals and guidance. Crucially, these targets are integrated into our corporate reporting framework, highlighting sustainability as a core aspect of our business operations. While our corporate efforts are substantial, we recognise the immense potential in empowering our staff to drive sustainability initiatives. Research underscores that employees seek out organisations with robust sustainability credentials, and such organisations benefit from increased loyalty and productivity. The CARE4 One Planet Living programme enables our employees to contribute meaningfully to their communities while advancing our sustainability agenda. To support this, we've developed online training materials accessible to all staff, with the aim of implementing a CARE4 One Planet Living plan across every service.

*“CareTech Ltd and The Foundation are paving the way for a more compassionate and equitable society.”*

In addition to CareTech LTD's community contributions, the CareTech Foundation is dedicated to fostering community transformation through its Community Grants initiative. This initiative serves as a catalyst for grassroots-level change, empowering local communities to address pressing issues effectively. By providing strategic financial support, the Foundation enables

community organisations to implement projects addressing a wide range of challenges, from healthcare disparities to environmental sustainability.

One inspiring example of the Foundation's impact is evident in “Little Sprouts,” a local community food charity supported by CareTech Foundation's Community Grants. With vital funding, Little Sprouts has expanded its reach, providing essential support to vulnerable individuals and families. From offering nutritious meals to hosting skills-building workshops, this charity has become a cornerstone of resilience and empowerment within the community.

Complementing the Community Grants program is the innovative “Match It” initiative pioneered by the CareTech Foundation. Unlike traditional grant schemes, “Match It” incentivises staff members to engage in volunteer activities by matching their efforts with financial support. This approach not only encourages volunteering but also fosters a culture of altruism and community engagement within the organisation. A notable instance of the impact of “Match It” can be found at Stainton Children's Home, where staff members embraced the spirit of giving wholeheartedly. Motivated by the Foundation's matching scheme, the team rallied to support Little Sprouts, inspiring a wave of generosity among their peers and culminating in a record-breaking blood donation drive.

Looking ahead, the CareTech Foundation remains committed to fostering volunteerism and social responsibility. Building on the success of its Community Grants and “Match It” programs, the Foundation aims to expand its reach, empowering more individuals and organisations to create positive change within their communities. Through collective compassion and collaboration, the CareTech Foundation continues to be a driving force for good, enriching lives and building a brighter, more inclusive future for all. A further initiative supported by Care4 Communities is Care Home Open Week. Delivered by the Championing Social Care initiative hosted by the CareTech Foundation, has continued to positively impact the sector. Over 5000 services across the care sector took part in the initiative last year and one in five MPs engaged with a care service in their constituency over the week. 104 CareTech services took also took part, this is an increase of 30% increase from the previous year and just another statement to the importance placed by on communities by all parties involved.

In summary, CareTech Ltd and The CareTech Foundation's steadfast support for volunteering and social responsibility, underscores the commitment to social responsibility and community empowerment. Through strategic investments and collaborative partnerships, both CareTech Ltd and The Foundation are paving the way for a more compassionate and equitable society, where every individual has the opportunity to thrive and make a meaningful difference.



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# Every Social Care Minister should undergo two weeks work experience



**Karolina Gerlich**  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Care Workers Charity

**Karolina Gerlich, Chief Executive at The Care Workers' Charity discusses the role of collaboration in promoting enhanced social care and community support, and why education of the role of social care needs to start at Government level.**

*“They didn't know that care workers administered medication or provided essential support like stoma care.”*

As the Chief Executive of a charity dedicated to care workers, I constantly see the complex network of collaboration necessary for the holistic wellbeing of our communities. It's clear that effective social care relies on more than the actions of any one professional or team. Instead, it relies on professionals across the sector communicating, educating and working together to provide excellent care and support.

A few years back, I gave a talk at the British Geriatric Society. Afterwards, as I spoke with consultants and nurses, I was struck that many of them were surprised by the extent of care workers' responsibilities. They didn't know that care workers administered medication or provided essential support like stoma care. This knowledge gap highlighted a crucial need for increased education and awareness of other health and social care professionals about the skills, responsibilities and the invaluable role care workers play.

Registered professionals must acknowledge and champion the contributions of care workers, recognise care workers as fellow professionals and work together to provide the best support for people drawing on social care. For example, care workers often serve as vital support systems for individuals in

physiotherapy rehabilitation. By collaborating closely with physiotherapists, care workers can facilitate better outcomes for those in their care, offering essential assistance, encouragement and guidance throughout the rehabilitation process and exercises. Care workers also provide palliative support in the community working closely with district nurses, administering end of life pain relief and coordinating with GP services.

It's essential to foster an environment of mutual respect and understanding between all professionals involved in the social care sector. Registered professionals and care workers bring unique skills and perspectives to the table. When each role is valued and respected, it creates a collaborative environment, and combined efforts get better results.

Education is key. We need to educate registered professionals and the broader society about the multifaceted nature of social care and the pivotal role of care workers within it. In this way, we can bridge the knowledge gap and foster a culture of appreciation for the invaluable work carried out by care workers daily.

This needs to start at a governmental level. Every social care minister should undergo a two-week work experience in the social care sector to see firsthand the daily responsibilities of care workers. This could help shape policies that truly value and respect care workers, leading to fair recognition and pay. By instilling this culture of respect and recognition at the governmental level, we can pave the way for a more sustainable social care system with policies and practices that uphold the professionalisation of care work, benefitting care workers, those drawing on social care, the wider social care sector and our society.

*“We need to educate society about the multifaceted nature of social care.”*

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# The power of community services that care



JEWISH CARE

**Jamie Field**  
Jewish Care Head of Community Services and Volunteering  
Jewish Care

**Jamie Field, Jewish Care's Head of Community Services and Volunteering gives an overview of how the organisation's community programme is bringing about positive change and wellbeing.**

*"We create a mutually-supportive team environment."*

Our 5 pillar approach directs our programming and is integral to everything we do in our community services at Jewish Care. The aim of our community programme is to have a positive impact on the quality of life of our members and community, so they leave us feeling better than they did when they arrived at our nine community centres and three centres for people living with dementia.

We achieve this by creating a mutually supportive team environment with a culture of pursuing excellence and working together to achieve the goals in our 5 pillars. These include keeping the brain active, staying physically fit, interacting and socialising with others, lifting spirits and connecting to Jewish culture. The senior team work closely to support the centre coordinators to integrate the values in the programming they lead and we review how well this is being implemented.

Our community services team sign up to a charter which steers everything from the way we deliver our services to how we bring ourselves to work each day. We have high expectations of each other, we are accountable to one another, and we listen to and respect each other.



Jewish Care Holocaust Survivor's Centre members, staff, and volunteers were delighted with a visit from Strictly Come Dancing Star **Pasha Kovalev**



The team's main expectations of each other are respect, having a can do attitude, humility and creativity. These are key and run through every role we recruit to. This brings an excellent team together and makes sure our services are effective. In turn, this creates an environment where staff want to come to work and be together, and where our members and those we support want to spend time with our staff and with each other. It creates a very happy space in our centres. A team who feels respected and dignified will create a respectful and dignified environment for our members. This is so important, as this is where the older people we support choose to come and spend their day.

When older people and those living with dementia come to our community centres, our Supportive Communities tea parties or when they take part in our online JC Presents programme, they enjoy a warm sense of belonging with opportunities to develop connections which all have a positive impact on their quality of life.

There's a whole range of activities to help our members keep fit, expand their interests, develop new ones, boost creativity and lift the spirits. Staying active with others in a fun environment helps to increase levels of happiness and sense of belonging.

We give people choice and flexibility with when they come in and we provide transport if they'd like. People self-select their day with us, so they feel independent and in control. They will come in to do pottery, Tai Chi, table tennis, bridge, Kalooki, line-dancing, exercise, discussion groups which are led by topics our members. We look at surveys so we can respond and provide people with what they enjoy. Some days our members may just want to come and sit and read the paper with a coffee. We also serve good food so that people feel they are nourished, physically, mentally, emotionally and culturally.

Activities include preparing for and celebrating Jewish festivals together, as well as national days, so our members feel that cultural community connection. This can involve cooking, music and parties and we adapt activities to support people to do the things that bring them enjoyment.

We have people from a range of backgrounds, ages and abilities and try to meet many aspects of support, care, love and social stimulation, so people feel appreciated and supported.

Staff check in on our members when their needs change and as cognitive ability declines. In our team we call it professional curiosity as self-neglect is one of the more common safeguarding concerns, we hear about from the older people who come in to our centres. Checking for any signs like not eating well or unclean clothes that could indicate there may be a safeguarding issue. Capacity is essential and we train staff around this and how the Care Act interacts with Mental Capacity Act regarding those concerns. It maybe that the older person needs more specialised support so we will refer them to Jewish Care's Social Work and Community Support Team or if they are struggling to prepare meals for themselves, to our Meals on Wheels service.

Knowing each person is key to seeing whether the services are meeting their needs, the continuity of care makes that transition much easier, our staff will support our community centre members when they make the move to attend our dementia day centres, and we continue to support them as their care needs change, requiring further care and support.



Music and parties are a regular feature at Jewish Care's community centres

100% of our dementia day centre members families tell us that their relative comes home from a day at the centre in a better mood than when they left. This means that the member has a better evening and therefore a better night sleep. The carer sleeps better because their relative sleeps better. This helps to prevent some of the safeguarding issues that we are most concerned about, such as carer burn out.

We couldn't do what we do without our volunteers. We often host many people for lunch and provide many different activities throughout the day, so our volunteers are instrumental to being able to provide all of this at the same time. Our incredible volunteers get to know many of our members over a long period of time and there are many people locally with strong connections. The volunteers bring a cultural aspect as does the food, music, traditions, and sensory stimulating aspects, making people feel connected and at home.

Our digital inclusion services are still as in demand as ever. This includes our JC Explore digital support services for older people and our Befriending service. We coordinate our volunteers to make 1600 calls a month to older, isolated people. This service also produces an outstanding podcast on current developments within the social care sector, in particular those that impact the Jewish community.

*“Our members make connections and friendships and leave with a smile on their face.”*

Many of our community centre clients are isolated and live alone so they will plan their whole week, like medical appointments, cleaning or laundry, around when they come to the centre. This shows how special these meaningful activities at Jewish Care centres are to them. They come to see their friends and participate in their community. They make connections, friendships and relationships and leave with a smile on their face. Seeing this, really is one of the most rewarding parts of our work.

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# Sex is not a taboo word at LDC



**Cheryll Champion**  
Quality and Compliance Manager  
LDC Care Company



**Cheryll Champion, Quality and Compliance Manager at LDC Care Company, a provider for people with learning disability and autistic people, explores the vital intersection of relationships, sexuality, and the journey towards reducing isolation for the people who draw on services.**

*“Only 3% of people with a learning disability will ever live with a partner.”*

I recently was honoured to win an award for innovation at the National Great British Care Awards. Alongside my joy at winning the award was a little sadness that the work we are doing is still seen as innovative.

