



CARING in COVID

Caring in COVID

Edited by A L Waddington-Feather



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National Care Forum
4th Floor
Friars House
Manor House Drive
Coventry
CV1 2TE

Tel: 02475 185524

Email: info@nationalcareforum.org.uk

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The material in this publication is a collation of real-life stories submitted by National Care Forum members for the National Care Forum Caring in COVID project. The National Care Forum does not endorse any of the entities mentioned, or any third-party entities whose trademarks and logos appear in this work.

This book is dedicated to everyone whose life has been touched by care during this pandemic. This has been the hardest of times, and we want this book to tell your story. These stories tell of pain, challenge, hope and humanity – and we thank you for everything you do.

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About the National Care Forum (NCF)

Caring in COVID project

The National Care Forum (NCF) is the membership organisation for not-for-profit organisations in the care and support sector. It supports its members to improve social care provision and enhance the quality of life, choice, control and wellbeing of people who use care services.

An important part of the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic is the role played by care organisations and the communities they serve. To help record and highlight the incredible response of the not-for-profit sector, we reached out to NCF members so that we could bring together these uplifting stories of community, the frontline, leadership, connection and fun in one place. The ebook reflects a selection of the wonderful stories we received from the start of the pandemic up to mid-October 2020.

The 'Caring in COVID' stories have been allocated to five different categories, and each of these could be a book in its own right. From these categories we have identified five highly commended stories, one in each category. The decision to recognise these particular stories was reached by judging the story on reader impact, impact on the person receiving care, originality and value to the sector.

This ebook has been created with the generous support of NCF Annual Partners Marr Procurement, Person Centred Software and Quality Compliance Solutions, and we are delighted to share their 'Caring in COVID' stories in this book. It has never been more apparent that care exists within a much broader network of support and services, and these stories from partners show just how central that network has been to the provision of care and support during this pandemic.

Foreword

From the National Care Forum (NCF)

As the pandemic hit, the NCF team continuously worked with our members from across the country. This meant hearing first hand just how swiftly and devastatingly the COVID-19 pandemic was impacting some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. This was a horrendous time for everyone, and our hearts and thoughts are with all who have lost loved ones.

Alongside this, we also heard more and more about the amazing work of colleagues on the frontline and their leaders, and the support from the wider community. This combined force came together to ensure that care in this crisis could continue, and that it was offered with dignity and compassion at its heart. Care providers literally were a lifeline for the most vulnerable across all our communities, ensuring care settings continued to be places where people thrive.

But mainstream media was portraying a very different image, focusing critically on the very real tragedy, but unable to hear or consistently share the stories that showed positivity, resourcefulness and hope.

As a result, we launched our #HereToCare online campaign to help profile the amazing work staff, carers and care providers are doing in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Running from July to September 2020, the stories we profiled were heart-warming, emotive and showed extraordinary examples of humanity.

But we knew that these would soon get lost on social media, so we decided to bring these and other stories together in one place. This compendium details how, during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions, National Care Forum members and the communities they serve, came together and rose to the challenge to support those who most needed help.

Through this collection, the reader peeks behind the closed doors and experiences what it was really like for care staff, residents in care homes, and people needing support in their own homes during lockdown.

This book is more than just a nod to social history, it demonstrates how people's lives are enriched by the role of those working in the sector through their creativity, dedication and passion, and through their many skills and talents.

There are over 100 stories in this compendium, and we could have told hundreds more. These stories are but a small representation of what is continuously happening in the sector.

Every day millions of carers and volunteers across Britain go above and beyond for other people; the extra steps, effort, and care given makes a remarkable difference to the lives of the people they touch and support.

We hope this book will help people to understand and value that work, those who do it and champion the role that great quality not-for-profit care plays in all our communities – day in, day out, seven days a week. It is our pleasure to share these stories, and take a moment to offer thanks for the resilience, determination and dedication that shines through each and every page.

Vic Rayner, Executive Director, National Care Forum

Foreword

From the editor

As a journalist, I always feel honoured when entrusted to tell someone's personal story, and editing this book evoked the same feeling; it has been a privilege to bring together stories showing what was, and indeed still is, really happening in the care sector throughout this pandemic – the true, behind-the-scenes stories, not those perpetuated by mainstream media.

Under the different sections, the stories are woven together like a patchwork quilt; each one is different in style and approach, and reflects the personality of those involved. I have respected these stories from the heart and have kept editorial changes to a minimum.