The work all centres around supporting people in our care who live with learning disabilities, autism, acquired brain injury or mental health needs to be less isolated. Supporting them to build friendships and having opportunities to meet potential partners.

It's a sad fact that data shows approximately only 3% of people with a learning disability will ever live with a partner with the statistics for marriage being even lower. The opportunities for them to build relationships and find an intimate partner are so few and far between. There is still an uneasiness from staff, families and other professionals about people who need support expressing their sexual needs and finding ways to meet them. So often the thought of people with a support need being intimate provokes an assumption that this is a safeguarding issue, rather than a natural thing and a connection most people seek.

The work we do at LDC all came because of a person we support saying her goal for 2023 was to go on a date. We knew if that was a goal for her it would also be one for other people. The first thing we did was to start a group called meet and mingle, where people could socialise and meet people both supported by LDC and other local organisations.





I am happy to say it has been a massive success. People have made friends often with people we would never have matched them with. Those friendships have continued outside the group with people meeting for coffee or lunch. We have also had some romances, with slow dances, dates, flowers, and some kissing. For some people they have progressed to thinking about intimacy and we have worked with them around their understanding, capacity and when needed sex education.

People with a support need are so vulnerable to 'mate crime', a bad friend is better than no friend at all. We work really hard to enable people to make friends who will treat them well and help those friendships to blossom. This minimised the hold those 'bad' friends have on people. It also minimises the risks that people encounter with online interaction.

We have introduced the idea of intimate relationships and expression of sexual needs into our induction training. So, staff know from day one that this is a support need we take seriously and do not avoid.

We have found staff are asking lots of questions and seeking training. We have trained 3 people to deliver the skills for care programme around relationships and sexuality.

The opened in this area has encouraged those in our care to ask for information and support relating to their gender, sexuality, and intimate lives.

Sex is not a taboo word at LDC.

In most recent interview for the award the interviewers told me it has inspired them to go back to their own organisations and look at how they were supporting people around reducing isolation and expressing their sensuality. For me this is a win in itself. If even one person's life is improved by my work then I am very proud.

 **LDC Care Co**  
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*“We have introduced the idea of intimate relationships into our induction training.”*



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# What's stopping care businesses from going digital?



deputy\*

**Jon Wilson**  
Senior Vice President  
Deputy

**Jon Wilson, Senior Vice President at Deputy, a scheduling software platform, outlines the barriers preventing care businesses from embracing digital transformation and the strategies to overcome them.**

*“Often, it's the fear of embarking on costly and time-consuming projects that may not deliver the promised outcomes.”*

This time last year, the government updated its policy paper on the next steps to put 'People at the Heart of Care'. A key aspect of the 10-year vision is to drive digitalisation.

The care sector, under constant demands for efficiency and transparency, stands to benefit significantly from the opportunities that digital technology can provide. But while automating admin areas such as records and rostering can free up time for valuable personal interaction, only 30-40% of care providers are fully digitised. So what's stopping care businesses from going digital?

Often, it's the fear of embarking on costly and time-consuming projects that may not deliver the promised outcomes. Today, cloud technology is removing this barrier, by making easy-to-use digital tools readily available across all laptops, mobile and tablets. This frees up care providers to focus on the human factor, so transformation becomes about people, not tech.

Unquestionably, the most important thing in any care home is the staff. I recently spoke to one of our customers who told me that removing any impediment to their happiness is the key to retaining the best people. The little things can make all the difference between a member of staff staying with you or leaving, and if you can focus on those small things, it's more likely they'll stay.

A successful digital transformation strategy encompasses five key elements:

## 1 Build a business case and secure buy-in:

Avoid the temptation to overhaul everything at once. Break down the transformation into manageable phases and prioritise initiatives based on their impact. Engage stakeholders early on and demonstrate tangible benefits to gain support and funding.

## 2 People-centred procurement:

Prioritise user needs and involve them in the decision-making process. Look beyond upfront costs and consider the total cost of ownership. Choose vendors aligned with your organisation's values and long-term goals. We know from our customers that when you're 'all hands on deck' and dealing with different issues across the business, it's very disruptive to be tied up doing admin tasks like timesheets and schedules the old-fashioned way.

## 3 Effective implementation:

Focus on achieving value incrementally and involve vendors as partners rather than mere suppliers. Set clear goals and commitments and create feedback loops to incorporate learnings into the solution. Ensure adequate resources and strong governance throughout the implementation process.

## 4 Go live and learn:

Treat the go-live phase as a starting point rather than an endpoint. Conduct a soft launch to address any issues before full deployment. Celebrate achievements and reflect on lessons learned to inform future iterations.

## 5 Success and advocacy:

Continuously assess progress towards strategic objectives and seek support from internal advocates and vendor partners. Align success metrics with overarching goals and foster a culture of ongoing improvement and innovation.

In the journey towards digital transformation, technology serves as a facilitator rather than the sole driver of change. Cloud technology has made digital transformation more accessible, but success ultimately hinges on the people and processes behind the technology. Care providers don't need to be IT experts to embark on this journey; they need to leverage their existing skills and partner with the right stakeholders to ensure a successful digital transformation. By prioritising people and process, care services can unlock the full potential of digital technology to deliver better outcomes for both those giving care and receiving care.

Download a free digital transformation guide for care providers at [www.deputy.com/gb/insights/digital-transformation-toolkit](http://www.deputy.com/gb/insights/digital-transformation-toolkit)

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# Signing up to care



**Care worker Alex Scarlatt, who is profoundly Deaf, has been recognised for her commitment to supporting Deaf young people.**

*“Alex has first-hand experience of attending a residential school for the Deaf and understands the challenges young people face.”*

Alex, 33, who joined the Devon-based Deaf Academy's residential care team in October 2022, was a winner of the Care Newcomer Award at this year's National Great British Care Awards.

And there's also a special mention for Alex's much-loved and very popular Hearing Dog for the Deaf, Otto, who is by her side as she works with the Academy's students.

The award is intended to acknowledge and celebrate a member of staff who has commenced and remained in employment in the care sector within the previous 12 months.

James Heaver, Assistant Principal for care at the Deaf Academy, said everyone at the Academy was proud of Alex's achievement.

He said *“Alex is naturally kind and caring and takes her role very seriously whilst being able to have fun along the way! Growing up as a profoundly Deaf British Sign Language user, Alex has used her personal life experiences of being a Deaf young woman to her advantage when developing positive and trusting relationships with the children she cares for.*

*“She has developed fantastic relationships with our students, who also adore Otto. Alex has first-hand experience of attending a residential school for the Deaf and understands the challenges young people face. She is truly able to empathise with issues such as children missing home and other daily barriers. She is also able to provide first hand advice regarding overcoming barriers linked to deafness.”*

As a residential care worker, Alex's role at the Academy involves supporting the young people to develop their independent living skills, as well as organising inclusive social activities.

James added: *“Alex's passion at the Deaf Academy is 'building bridges', ensuring full accessibility for the students. Being a positive Deaf role model has enabled Alex to develop the skills swiftly to become a highly*

*effective practitioner. She has been studying for her Health and Social Care qualification utilising the regular support of a British Sign Language interpreter.*

*“We have children from across the country stay with us in residential care, so Alex has also been learning some new regional signs from the Deaf children that she supports and to further develop her understanding of working with Deaf children with mental health needs.”*

Alex has gone from strength-to-strength during her time with the Deaf Academy. Despite not having any previous experience of working in residential care, she has flourished and provides the young people with exceptional care, experiences and outcomes.

The Deaf Academy, which was founded in 1826, provides a school and Further Education college for Deaf young people aged 9-25, many of whom have additional needs. It currently has around 70 students. Its unique provision and specialist expertise mean that students come from across the UK to attend, with many using its residential care facilities.

Originally located in Exeter, the Academy moved to the Devon seaside town of Exmouth in 2020. Its new campus is designed around the principles of inspiration, visual communication and inclusivity, placing it at the cutting edge of Deaf education in Europe.

 @DeafAcademy  
 thedeafacademy.co.uk





# Making Space for the menopause

**When a support worker from Darlington who was struggling with symptoms of menopause asked her manager for help, she inadvertently set in motion an organisation-wide policy that helps both the charity's employees and the people who use its services.**



Maxine Ridley

Maxine Ridley, 48, works with the national health and social care charity Making Space in their extra care services in Darlington. When she began struggling with menopause symptoms she turned to manager Rebecca Liddle for help.

*"I had low mood, anxiety, I wasn't sleeping, I had hot flushes. I just wasn't right," says Maxine. "I didn't realise at the time, but they were typical symptoms of perimenopause. One of the things that was really bothering me was the relationships with my colleagues. I was going*

*through this rough time and I really didn't understand why, so of course they didn't either. I wasn't coping."*

Worried about the impact on her work, Maxine approached manager Rebecca, known as Becky, for help.

*"Becky was amazing," says Maxine. "She listened to my concerns and immediately began researching what help was available, and what more we could do as an organisation."*

The conversation was the catalyst for what is now the Making Space menopause policy. And, thanks to the open and welcoming way the charity has approached the issue, raising awareness is also helping the people who use Making Space services.

*"The group was initially set up for us to support each other as colleagues, first just as a small WhatsApp group, and then Becky created a Facebook page," Maxine explains. "But it very quickly took hold. I did some research, delivered some workshops within the service and shared as much information as I could. When we realised how much people were benefiting from it, Becky and I and our colleague Emily set up a regular coffee morning for the people who use our supported living services."*

Maxine's initiative – or Max's Menopause Darlington Extra Care, to give it its full title – was so successful, the idea has now been adopted by Making Space as official policy.

Hester Pownall is the lead people and culture partner at the charity. When she heard about the successful work Maxine had been doing to educate people on menopause issues, she was keen to find out more.

Hester explains: *"We had a long conversation about the wide range of symptoms and how Maxine had struggled to work out what was going on, so we decided that we had to do something as an organisation. We'd had unofficial awareness-raising initiatives before, but now we have an official menopause policy. It includes guides around symptoms, how to approach managers, how managers should support teams, workplace adaptations, and lots of other practical advice. We also have online meetings, where people can log in and chat, or simply listen and know that they're not alone."*

The menopause policy was launched with a celebration day at the charity's head office in Warrington, which Maxine attended as a Making Space Menopause Champion.

*"The launch event was such a great way to remove the stigma and let everyone know they're supported," Maxine says. "Making Space has really got on board and proved that it's not just an exercise in box-ticking. We have the guides, training for managers and team leaders - we even have new uniforms made with light cotton fabric that help to reduce the impact of hot flushes."*

And, of course, with so much knowledge within Making Space, the teams can share their experiences to support the people who use their services.

***"The conversation was the catalyst for what is now the Making Space menopause policy."***

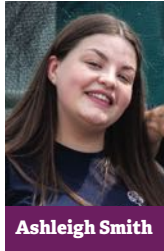
*"I've really noticed a difference in people's attitudes, it's been amazing," says Maxine. "One gentleman I support always makes a point of asking me if the temperature is OK when I visit."*

Hester agrees: *"Some people are fine about talking very openly about their symptoms, but others can feel embarrassed or uncomfortable, particularly if they're talking to a male colleague. We're not just saying 'we'll make adjustments for your symptoms,' we want to educate everyone. By removing the stigma, we're making it much easier for all the people who use our services to understand how they, their neighbours or family members may be affected."*

# Enhancing lives through performing arts



**It is always rewarding when you can combine your personal interests and skills with your work. Ashleigh Smith, who is the Office Co-ordinator at Spadework, a charity in Kent, loves music and singing and is a member of the Maidstone Amateur Operatic Society.**



Ashleigh Smith

During the pandemic, when she organised much of the volunteer support that helped the charity to survive, Spadework identified Ashleigh as someone with many talents but perhaps lacking the confidence to achieve her potential. She was offered the opportunity to become a Spadework apprentice and subsequently graduated in Business and Administration.

*"I've always loved studying and learning and I'd definitely recommend an apprenticeship to other people," Ashleigh said. "I learned so many transferable skills though this period. Moving from the café into the office gave me the opportunity to learn many new skills. For someone who was so anxious when I was first asked to make a telephone call, I can't believe that's now a big part of my job."*

Ashleigh credits Spadework's Chief Executive, Kris Healey, with enabling her to blossom during the apprenticeship. *"Kris spent time with me, inviting me to ask questions," she said. "I'd suggest all employers give this support to apprentices."*


She has developed excellent relationships with all the staff and Trainees. She organises events, writes social media posts, takes orders for logs, organises volunteers, and supports the staff.

Ashleigh is a volunteer at Square Peg Arts, a performing arts charity with bases all over Kent. Once a month on a Saturday she leads their singing groups with adults with learning disabilities. Several Spadework Trainees now take part in these sessions. Knowing that one of them was feeling anxious about attending, Ashleigh met him at the door on his arrival and spent most of the day with him, giving him confidence and encouragement. He now attends these sessions regularly.

Ashleigh says she is inspired by many of the people around her at Spadework. *"I learn a lot from the care team, who have so much experience," she said.*

Although she is not sure where her career will take her next, Ashleigh has people she can learn from. For example, one of the members of the amateur dramatic group teaches children with special needs and another is a music therapist.

Ashleigh has won several awards, including 2023 Regional Winner of the Great British Care Awards. *"That's definitely been a highlight, but working alongside our Trainees, showing new Trainees around our site and seeing them so inspired and motivated to come here is what makes my heart sing," she said.*

 @Spadeworkoffham  
 [spadework.org.uk](http://spadework.org.uk)

*"It is always rewarding when you can combine your personal interests and skills with your work."*

When she started working at Spadework, which offers meaningful opportunities to its Trainees (adults with learning and other disabilities), 22-year-old Ashleigh never imagined that part of her daily routine would include music!

At lunchtimes Ashleigh holds dance sessions for the Trainees in the Courtyard. *"They started after a week-long challenge at Spadework where we encouraged our Trainees to get more active," she recalled. "When the designated week finished, the Trainees popped their head into the office and asked if we would carry on doing this. The sessions have continued ever since, increasing in length from 20 minutes to sometimes as much as 45 minutes. You can tell it brings so much happiness to them, but it also brings so much happiness to me, staff, volunteers and the public."*

Spadework, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, is based in Offham, near West Malling. Kent's Charity of the Year for 2023, it also has a Farm Shop, Café and Garden Centre on its five-acre rural site. Spadework helps its Trainees to be more independent, feel less isolated and live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives. It also supports people living with dementia and those experiencing problems with their mental health.

Ashleigh began working weekends at Spadework five years ago. After leaving school, which had performing arts status where she had won a scholarship, she decided to take a gap year and started working full-time in the Spadework Café.



# Hairdressing's loss is the care sector's gain!



**Tracy's story is one of unexpected twists and profound growth, leading her from youthful aspirations of glamour to a fulfilling career in the world of care.**



Tracy Green

Despite her early dreams of becoming a hairdresser and traveling the globe, Tracy's journey took an unforeseen turn when she discovered her allergy to hair dye. Devastated by this setback, she found herself at a crossroads, unsure of her path forward.

In late 1992, at the age of 17, Tracy embarked on a Youth Training Scheme with a local hairdresser in West London. However, her hopes of pursuing a career in hairdressing were dashed when she developed a severe allergic reaction to hair dye. Forced to abandon her dreams, Tracy faced uncertainty about her future.

It was at this pivotal moment that Tracy's mother, Lynda, stepped in with unwavering support and guidance. Recognising Tracy's practical nature and her commitment to hard work, Lynda encouraged her daughter to explore a new path in the care industry. Despite initial reluctance, Tracy followed her mother's wishes, viewing it as a temporary solution rather than a long-term career.

Tracy's foray into the world of care began in 1994, when she joined a local care home under her mother's guidance. Assigned to work with a formidable service user called Grace, Tracy initially struggled to find her footing in her new role. However, she soon discovered a deep sense of fulfilment in caring for the elderly residents, many of whom became like family to her.

In an era before stringent inspections and regulations, Tracy recognised the need for change within the care home environment. Inspired by the stories and wisdom of the elderly residents, Tracy sought to create a more personalised and vibrant atmosphere within the institution.

One resident, in particular, left a lasting impression on Tracy. Emily, a kind-hearted woman with whom Tracy formed a close bond, passed away unexpectedly, leaving Tracy reeling with grief. Her experience with Emily's death prompted Tracy to reevaluate her commitment to the care industry.



Taking some time to reflect, Tracy embarked on a journey of self-discovery, spending a year working as an au pair in America. However, her heart remained tethered to the care industry, and upon her return, she resumed her role with renewed determination and purpose.

As the years passed, Tracy's dedication to her work only deepened. She explored various roles within the care sector, including patient transport ambulance driving, before setting her sights on a new dream—to become a Registered Manager. Despite facing personal tragedy with the sudden loss of her mother in 1999, Tracy persevered, driven by her mother's legacy and her own passion for caring for others.

As Tracy approaches her 30th year in the care industry, she reflects on her journey with a sense of pride and gratitude. Honoring her promise to Emily, Tracy named her daughter after the beloved resident, embodying the spirit of compassion and empathy that has guided her throughout her career.

In Tracy's eyes, caring for another is not just a job—it's a calling, a privilege, and one of the most rewarding experiences life has to offer. As she looks forward to celebrating this milestone with her work and home family, Tracy remains committed to making a difference in the lives of those she serves, carrying her mother's voice in her heart every step of the way.

*“Her hopes of a career in hairdressing were dashed when she developed an allergic reaction to hair dye.”*

 @TricuroUK  
 tricuro.co.uk



## WHAT KEEPS ME



## AWAKE AT NIGHT

**Steve Veevers, Chief Executive at Hft, a charity supporting adults with learning disabilities, shares his thoughts on the current state of social care and hopes for the future.**

*“ In the face of austerity and indifference, we’re losing our collective humanity.”*

Undeniably and by every available measure, social care is on a precipice.

That’s a bold statement but there’s no other way to describe it. The sector has been engulfed in a sustained state of crisis for, at the very least, the past 12 months. Really, for the last few years. Both care providers and local government are facing increasing financial and workforce pressures in the face of rapidly growing demand.

The direct impact of this has led to many sleepless nights. The armed forces have a term for it: ‘battle fatigue’.

Because it’s not just about numbers and statistics. It’s about much more than that - real people. It’s real people whose lives are affected by constant cuts, empty promises and a lack of action from the Government, not forgetting the long-lasting impact of Covid-19. And my biggest concern? That, in the face of austerity and indifference, we’re losing our collective humanity. That fundamentally, social care, where those who draw upon care and support can live rich and fulfilled lives, is being reduced by incremental and year-on-year cuts. Every year we face slightly harder choices than the year before.

A prime example is that, for years, society has collectively pushed the personalisation agenda, advocating for individuals to have the greatest possible influence and choice about how they receive support and, subsequently, how they live their lives. Yet, largely due to cash constraints, a number of local authorities have worryingly made moves to undermine such progress, in some cases proposing that learning disabled adults are moved from their homes to residential settings, with little consideration for what works best for the individual.

The importance of personalised care and support is massively under-estimated here, which is largely a result of limited budgets and options for policymakers.

Our 2023 Sector Pulse Check report<sup>1</sup>, produced in partnership with Care England, saw 79% of providers report that local authority fee increases did not cover the impact of the National Living Wage rise in 2023 - a glaring example that our sector is limited by chronic underfunding and squeezed local authority budgets that limit the scope for fee increases to properly cover the costs of care.

Our report also revealed that 43% of adult social care providers were forced to close part of their organisation or hand back contracts in 2023 due to cost pressures. Such cost pressures also resulted in 18% of providers offering care to fewer individuals, while two in five providers considered taking steps to shut up shop altogether.

This is worrying given the growing demand for care and support across the UK, and has detrimental consequences. Last year, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, (ADASS), reported that nearly 250,000 people are waiting for care - a significant portion of the adult population with potential unmet needs.

I hope local authorities don’t lose sight of the value of social care and, as providers, we’ll ensure we continue to be driven by our duty of care to the individuals we support. I once had a wise man say to me that, if the NHS is about saving lives, social care is about people having meaningful lives.

*“ Social care isn’t something that can be pushed to the bottom of a manifesto.”*

At its best, adult social care empowers people to live the life they choose, their way. But to be at its best, urgent and long-term reform is needed.

At Hft, we would like to see a commitment to funding social care once and for all, with ringfenced funding for local authorities that enables them to pay the real cost of care and assurance that the money will reach those who draw on care and support, thus making a tangible impact on their lives. Sticking plaster solutions work for no one.

With a general election looming, this is a particularly crucial time for the Government, this year and the next, to get social care right. Social care isn’t something that can be pushed to the bottom of a manifesto. It needs to be prioritised. As do those who draw upon care and support, including learning disabled adults, so they can live their best life possible.

*“ If the NHS is about saving lives, social care is about people having meaningful lives.”*

[hft.org.uk/get-involved/public-affairs-policy-and-campaigns-sector-pulse-check/](https://hft.org.uk/get-involved/public-affairs-policy-and-campaigns-sector-pulse-check/)

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 hft.org.uk





**Steve Veevers**  
Chief Executive  
Hft







## CO-PRODUCTION COUNTS!

# Meeting together at Autism Together



autism  
together

**Paul Baker**

Communications Officer  
Autism Together

**Paul Baker, Communications Officer for charity Autism Together, explains how their monthly co-production group has evolved into a cornerstone of their co-production strategy.**

*“People’s confidence levels really improve through attending the forum.”*

At Autism Together we created a co-production group for the people we support to give feedback, share ideas and help shape our charity. We call it the Meeting Together Forum.

The Forum has come together once a month for the past 12 years to discuss a range of subjects relating to our services for autistic people. It is an important outlet for the people we support and an opportunity for them to ask questions and give opinions on their care.