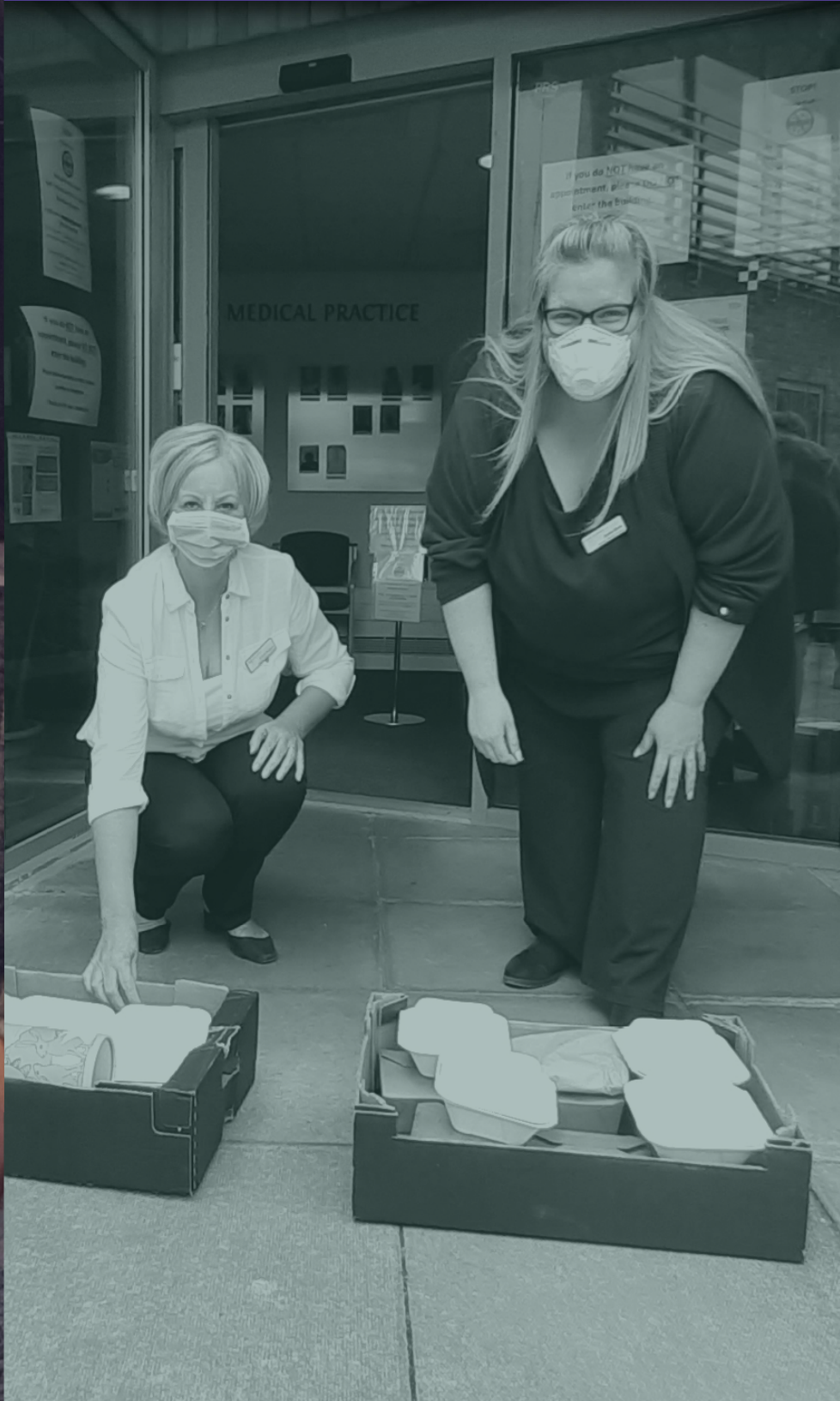
Having worked as a carer myself, I know the lengths you go to, to ensure the person in your care has more than just their physical needs met; it's also about respectfully providing emotional and wellbeing support, and enabling as much independence as possible so the person can live the life they choose. These stories clearly demonstrate person-centred care at its best.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

This compendium of stories is incredibly emotive; I am inspired by these stories and I hope this collation will inspire others to find their own humanity.

A L Waddington-Feather

STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINE



Stories From The Frontline

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Lou & Her Team Face COVID Together

ambient

Passionate About People

www.ambient.org.uk

020 8502 3933

Address: Unit 9, Bourne Court, Unity
Trading Estate Southend Road,
Woodford Green, Essex. IG8 8HD

"My name is Louise Foyle-York, and I've been part of the team at The Croft care home since 2017, becoming Home Manager in mid-January this year. Only a few weeks into my new role, we began putting contingency plans in place for the COVID-19 pandemic – but were we in for a shock; mid-March, we closed our doors to the public and new residents.