The group is chaired by Julie Logan, our Quality and Assurance Manager. We take the meetings very seriously with an agenda in advance, have minutes taken and shared with the whole organisation, and often have special guests who are invited to speak. It is open to any of the people we support, and they can choose to come regularly or occasionally.

As part of the meeting, the group will plan events such as our monthly disco night, share their good news, and take a look at a relevant easy-read ‘Policy Of The Month’. An example of this was when the group looked at CQC’s report on ‘Reduction In Restraint’. Everyone agreed this was an important topic and had a good discussion on the roles of their support staff.

The group are free to suggest members of staff that they would like to invite to come and speak about their work and answer questions from the forum. Often, forum members request a certain manager or trustee they want to hear from or speak to. Sometimes an external person might speak.

Perhaps, most importantly, it gives the people we support a chance to use their voice, knowing it will be heard, listened to, and acted upon.

Two regular attendees, Ken and Mike, enjoy the chance to share feedback and thoughts about their care. For example, Ken told the group that if he is feeling down or not in a good mood, he knows that he can talk to his staff team who will support him. Mike said that he finds it comforting to know he can talk to his staff team and they will help him if he needs it.







Jane Carolan, Autism Together’s Director of Operations, said: “The Forum is a great resource to Autism Together. They have reviewed some of our policies, fed back to us about what it is like to experience support from Autism Together, asked to speak with key personnel from across the organisation. All this whilst having fun and growing in confidence. They regularly meet with partner agencies and have shaped support wherever they have been involved.”

*“The Forum has come together once a month for the past 12 years.”*

We have noticed that people’s confidence levels and ability to express themselves in a group setting really improves through attending the forum. Some forum members recently used the confidence they had gained from attending each month to assist our Recruitment Team when interviewing for new support staff.

Members were able to volunteer to sit in on interviews for new staff, answer questions about their care and ask the candidates questions too. Feedback from the interview candidates showed that they really enjoyed getting the chance to meet and talk with some of the people we support, before joining the charity.



 @autism\_together  
 autismtogether.co.uk



## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CARE

# From NHS to Nursing Home

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 Faye Operanta, Registered Manager at St Albans Nursing Home, who's journey working in acute nursing in the NHS led her to a career in social care.



Faye Operanta

Transitioning from the hustle of acute nursing in the NHS to the fulfilling realm of care at St Albans Nursing Home, Faye Operanta embodies the ethos that it's never too late to embrace a career change in the care sector. She stands as a beacon of passion and dedication in her role as a Registered Manager, conducting a symphony of care

for people with diverse and complex needs.

the ranks, from Clinical Lead to Deputy Manager, and eventually to Registered Manager where she is today. Faye's journey was marked by unwavering dedication to making a difference.

*“Making the move to the private sector provided her with opportunity to really make a difference in people's lives.”*

She embraced every opportunity to develop and undertook qualifications, further developing her knowledge and skills. Fieldbay's support provided her with the building blocks to grow her career, ensuring that her passion for making a difference stayed strong. At St Albans, Faye oversees a bustling hive of activity, and makes sure that every member of her team feels valued and empowered. From managing daily operations to fostering a culture of open communication and collaboration, Faye leaves no stone unturned in her quest to create a workplace where everyone thrives. From the domestic team to the kitchen staff, she wanted to create an environment where everybody could see the difference they make to the lives of the people we support.

Faye said, *“During my career I feel like I've achieved a lot but what I've done since being in Fieldbay is what makes me the most proud. When I started, we were struggling with recruitment and bringing in the right colleagues, but I've worked hard to bring in the best people to help us deliver outstanding levels of care to the people we support. Seeing our survey results now, and how well we've done just fills me with pride and makes me see that all the hard work we put in has made a massive difference. And the holidays are always brilliant!”*

While her professional aspirations continue, Faye's heart and priorities are with her family. With two beautiful granddaughters, she makes the most of every moment she spends with them. Balancing the demands of work and family, Faye embodies resilience and grace in equal measure.

In a world where compassion often takes a backseat, Faye's passion for care serves as an inspiration for us all. Whether managing seamless operations or lending a compassionate ear, she exemplifies the transformative power of care. With every smile she elicits and every life she touches, Faye reaffirms the timeless truth: it's never too late to make a difference.

*“She started as a nurse in the NHS back in 2004, but found herself increasingly disillusioned by the admin and paperwork that overshadowed the essence of patient care. Faye's heart was always with looking after people and personal interactions rather than bureaucracy and paperwork. Making the move to the private sector provided her with opportunity to really make a difference in people's lives.”*

Faye's journey into care is one that's familiar with lots of people in the sector. She started as a nurse in the NHS back in 2004, but found herself increasingly disillusioned by the admin and paperwork that overshadowed the essence of patient care. Faye's heart was always with looking after people and personal interactions rather than bureaucracy and paperwork. Making the move to the private sector provided her with opportunity to really make a difference in people's lives.

She joined Crusader Care initially, before this was taken over by Fieldbay, where she works now. The Fieldbay values, or the Fieldbay Way, resonated deeply with her, as did the culture of kindness, excellence and compassion.

Her dedication and hard work helped her to rise through







**WAGS**

**WOMEN ACHIEVING GREATNESS  
IN SOCIAL CARE**

**2024**

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★ **LONDON HILTON BANKSIDE HOTEL** ★

*“The majority of staff within the sector are women, and the awards is a great way to recognise their significant accomplishments.”*

Professor Vic Rayner, Chief Executive Officer, National Care Forum

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  - ★ The **Girl Power** Award ★ The **Rising Star** Award ★
  - ★ The **Communications Guru** Award ★ The **HR and Recruiter** Award ★
  - ★ The **Equality and Diversity** Award ★ The **Social Care Superwoman** Award ★
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# HAVE YOUR SAY!

## 3 Wishes!

Tea Ross, Activities Co-ordinator, Majesticare

Tea Ross is an Activities Co-ordinator at Majesticare's Cavendish Park Care Home in Evesham. Here she tells us her 3 wishes for the social care sector:

- 1 As an activity coordinator, my first wish would be for the importance of the role we play in a care setting to be highlighted, especially in relation to the residents' wellbeing. My job as an activity coordinator is not just about 'playing bingo', there is much more to it with empowering residents to live their lives as they want to, enhancing their wellbeing and supporting with both their mental and physical health.
- 2 My second wish would be that we could increase the involvement of activities in different settings across the sector. Activities is something that can holistically enhance someone's life in many ways, not just making them happier. It can help them socialise, feel collected and give them a sense of belonging. Activities can give someone a sense of purpose and engaging in activities can engage people to live a more fulfilling life no matter what barriers they may have as it can be adapted to suit them and meet their needs.
- 3 My last wish would be that we could highlight the incredible things that happen in adult social care, particularly within activity provision, through social media, in hopes it would show people that being in a care home can be so much more than sitting and watching the television to pass the days away. Through my role I have already found that we have change that perception with the residents we have welcomed into the home and we are working to change that view in our community. A lot of people only see negative things that can happen in care, but we need to shout from the rooftops about the amazing things that happen every day to try and adjust that perception.

By fulfilling these wishes, we can show how amazing we are and the things that we do, and the impact that we can make to people's lives every day.



## In The Spotlight

Maesyffynnon Extra Care Service, Radis Community Care

An extraordinary family affair at Radis Community Care! Three generations of girl power are lighting up Maesyffynnon Extra Care Service in Wales.

Leading the three generations as grandmother, Jeanette has lived at Maesyffynnon for almost four years, receiving top-notch care & support from the Radis Team, two of which are her daughter and granddaughter!

Julie, Jeanette's daughter, made the leap from taking care of her mum at home to becoming a professional carer. She said: "to care for those who once cared for us is one the highest honours – and I wouldn't change it for the world."

As the third generation, Jenna followed in her mother's footsteps and joined the team at Maesyffynnon over a year ago. Jenna said, "I have enjoyed every minute of my time here, and have helped to care for my Nan since I was nine or 10, so I always knew that the care industry was for me."

It's an extraordinary circumstance, and Emma Lawrence, Deputy Manager at Maesyffynnon Extra Care says: "For three generations of the family to be connected by the same care provider is almost unheard of, but for all three women to be working and residents of the very same service is something truly special."

Jeanette, Julie and Jenna all recently celebrated Mother's Day together at the service – an extraordinary family affair at Radis Community Care indeed!





# Movers & Shakers

**Internal Audits Team, Creative Support**

**Congratulations to Creative Support's Internal Audits Team, snagging the coveted 'Team of the Year' title at the Made in Manchester Awards!**

The foursome—Hazel Beddows, Melissa Jones, Abigail Lord, and Kit Nordhausen-Smolarz—stood out from the crowd with their financial prowess and operational finesse. Small but mighty, the team's success stems from a stellar showcase of teamwork that aligns seamlessly with Creative Support's 'We Care' values—Welcoming, Empowering, Compassionate, Aspirational, Respectful, and Effective.

Hazel Beddows, the team lead, couldn't be prouder, expressing excitement about their well-deserved victory. The judges aptly labeled them 'small but mighty,' capturing the essence of their impactful work.

But that's not all - Creative Support had two other shining stars at the MIMAs: Megan Mitchell and Sarah Smith, both finalists in the 'Business Support Professional of the Year' category.

Anna Lunts, Chief Executive of Creative Support, showered praise on the winning team and finalists, emphasising the consistent recognition of their young professionals over the years. This latest accolade solidifies Creative Support's standing as a talent hotspot. Hats off to the Internal Audits Team at Creative Support!



# Lightbulb Moment

**Stop the bureaucracy!**

**Roxie Taj, Managing Director, Visting Angels Manchester East**

*My light bulb moment is to stop the excessive bureaucracy that prevents Care Providers, medical professionals and social workers from working together to achieve positive outcomes.*

*Why is it that Independent Care Providers have to wait sometimes years to be able to apply for acceptance onto "Approved Provider" lists with Local Authorities/NHS? Why is it that NHS Continuing Healthcare will not consider communicating independently with Private Providers when commissioning care? Why is it that GP's do not consider Private care Providers as an ally? Why is it that the Government, NHS, Local Authorities have forgotten the therapeutic and social value of "companionship" for the elderly and only focus on their needs?*

*Collaborative approaches to care in the community will lessen the demand on hospital beds, improve discharge and reduce bed-blocking; it will increase capacity in the community to commission out care; it will allow Private Providers to remain in business and support the community. A win-win situation!*

*Let's keep it simple, let's all speak a common language, let there be clear sign-posting between collaborating professionals to help ease the burden on a failing healthcare system.*



**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](mailto:kirsty@care-awards.co.uk) for the opportunity to appear in upcoming editions.