Our GP called, suggesting we get more staff on standby for shifts. I was arranging meetings with the team to talk through concerns and solutions. Everything was under control.

Three days from our 14 days 'clear' of any person displaying symptoms, a resident living with dementia became bedridden. They were usually very active, walking the equivalent of 14 miles a day around the home. We knew instantly that others in our care might be at risk.

Acting quickly, we made an isolation zone, scrubbing all hard surfaces down throughout The Croft, even the walls. This is the beginning of what I called "wave one", where five people became severely unwell and very quickly, requiring palliative care immediately, some very sadly passing away within a week.

Staff were also getting sick. I started feeling strange, and within an hour, my temperature rose to over 37.8C. I disinfected my office and left as soon as I could. Whilst I was unwell, I still tried my very best to help from home, not because it was expected of me, but because I could not bear the thought of the team going through this traumatic experience without my support.

On my return, 21 days later, everyone in the home was shell-shocked. How would we recover from this devastation? Within a day of being back, we were hit with a second wave. Testing was not available because we'd already had an outbreak. At the very least, we were becoming specialists

at spotting COVID-19, and it was generally not just the recognised symptoms. Some had what we named the "COVID-19 look": grey with dark eyes. We had to learn quickly because every decision we made had an impact.

We ordered pressure relieving equipment and medicines to support residents' comfort. The amount of information required from authorities and loved ones was overwhelming but essential, so I did this late at night from home. Every morning, the senior team

"Whilst I was unwell, I still tried my very best to help from home, not because it was expected of me, but because I could not bear the thought of the team going through this traumatic experience without my support."

would discuss how we were going to get through that day. We had an A4 length list of high-concern residents in April, and week by week, day by day, this reduced.

I ensured that staff continued speaking sincerely about their fears. They have been given trauma counselling; it is difficult even now to imagine what



we went through and the grief we see. And yet, the overarching sense of pride I have for my team is indescribable. They never let us down; they looked after each other. I don't have horror stories to tell. I can only be proud of what happened here at The Croft."





www.anchorhanover.org.uk

0800 731 2020

The Heals Building, Suites A & B
London, London, WC1E 7HJ
United Kingdom

VE Day Celebrations

To commemorate VE Day, Anchor's St Mary's care home in Ipswich curated a unique museum filled with residents' astounding memories and artefacts from the Second World War.

Staff worked with residents and their families to collate letters, nostalgic photographs, military uniforms and rousing posters, to display in the care home and recapture the spirit of wartime Britain.

The moving installation evolved from St Marys' initial plans to organise a VE Day street party, which was adapted due to government guidance on social gatherings. Staff remained determined to commemorate VE Day with residents, many of whom remember the landmark moment in history with fondness.

The museum united residents in shared memories of their colourful WWII experiences during this challenging time – including Bernard 'Sam' Lambert, age 79, who was born under a table during an air raid.

To help the public to commemorate the occasion, artefacts from the VE Day museum were made available to explore on Anchor's website, in place of being able to visit museums and memorials in person.

On VE Day (8th May), St Mary's marked the occasion with a host of activities for residents including wartime food, films, dances, and poetry readings. Uplifting audio clips and commentary from the period were also played as residents experienced the museum, to help evoke memories and create a nostalgic atmosphere.

The process of creating the museum alongside residents has uncovered some incredible WWII experiences.

Rosemary Martin, aged 98, was 19 when she joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and played a remarkable role plotting British bombers as they left the coast. She remembers the time with great pride and talks fondly about the friendship and camaraderie in the Air Force.

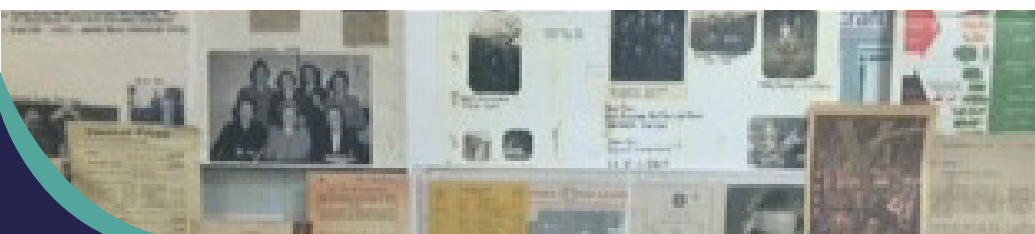
**"I went into
the WAAF a
girl and came
out a woman."**

"It was so disciplined, we all worked together, and I'm proud to have supported the country." She talks fondly about the friendship and camaraderie in the Air Force.