## ASK THE EXPERTS

# Collaborative working two years on

The Health and Care Act of 2022 mobilised collaborative working between social care, the NHS, local authorities and other organisations with the aim of improving outcomes for those who draw on services. With this in mind, we are asking a group of stakeholders the question: **“What is the state of collaborative working within social care two years on from the passing of the Health and Care Act?”**

*“The goals still seem to be focused on reducing duplication and issues with interactions with the NHS.”*



**Charlie Jones**  
Chief Operating Officer  
BKR Care Consultancy

### The Consultancy

*“I am not convinced that there has been a great change in the nature of collaborative working across health and social care. That’s not to say we don’t see collaboration in social care, it’s just there has always been collaboration across the sectors. There are some innovations utilising technology that are proving helpful. For example, GP connect where services are using eMAR systems but the flip side to this is that some surgeries are now refusing to provide GP summaries to services even if they are on paper-based systems. The goals of collaborative working still seem to be focused on reducing duplication and issues with interactions with the NHS and less about improving social care. Of course, there will be some benefit to social care in cutting duplication but it would be great to have innovations that start from a position of improving social care rather than an NHS focus (again).”*



**Jackie O’Sullivan**  
Acting Chief Executive  
Mencap



*“The perilous state of local authority finances is also a barrier to collaboration.”*

### The Charity

*“I think it’s fair to say that collaborative working within social care hasn’t realised its potential! Two years after the Health and Social Care Act, the envisioned framework of shared outcomes and integration remains elusive, with social care underrepresented in Integrated Care Systems. Greater collaboration is essential to improve local services and transition towards holistic care, prioritising prevention and independence. However, constrained local authority finances jeopardise this effort, leading to cuts in care packages and exacerbating pressures on the NHS. The perilous state of local authority finances is also a barrier to collaboration, as care packages for people with a learning disability are being cut or removed. This can lead to people developing new health conditions or their existing conditions worsening, putting pressure on an already stretched NHS. Social care is still seen as the poor relation to the NHS, which isn’t good enough. Government must inject £8.4 billion into the sector immediately and address the workforce crisis with a long-term plan.”*





**Dr Jane Townson OBE**  
Chief Executive  
Homecare Association



**“Consistently embracing care provider expertise could help to optimise use of scarce resources.”**

### **The Homecare Association**

*“Integrated Care Systems, (ICSs) have the potential to improve population health outcomes by addressing social determinants of health, not just healthcare. Housing, education, transport, leisure, voluntary sector, social care and health colleagues must work together to enable us all to live well and flourish in our communities. ICSs vary in how they operate and engage beyond the NHS. While local authorities have seats on Integrated Care Boards and Partnerships, which is improving collaboration, most social care providers do not. A minority of care providers are involved in “place” and “neighbourhood” decision forums. This means care leaders and the 1.6m strong care workforce have little opportunity to influence thinking and direction. Care teams support and advocate for people in their communities daily, mobilising assets to meet needs and reduce inequalities. Consistently embracing care provider expertise could help to optimise use of scarce resources, develop solutions to system challenges, and improve more lives.”*

**“The irony is that the bodies who need to form the collaboration are not equal partners”**



**Nadra Ahmed**  
Chairman  
National Care Association

### **The Care Home Association**

*Collaborative working is an important ingredient to ensure the seamless delivery of services for those who need it when they need it. It is crucial that we understand why the Health and Care Act of 2022 needs to be the foundation on which that vision is built. The irony is that the bodies who need to form the collaboration are not equal partners, and this is the fundamental flaw. Despite the fact that Social Care contributes £56 billion to the economy, is one of the biggest employers and supports more people than the NHS, it has never been held in the same esteem; viewed as a subsidiary service. The reality is social care remains the backbone of the care and health service. Our colleagues in Local Authorities are commissioning our services holding a dominant position so not equal partners either. There is a slow but positive move for more meaningful dialogue between the organisations especially since the pandemic, but until there is recognition of the value of social care within the health economy, we will continue to struggle to create collaborative solutions to those we support and thereby fail them.*



**Clive Parry**  
Director  
ARC England



**“Nowhere is this collaboration more urgently required than in relation to the c2000 people who remain in locked services.”**

### **The Learning Disabilities & Autism Association**

*“The most significant development associated with the Health and Care Act 2022 was the creation of the Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) that would bring together local authority and NHS commissioning policy and practice to ensure better cohesion across these systems for local populations. ICSs are powered not by competition but by collaboration. For people with learning disability and autistic people, nowhere is this collaboration more urgently required than in relation to the c2000 people who remain in locked services, such as hospitals and Assessment and Treatment Units, a great many of whom could live in their own home in the community right now if they were supported to do so. It is clear that the government-set deadline of March 2024 for reducing by 50% the number of autistic people and people with learning disabilities in in-patient settings has not been met. As we reflect about how these people have spent the last two years that have elapsed since the formation of integrated care systems, we must surely be driven to do something different because what we have tried simply isn't working.”*

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...

### **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 & End of Life 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 Milton Keynes Dons

2nd November 2024 West Midlands ICC, Birmingham

6th November 2024 Wales Marriott Cardiff

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

14th November 2024 South West Ashton Gate, Bristol

15th November 2024 South East Hilton Metropole Hotel, Brighton

16th November 2024 London Hilton Bankside, London

27th 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.



2 0 2 4



The National  
Children &  
Young People  
Awards

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL CARE

The ICC, Birmingham  
24th October 2024

Small things  
make a **BIG** difference

**NOMINATE**  
**NOW!**

Help us pay tribute to the unsung heroes of our sector



[www.cypawards.co.uk](http://www.cypawards.co.uk)

# Living a Good Life at every stage

*“You matter because you are you, and you matter to the last moment of your life. We will do all that we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die.”*

*Dame Cicely Saunders, Founder, St Christopher’s Hospice*



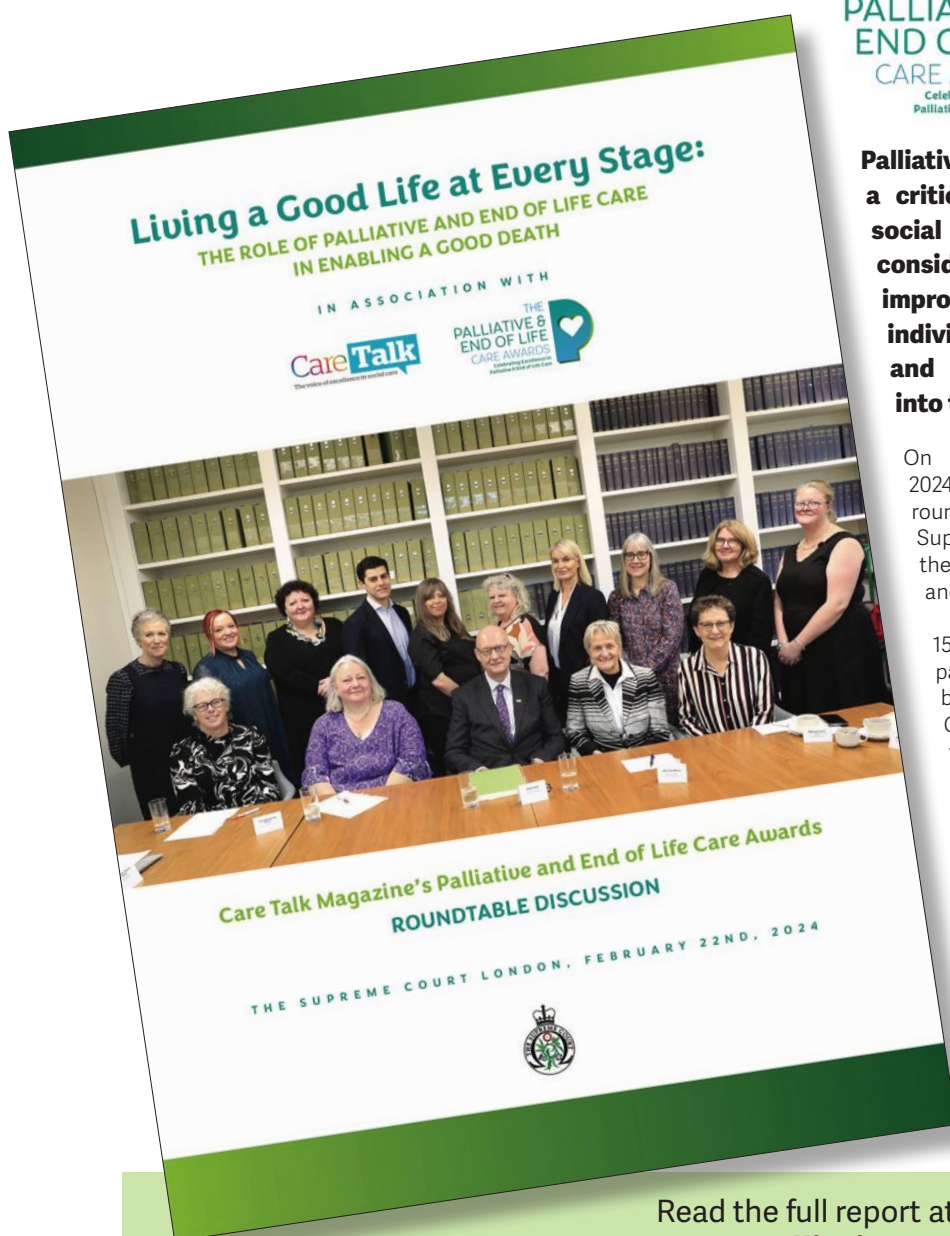
**Palliative and End of life care are a critical aspects of health and social care that require careful consideration and continuous improvement to ensure individuals experience a dignified and compassionate transition into their final stages.**

On 22nd February 2024, Care Talk held a roundtable event at the Supreme Court, around the area of Palliative and End of life Care.



15 sector experts took part in the discussion, chaired by Professor Martin Green OBE, Chief Executive of Care England. A wide range of topics were covered, including: death as society’s best kept secret, public perceptions of death and dying, what it means to live and die well, what a Good Death looks like, and the role of social care in ensuring this.

The Care Talk paper synthesises the points that came from the conversation with the aim of foregrounding further dialogue in the areas of Palliative and End of life care.



Read the full report at:  
[www.palliativecareawards.co/news](http://www.palliativecareawards.co/news)



# THE PALLIATIVE & END OF LIFE CARE AWARDS

Celebrating Excellence in  
Palliative & End of Life Care



S U P P O R T E D   B Y   CareTalk  
The voice of excellence in social care

28TH JUNE 2024  
MARRIOTT REGENT'S PARK, LONDON

Announcing our celebrity host:  
**Kate Garraway**

## A w a r d   C a t e g o r i e s

- ★ THE PALLIATIVE CARE AT HOME AWARD ★
- ★ THE PALLIATIVE RESIDENTIAL CARE PROVIDER AWARD ★
- ★ THE PALLIATIVE NURSING HOME PROVIDER AWARD ★
- ★ THE PALLIATIVE CARE WORKER AWARD ★
- ★ THE PALLIATIVE CARE MANAGER AWARD ★
- ★ THE PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM AWARD ★
- ★ THE ANCILLARY WORKER AWARD ★
- ★ THE SUPPORT FOR FAMILY CARERS AWARD ★
- ★ THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARD ★
- ★ THE INNOVATION IN END OF LIFE SOCIAL CARE AWARD ★
- ★ THE BEST INFLUENCER AWARD ★
- ★ THE EXCELLENCE IN PALLIATIVE CARE NURSING AWARD ★
- ★ THE BEST FUNDRAISER AWARD ★
- ★ THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AWARD ★
- ★ THE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT AWARD ★
- ★ THE OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD ★
- ★ THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT TO EXCELLENCE  
IN PALLIATIVE CARE AWARD ★

Closing  
date for  
nominations  
**29th APRIL  
2024**

N o m i n a t e   N O W   a t :

[www.palliativecareawards.co.uk](http://www.palliativecareawards.co.uk)

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The National End of Life Care Forum

JCF

NCF  
THE NATIONAL CARE FORUM

THE  
OUTSTANDING  
SOCIETY

CHRISTOPHER'S

# Celebrating Best Practice, Continuing Professional Development

## The Alzheimer's & Dementia Show in association with The Dementia Care Awards

THE  
ALZHEIMER'S  
& DEMENTIA  
SHOW 14-15 June 2024  
ExCel, London



### Care Talk Magazine and the Alzheimer's & Dementia Show have joined forces to launch the Inaugural Dementia Care Awards.

In a landmark move for the social care sector, Care Talk Magazine has announced a pioneering partnership with the Alzheimer's & Dementia Show, set to showcase the first-ever Care Talk Dementia Awards 2024.

*"This partnership establishes a new standard for recognition for the sector."*

The announcement comes on the heels of Care Talk's recent launch of the brand-new Dementia Care Awards. The awards will kick off the night before the Alzheimer's & Dementia Show at the prestigious Royal Lancaster Hotel in London, promising an evening dedicated to recognising the unsung heroes of dementia care.

Lisa Carr, Editor of Care Talk Magazine, spoke of the necessity of the awards, "With an increasing number of dementia-focused entries at the Great British Care Awards, it became clear that there was a wealth of contributions that deserved special recognition. Launching the Dementia Care Awards was our answer to honour this dedication comprehensively."







The awards have garnered the support of influential organisations such as Care England, United for all Ages, the Downs Syndrome Association, Newman University, and the Outstanding Society, highlighting the event's significance in the healthcare community.

The Alzheimer's & Dementia Show has expressed enthusiasm about the collaboration, which aligns with their mission to provide a platform for advancements in dementia care.

Scheduled to be held on the 14-15th of June 2024 at ExCel London, the Alzheimer's & Dementia Show will immediately follow the awards ceremony, creating a two-day event focused on education, innovation, and appreciation within the field.

This partnership not only sets the stage for a grand celebration of those making a difference in the lives of individuals with dementia but also establishes a new standard for recognition in the sector. The Dementia Care Awards promise to shine a light on the extraordinary efforts of caregivers and organisations, giving them the acknowledgment they richly deserve.

The Alzheimer's & Dementia Show had this to say about the partnership: *"Partnering with Care Talk Magazine to present the Dementia Care Awards is a milestone moment for us at the Alzheimer's & Dementia Show. It embodies our shared commitment to acknowledging the remarkable efforts of those within the dementia care community. These awards will shine a spotlight on the outstanding contributions of caregivers and professionals who go above and beyond in their daily roles. It's a celebration of the innovation and compassion that drive dementia care forward. We're honoured to be a part of this inaugural event and look forward to making it a highlight of our annual show."*



Nominate now for The Dementia Care Awards at:  
[www.dementiacareawards.co.uk](http://www.dementiacareawards.co.uk)

To book tickets for The Alzheimer's & Dementia Show visit:  
[www.alzheimersshow.co.uk/alzheimers-dementia-care-show-2024-pre-registration-form/](http://www.alzheimersshow.co.uk/alzheimers-dementia-care-show-2024-pre-registration-form/)

 @AlzheimersShow   
  @Dementia\_Awards  
 [alzheimersshow.co.uk](http://alzheimersshow.co.uk)   
 [dementiacareawards.co.uk](http://dementiacareawards.co.uk)

# Enhancing housing solutions for vulnerable communities



**The landscape of housing with care presents a complex tapestry of challenges and opportunities, requiring a nuanced approach to address evolving needs and aspirations.**

## The event

On 20th March 2024, the National Liberal Club in the heart of Whitehall was an impressive venue for Care Talk's annual seminar: **Enhancing Housing Solutions for Vulnerable Communities**.

Guests representing all areas of the housing with care sector came together to explore opportunities and challenges around **Insights on Planning, Operational Impact, Health Partnerships, and Taskforce Objectives**.

## The experts

Chairing the event was Jeremy Porteus, Chief Executive at the Housing LIN. Panellists were Sarah Clarke-Kuehn, Chief Operating Officer at Sanctuary, Tom Falconer, Chief Operating Officer for Supported Living and Care Real Estate at Civitas Investment Management and Michael Voges, Chief Executive at ARCO.

## The discussion

With an election looming, it is more important than ever to campaign about the vital role housing plays in both health and social care. One of the foremost challenges in housing with care is the growing demand fuelled by an aging population and increasing life expectancy. Meeting this demand requires innovative solutions that go beyond traditional models of care, emphasising

*“With an election looming, it is more important than ever to campaign about the vital role housing plays in both health and social care.”*







Jeremy Porteus

independence, choice, and quality of life for residents. However, limited funding and resources pose significant barriers to scaling up services and infrastructure to meet burgeoning demand.

Moreover, there is a pressing need to ensure that housing with care remains affordable and accessible to all segments of the population, including those with diverse care needs and financial circumstances. Achieving this goal requires collaboration between government, housing providers, and care organisations to develop sustainable funding models and incentivise investment in affordable housing options with integrated care services.

Amidst these challenges, there are also promising opportunities on the horizon. Advances in technology and digital innovation hold the potential to revolutionise the delivery of care, enabling remote monitoring, telehealth services, and personalised care solutions tailored to individual needs. Embracing these technological advancements can enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and accessibility of care services while empowering residents to live independently for longer.



Tom Falconer



Michael Voges

Furthermore, there is a growing recognition of the importance of holistic and person centered approaches to care, emphasising social inclusion, community engagement, and wellbeing alongside clinical support. Housing with care providers have an opportunity to differentiate themselves by offering comprehensive wellness programs, leisure amenities, and social activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional health.



Sarah Clarke-Kuehn



### The take aways

The challenges and opportunities facing housing with care are multifaceted and dynamic, requiring proactive and collaborative efforts from stakeholders across the sector. By addressing affordability concerns, embracing technological innovation, and prioritising person centered care, housing with care providers can adapt to meet the evolving needs of residents and ensure that every individual has access to safe, supportive, and fulfilling living environments in later life.

To nominate for The Housing With Care Awards visit [www.housingwithcareawards.co.uk](http://www.housingwithcareawards.co.uk)

@HWCAwards  
 [housingwithcareawards.co.uk](http://housingwithcareawards.co.uk)

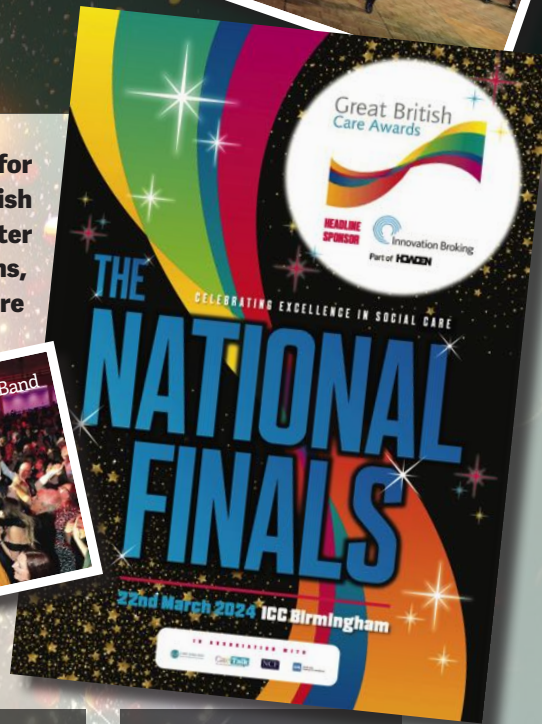


# Celebrating Excellence in Social Care!



22nd March 2024 saw over 1,300 people come together for celebration of excellence in social care, at the Great British Care Awards National Finals, at Birmingham's ICC. After impressing the short listing panel with their nominations, wowing the judges at the interviews the finalists were amongst the best of the best in social care.

The event was hosted by Steve Walls and this year's celebrity guest was Rylan Clark. There was entertainment galore, including Irish dancers, a Kylie tribute and live music from The Rick Parfitt Jnr Band. The Great British Care Awards celebrate excellence and innovation in the sector and pay tribute to hard working, dedicated social care professionals who have gone above and beyond in the most challenging of circumstances to ensure the best possible outcomes for the people they support.



Nominations are now open for this year's Regional Awards which take place during November this year.

Meet the winners!

**The Care Home Employer Award**  
**M&D Care**

**The Home Care Employer Award**  
**Gillian Holden**  
**Astar Home Care**

**The Care Home Worker Award**  
**Marinette Mafor Nana**  
**Anchor Care**

**The Home Care Worker Award**  
**Carol Kentesber**  
**Bluebird Care**

**The Support Worker Award**  
**Philip Gahan**  
**Community Integrated Care**

**The Care Newcomer Award**  
**Alex Scarlett**  
**The Deaf Academy**

**The Care Home Registered Manager (Children & Young People) Award**  
**Stephen Doody**  
**Lonsdale Care**

**The Care Home Registered Manager Award**  
**Claire Callaghan**  
**Knoll Care**

**The Home Care Registered Manager Award**  
**Charity Hayler-King**  
**My Life Home Care**

**The Supported Living Manager Award**  
**Edwine Tembong**  
**Outlook Care**

**The Dignity in Care Award**  
**Jade Smethurst**  
**Fairburn Mews (Exemplar Health Care)**




The Dementia Carer Award  
**Juliet McNeilly**  
 Devonshire Court, Royal Masonic Benevolent Institute



The Ancillary Worker Award  
**Kirk Ferriter**  
 Darwin House




The Care Home Activity Organiser Award  
**Sarah Martin**  
 Exemplar Healthcare



The Home Care Co-ordinator Award  
**Neil Martin**  
 Early Birds Lifestyle Support



The Chef Award  
**Chris Doherty**  
 Mill Lodge Care Centre



The Care Home Team Award  
**Safe Haven**  
 The Meadows




The Home Care Team Award  
**All Care Team**  
 All Care Thames Valley



The Supported Living Team Award  
**Cannock Support Living Team**



The Care Innovator Award  
**Cheryll Champion**  
 LDC Care Co Ltd



The Frontline Leader Award  
**Mandy Williams-Vance**  
 Komplex Care



The Care Assessor/ Care Planner Award  
**Lucy Shaw**  
 Baily House




The Three Rs Award  
**Vida Healthcare**



The Workforce Development Award  
**Paul Blane**  
 CBAT



The Putting People First Award  
**Llesiant Delta**  
 Wellbeing Community Response Team



The Palliative/ End of Life Award  
**Karen Crampton**  
 Carefound Care Home



The Social Care Nurse Award  
**Smita Patel**  
 Barchester Healthcare



The Housing With Care Award  
**Kingfisher Court**  
 Cross Keys Care



The Co-production Award  
**KingsHill**  
 Making Space



The Unpaid Carer Award  
**South Ayrshire Young Carers**  
 South Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership



The Outstanding Contribution Award  
**Patricia Sheridan**  
 Moore House Group



Nominations for the **2024** Regional Awards are now open!  
[www.care-awards.co.uk/nominate](http://www.care-awards.co.uk/nominate)  
 Let's celebrate social care and help it get the recognition it deserves! [www.care-awards.co.uk](http://www.care-awards.co.uk)





# Soft front, strong back and wild heart!

**Samantha Crawley, winner in last year's Social Care Leadership Awards, is Chief Executive for residential care group Bracebridge Care. Here Samantha explains how her approach to leadership is anchored in empowering individuals to enact meaningful change.**

*“Dr Brene Brown talks of leaders with a ‘strong back, soft front and wild hearts.’”*

In the world of social care, leadership is not merely a title; it is a guiding force that shapes the quality of care, drives innovation, and cultivates a culture of compassion and excellence. As the present and future of social care evolves amidst the challenges of a changing climate of funding, government and regulation, the need for effective leadership has never been more important. Within my own role and organisation, my belief is that leadership is not just about directing others, but about empowering people to create and lead meaningful change whilst upholding the values of the organisation which begin and end with ‘people first’.

Effective leadership in social care is paramount. It requires a deep understanding of oneself. Without self-knowledge (especially knowledge of our areas of development) we could so easily fail to recognise when a different approach is needed or where learning is vital.

Dr Brene Brown talks of leaders with a ‘strong back, soft front and wild hearts’- this is true of the exceptional leaders across the social care sector. Ensuring leaders are equipped to support the complex needs of individuals, as well as the ability to navigate dynamic environments and respond to emerging challenges with agility and compassion.

As a leader in social care, I recognise the importance of fostering a culture of inclusivity, collaboration, and continuous learning. By championing these values, we can create environments where both the people who live and who work in our homes, or organisations feel supported, valued, and empowered to thrive.

My approach to leadership in social care is rooted in transparency, empathy, and servant leadership. I believe in leading by example, actively listening to the voices of the people we support and who we work alongside and fostering a sense of shared purpose and accountability. By empowering my team to take ownership of their work and providing them with the support and resources they need to succeed, we endeavour to create a culture of trust and collaboration where innovation can flourish.

Cascading our values throughout our services is a cornerstone of effective leadership. This involves clear communication of our organisation's mission, vision, and core values, as well as ongoing training and development opportunities to ensure that all team members are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to deliver high-quality care. Additionally, we encourage open dialogue and feedback mechanisms to foster a culture of continuous improvement and accountability. We do this by the usual feedback surveys but also by hosting monthly Lessons Learned Labs where all team members are invited to discuss and learn about recent safeguarding, complaints, and compliments. We share openly discuss the findings of our investigations and what we share with the regulator. Doing this means that we remain wholly transparent and that the team are confident that there are no secrets when it comes to learning from any mistakes or issues raised.

Creating a leadership team who truly care and know too, that they are cared for is really something we are proud to achieve. We are truly different in our approach, and it's taken our leaders time to trust how we work- avoiding ‘blame’ and focussing on the learning being offered is key to our approach.

Social Care Leadership is not for the faint hearted, it can be exceptionally difficult to navigate the varying needs of the people who work with us, as well as the people we support. There are times when we will question everything and there are times when we dance all the way home. It is by our open and transparent approach in growing leaders of tomorrow through exemplary succession planning and focus on developing the people now – that we will be able to look back and say – As leaders. We did that!

 [bracebridgecare.org](https://bracebridgecare.org)



A professional headshot of Samantha Crawley, a woman with shoulder-length blonde hair and blue eyes, wearing a grey blazer over a blue top. The background is a plain, light grey color. The image is framed by a decorative border on the right and bottom edges, featuring a gradient from red to yellow with bokeh light effects.

*“There are times when we will question everything and there are times when we dance all the way home.”*

**Samantha Crawley**  
Chief Executive  
Bracebridge Care







# Breaking societal labels: Empowering others to lead in self-advocacy



**Sarah Offley**  
Chief Officer  
Dudley Voices for Choice

**Winner in last year's Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards, Sarah Offley is Chief Officer at user-led charity, Dudley Voices for Choice, shares her approach to leading the way for change in enabling people with a learning disability and autistic people to be heard.**

Employment is something we all take for granted, but many of the people I work with do not have that opportunity. People see their societal labels first and make judgements without offering chances. Statements that are not true for all about people with the learning disability and autism label, stop people gaining meaningful employment.

With just 6% of individuals with these labels employed in the UK, I proudly consider myself a risk-taker. Taking that leap, I've assembled a team of 11 individuals, 66% of whom share those labels, tirelessly dedicating themselves to improving the lives of their peers and communities every day. Whether it's enhancing accessibility to information or serving as paid consultants to professionals and students, we're equipping them with the tools necessary to support their peers more effectively in their future endeavours — a teaching opportunity not to be overlooked.

My role gives me the greatest opportunities to support, challenge and make changes, working alongside upcoming female leaders who have been marginalised by society. They are real life changers supporting and celebrating difference. Together we have implemented changes including:

*“People see their societal labels first and make judgements without offering chances.”*

Starting over thirty years ago in elderly residential care I never dreamt that one day I would be Chief Officer of a fantastic charity. Supporting others has always been my calling, making a career in care a seamless choice. Climbing from a support worker to my current position at the top has been a twenty year journey, filled with invaluable experiences and growth.

I have worked under some fantastic leaders and hope that I am following in their footsteps and offering the same great leadership to my team. Talking about my team always brings me to a place of pride. I have the most passionate, determined team who all hold such strong values about inclusion and opportunity. Every single one of my team bring their own skills and expertise and this is why they are the best at what they do.

Working alongside people with learning disabilities and autistic people to create a more inclusive society and community is the basis of everything we do. Promoting and offering opportunities that may be seen as risky by some but are totally worth the risk for the results it has produced.

- **Employing and showing the real value of an inclusive team**
- **Sharing the importance of the rights and choices of citizens with a learning disability with decision makers who are designing services for their areas.**
- **Facilitating self-advocacy groups from around the country to run a national conference, designed, developed, and delivered by self-advocates for self-advocates. Empowering future leaders to start their journeys.**
- **Watching my team members, which includes the self-advocates, win many awards for their fantastic work and encouraging them to strive and dream big.**
- **Offering opportunities that many thought were an impossibility until they tried and watching them succeed and celebrate their wins.**
- **Finally, one of my top ten proudest moments is when someone made me a cup of tea. It took us six weeks of building to a complete cuppa, but it was the best tea I have ever tasted! The pride and relief on the persons face at succeeding is forever etched in my memory.**





From that initial cuppa to receiving the Queen's Volunteers Award on behalf of the charity and visiting the palace, to the most recent Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards in London, where I was overwhelmed by the nomination, the shortlist, and ultimately, winning it all!

I have never viewed myself as a female leader and feel imposter syndrome creeping in just saying that statement. I have many role models that are female leaders, and I will continue to follow their path by encouraging opportunities and challenge to make real change happen for more women in whichever career they desire. Opportunities are there to be taken. It may feel like a risk, but the rewards far outweigh it!

Thank you for shining the light and championing women in leadership.

 @DvcDudley  
 dudleyvoicesforchoice.org.uk

*“My role gives me the greatest opportunities to work alongside upcoming female leaders who have been marginalised by society.”*

# Get involved with #CelebratingSocialCare in April



**Oonagh Smyth**  
Chief Executive  
Skills for Care

**With Skills for Care leading on #CelebratingSocialCare again this April, Chief Executive Oonagh Smyth shares how you can get involved and why this celebration is so important.**

***“#CelebratingSocialCare is an opportunity to raise the profile of social care and its important contribution to society.”***

For the third year running I'm delighted that Skills for Care will be spearheading the celebration of social care again this April.

We first launched our #CelebratingSocialCare campaign in April 2022. This was a pivotal time for the social care sector, where we were starting to move beyond the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic and into new ways of working, which have been forever influenced by the impact of the pandemic. The two years prior had been a turbulent time for everyone across the world and was felt especially keenly by those working in and drawing on care and support.

When we launched the first #CelebratingSocialCare campaign, we reached out to some of our connections working in frontline care delivery to determine whether they felt it was a good time to launch a celebratory campaign.

We were pleased that feedback on the idea was really positive, with people telling us that it did feel like an appropriate time to reflect back on the incredible work that everyone working in care had achieved over the past two years and to look forward to the opportunities ahead.

When we launched the campaign, we were even more delighted with the engagement and enthusiasm we saw from people across the sector who relished the opportunity to share their successes, thank yous and well dones.

Having seen what a positive impact the #CelebratingSocialCare activity had for the sector we were excited to run it again in 2023, and were once again blown away by how much it took off across the sector.

Seeing care organisations and individuals working in and drawing on care and support sharing their achievements, hard work and celebrations of others really put a smile on all of our faces and spread a feelgood movement across social care. We were inundated with positive messages and stories on a daily basis.

That's why we are so looking forward to leading the celebrations again this year.

Of course, at Skills for Care we celebrate social care year-round but our #CelebratingSocialCare campaign in April is an opportunity to celebrate that little bit louder and to encourage everyone else to get involved.

You can get involved with the celebrations by sharing your successes and shout-outs on social media.

On the Skills for Care website, you can find suggested social media posts and photos that you can use to show that you're #CelebratingSocialCare as well as templates that you can tailor to create your own bespoke celebratory messages and images.

This might be a thank you to your team members, a well done to a colleague, or an update on a recent event or activity you've run with the people you support.

On our website you can also find suggested activities you can get involved with throughout April to celebrate social care. This could include an awards event for your staff, a special coffee morning for the people you support and their loved ones, or engaging with your local community.

People who work in social care are highly-skilled, passionate and hard-working and it's important that we all take time to recognise the work that people who work in social care do and the impact this has in supporting people who draw on care to live their lives how they choose.

#CelebratingSocialCare is an opportunity to raise the profile of social care and its important contribution to society; share positive stories from social care and change the narrative of how social care is often portrayed; create a feeling of community, celebration, and pride among the social care workforce, and highlight positive examples of best practice to inspire and support care organisations.

We really hope you can just us in the celebrations.

Find out more about getting involved:  
[www.skillsforcare.org.uk/celebratingsocialcare](http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/celebratingsocialcare)



@skillsforcare  
[skillsforcare.org.uk](http://skillsforcare.org.uk)



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

## Social Care TOP 30

RECOGNISING INFLUENTIAL LEADERS IN SOCIAL CARE

# 2024

I N C O R P O R A T I N G

Social Care  
**LEADERSHIP**

**AWARDS**

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL CARE LEADERSHIP

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**AWARDS**

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE IN SUPPLIERS TO SOCIAL CARE

**15th October 2024**  
Grosvenor Square Hotel, London

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The voice of excellence to social care

CareTalk  
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Helping businesses to improve their social care

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

[www.socialcaretop30.co.uk](http://www.socialcaretop30.co.uk)

# Balancing safety, comfort and luxury in the home care model



**Louise Blezzard**  
Chief Executive  
Vivant

**Louise Blezzard, Founder and Chief Executive of Vivant, a luxury home care service shares her thoughts on the future of at-home care and its convergence with luxury services.**

*“Luxury can mean different things to different people and varies depending on how we feel.”*

Most people, wherever possible, would prefer to stay in their own homes as they age. It is seen as a ‘safe space’, being filled with loved possessions and precious memories. As people start to get into their later years, however, it can become even more important to them as the outside world, for many, will become a little daunting.

Unfortunately, the decision to stay in their own homes can become challenging for multiple reasons, especially if they are living with complex health conditions such as dementia. Therefore, home care that balances safety, comfort and luxury will allow them to remain living in the place they love and give them the confidence and support to live a life that is meaningful to them.

The key is consistency. Having someone in your home can feel intrusive, and this is particularly heightened for people who feel vulnerable. Holding on to a safe space is comforting at a time when uncertainty with aspects such as health and lifestyle are in play.

Assigning a small team to the person requiring care will enable them to relax, get to know the people supporting them on a personal and meaningful level, and reduce the ambiguity on who will be knocking on their door and entering their personal space. This alone makes such a difference to the individual's experience and allows for a more natural way of living.

Providing consistent care also supports homecare providers in ensuring safe care. By consistently and effectively monitoring quality, through the use of technology and robust quality monitoring systems, homecare staff can ensure they have detailed oversight of how people are being supported.

At Vivant, for example, we pay particular attention to what happens in our clients’ lives when we are not there supporting them. This allows us to map out a picture of how our clients are from a physical and well-being point of view, and enables us to adapt our services and interactions accordingly.

Luxury can mean different things to different people and varies depending on how we feel. For instance, sometimes luxury is just being left in peace and quiet or having a hot bath and not talking to anyone. Other times, luxury can be found somewhere in the middle of the Caribbean, plunging into the turquoise waters after a morning of laughing on the beach with people you love.

We purposefully find out what luxury means to each client and adapt our services to ensure they are being provided with a home care experience that matches that perception. To do this, we empower our team with the skills and the means to provide a luxury service to the client. This could be buying them their favourite flowers on the way to visit them in the morning, or accompanying them on a trip to New York that we have helped to plan so they can visit their grandchildren they've been desperate to see.

At Vivant, we have been very intentional about every step of our clients’ journey. They will first have an initial consultation with myself and our Director of Care Operations, and from there we will build a team of staff around them. We encourage our clients to choose their team members and we will also work with them to create their unique lifestyle plan, which may see them attending our exclusive swimming club or taking part in our weekly outings to places such as the Saatchi Gallery or The Ritz for afternoon tea.

Ultimately, by firstly providing safety and comfort through tailored, meaningful home care, providers can supplement it with an offering that the person perceives as luxury, resulting in a balance of care that offers the best quality of life in later life.

 [@Vivant\\_life](https://twitter.com/Vivant_life)  
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# This month, *Kirsty meets...*



**Kirsty Hollins**  
Communications Executive  
Care Talk

**Each month I meet key stakeholders and business leaders in the social care sector. This month I met Lucinda Jarrett, Chief Executive, Rosetta Life. I caught up with Lucinda to discuss the creative arts as an effective care intervention, and how poetry, music and dance can improve quality of life, both for carers and those they support.**

*“Heart of Care has been cathartic for carers. The poetry sessions helped us gain trust in each other, release our pent-up feelings and gain confidence in ourselves.”*

### **So Lucinda, tell me a little about Rosetta Life**

Rosetta Life’s vision is to ensure that every person living with life altering illness or facing loss has the opportunity to lead a full creative life. We develop innovative creative practices that transform lives and improve quality of life. We work with communities to co-create performances that challenge the stigma and perceptions of life altering illness or loss.

Rosetta Life began as a residency programme in hospices called LifeStories. Our goal was to enable each person to share a story from their life experiences to a small audience of family and friends. Online, we were able to link twenty hospices through a website, connecting people and their stories. Since 2005 we have applied the holistic principles of palliative care to other fields of healthcare, including stroke and brain injury, young people facing conflict or displacement, and unpaid carers.

### **You’ve been working in healthcare for 25 years, can you tell us a little about the evidence that shows how impactful the arts is in healthcare settings?**

For many years, artists and arts organisations felt that they had to justify their programmes could deliver health



**Lucinda Jarrett**  
Chief Executive  
Rosetta Life

outcomes. However, as the evidence grew it became more possible for artists to find new ways to validate arts and healthcare interventions on their own terms. Critical ethnography and Participatory Action Research, for example, show what happens holistically, to observe changes in individuals and in group dynamics, watching the way relationships are formed through group dynamics and the building of community, and to look at what is happening in participation in a creative process. This co-authored research practice empowers people to understand what creativity has to offer and gives all participants ownership of their own transformation.

### **The Heart of Care project’s been going for two years. What is it and how did it start?**

The Heart of Care began as a series of conversations in lockdown. We identified one challenge where the arts could find a solution: to increase the understanding and visibility of unpaid carers through working with visual arts, dance performance and the spoken word.

With a group of carers from Kingston on Thames we ran a series of creative workshops which led to poetry writing and choreographed movement sequences. These we recorded and filmed (greenscreen) enabling the edited version to be projected publically in Kingston.

<https://vimeo.com/908305403>

### **What have they got out of taking part?**

*“Heart of Care has been cathartic for carers. The poetry sessions helped us gain trust in each other, release our pent-up feelings and gain confidence in ourselves as poets.” - Penni Cotton*

*“I used poetry to connect with a loved one in crisis, then I wrote it to help myself, so poetry saved both of us. ... As a carer, I have often experienced the despair of feeling unseen and unheard. This evening the Heart of Care project turned that on its head.” - Jo Lambert*

*“We were able to link twenty hospices, connecting people and their stories.”*

@rosettallife  
 rosettallife.org

# Collaboration or delegation?



**ACUITY  
LAW.**

**Jenny Wilde**

Partner  
Acuity Law

**Jenny Wilde, Partner at Acuity Law, shares her thoughts about inspections under the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) Single Assessment Framework**

The CQC has probably, at the time of writing, performed around 100 inspections using its new, Single Assessment Framework ("SAF").

Providers have had the opportunity to review the new quality statements and the update guidance on how these inspections are likely to work. But the real-time experiences are rolling in and there is no better way to get a feel for the new regime than the anecdotal experience of other providers.

I have to admit, I was hopeful but sceptical of the new system. An approach that is more remote, more digitised, and only reviews limited aspects of a service at a time felt like a cost-saving exercise that served a regulator in crisis, rather than a solution for an over-stretched sector. But I am a cynical lawyer.

I had glimmers of hope that the new portal would streamline information sharing, that the additional layers of staff could deliver more support to providers and that dynamic regulation would have a positive impact on those that have not been inspected for years. Whilst these positive outcomes could still apply, the feedback has raised serious questions about our new frontier.

*"The system is evolving but it should benefit everyone, not just the purse of the CQC."*

## **Remote Inspections and the burden of documentation**

As part of the new regime, the CQC is going to do more work "off-site". This means the days of having an inspector holed up in a service's side room, looking at policies and care plans, are likely gone. Whilst staff and registered managers will breathe a sigh of relief, what this does mean is that documentation has to be provided in a different way.

A client of mine has reported receiving an email from the CQC containing a list of 75 questions and requested documents. The documents are specific, as are the questions. The CQC's expectation is that all of this information will be promptly uploaded to the portal to enable remote review. Whilst this is a clear benefit to CQC inspectors and assessors (who will have less "digging" to do) it creates a new obligation for Registered Managers and senior staff. This will inevitably be a time-consuming task which will have to sit alongside the stresses and strains of typical managerial duties.

Given the promise that the new regime will lead to "dynamic" regulation, it could mean that these extensive requests come on an ongoing basis. Time will tell what impact this will have on day-to-day duties, but what is clear is that the better organised your evidence is, the more likely you are to be able to comply with requests for documentation at speed.

An online system is obviously more efficient but this cannot be to the detriment of care home staff who simply have the burden shifted to them. They should be focused on delivering excellent care, not making the lives of the CQC easier.

## **Absence of consistent inspector relationships**

The provider / inspector relationship, as we know it, is a thing of the past. Teams with multiple members will now input into social care services.

Whilst those with challenging relationships with their inspectors will be over the moon with this change, many will miss having a single point of contact to ask questions, raise concerns or generally turn to for advice in difficult regulatory scenarios. Whilst the CQC has never been keen to provide any kind of meaningful support to providers, it can be comforting to know that you have a person at CQC who understands your service and could support you with issues involving other stakeholders.

The reason for this change is sensible and the massive staff turnover and sickness figures at the CQC mean that your single point of contact could suddenly disappear or is on leave indefinitely. It therefore helps to have multiple people available to avoid a bottleneck when someone is unavailable, however, does this mean that their knowledge of your service will be diluted or that their understanding will not be as deep (as they have many other services to work with)? The impact of this will become clear in due course.





### Available evidence – demonstrating an Outstanding service


The CQC has recently clarified that it wishes to move away from “risk-based” regulation. This had previously seen inspections triggered by adverse incidents, safeguarding issues or complaints. Naturally, this set reviews off on a negative footing whereby the regulator would be looking for evidence to corroborate the adverse report rather than looking for positive evidence.

The CQC intends to revert back to its approach of “looking for Good” during its reviews. Whilst this is a welcome decision, providers need to examine how they are going to evidence the more positive aspects of the care they deliver through a remote inspection. It is easy to upload positive care plans, detailed audits and comprehensive staff rotas into the portal, but where in-person observations of care are likely to reduce, how do you show the CQC how good you really are? Creative thinking should be applied to showing the impact of activities, service users’ feedback and the innovative aspects of your care and environment.

### Conclusion

I think we all want the new regime to work, but not to the detriment of staff working in the sector that are inevitably going to have to undertake more administrative tasks on behalf of the CQC. This is not fair or reasonable. Remote regulation can work, but the human side of inspections is crucial and it should not become a tick box exercise where CQC inspectors demand documents, review them in the comfort of their own home (without staff context or answers where there are queries) and simply fire out judgements at will.

The system is evolving but it should benefit everyone, not just the purse of the CQC.

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# Care Talk Business

Sharing business excellence in social care

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