Commenting on the museum, Kristy Smith, manager at Anchor's St Marys, said: "I am so proud of the museum, and how it has evolved with input from residents, relatives and colleagues.

"It is lovely to see residents engaging with their past in such a personal way, and it's providing great comfort at this challenging time."

"Our residents have been so involved and loved every minute, building aeroplanes and decorating the home. We hope the public enjoyed touring our virtual museum as much as we enjoyed curating it."





www.belong.org.uk

(01270) 610666

Pepper House, Market Street
Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5DQ

Getting Creative On The Frontline



Biscuit bake-offs and outdoor entertainment have been all the rage at Belong Atherton during lockdown, with the care village's newly appointed experience coordinator, Jo Woods, rolling out a range of fun and engaging, socially-distanced activities to keep residents feeling positive while nationwide restrictions are still in place.

Moving into social care at the height of the pandemic, 31-year-old Jo joined Belong as the village's activity lead under unusual circumstances. But with COVID-19 temporarily putting a stop to external visitors and mixing between the village's households, Jo's background as an events organiser and fundraiser proved vital to finding new and innovative ways to bring residents together over the last few months.

Activities introduced ranged from static biking competitions and virtual tours to Pizza and Prosecco parties in households.

Speaking of her new role, Jo said: "I am thrilled to be leading activities provision at Belong Atherton, albeit under

slightly different circumstances than normal! Lockdown has given me the opportunity to really understand what residents enjoy and the events programme has been designed to reflect this.

"Although this is my first role in the care sector, I feel that I've found my true calling in life and nothing makes me happier than when a customer says an activity has made their day."

One activity that has particularly gone down a treat is Jo's fortnightly baking competitions, with residents from across the village's six households whipping up delights, from cheesecakes to shortbread biscuits, in a bid to be crowned Belong's bake-off winner.

Outside the kitchen, local duo, Music in Mind, have provided outdoor entertainment, playing a repertoire of much-loved classics to a socially-distanced crowd of residents, who have enjoyed dancing along from their gardens and balconies.



Commenting on this, 82-year-old resident, Audrey, said: "The activities and events on offer have been fantastic, providing a welcome distraction during lockdown for us all. There's something for everyone at Belong and we are thankful for the smiles and laughter they have brought at what has been a tough time for many. Jo is well liked by everyone and really understands the needs of different age groups."

On life beyond lockdown, Jo added, "I have a number of exciting plans in mind for the village once restrictions have been lifted, involving both community groups and charities, and I look forward to putting those into action in due course."



Jo's background as an events organiser and fundraiser proved vital to finding new and innovative ways to bring residents together over the last few months.

Frontline life at Lynwood



Support for life

www.ben.org.uk

01344 298100

Lynwood Court, Lynwood
Village, Rise Road, Ascot
Berkshire, SL5 0FG

Lynwood Care Centre is one of three residential care centres run by BEN. We have seven interconnecting 'houses' each with 15 residents and these small communities are a blessing during COVID-19. Staff work in specific houses, so residents know their carers really well and even when their faces are partially obscured by PPE, most can recognise their carers by their eyes, voice and uniform, which is very reassuring.

Because we work in these 'bubbles' it also helps with infection control, which has become even more important during the pandemic. Although we have had cases here we've not been affected as badly as many care homes and I am hoping we can keep it that way.

Communication has been one of the most important things during the pandemic. Communicating with families, who are understandably frustrated at the 'stop-start' visiting, talking to residents to explain why they can't have visitors today when they could yesterday (and vice versa when the rules change again), requires a calm and consistent approach. Communicating with staff is so important too. This has been a challenging time for us all and they need to know that they are appreciated and cared for.

The Lynwood staff have been amazing. They have risen to the occasion with compassion and ingenuity, finding ways to make each day interesting while keeping everyone safe.

With hairdressers unable to visit, Denise, who works in Robin house, recreated the salon experience for her residents, washing, curling and styling their hair. It's so important to feel good and this really gave everyone a lift. Gill, who works in Puffin house, got residents helping with the gardening, dead-heading roses (some of which may not have been quite ready but we went with it!) and spending time outside to boost vitamin D levels and raise spirits.

At any one time you'll see painting, colouring, bingo, some people will be watching a film, others will be having hand and nail care. Staff always make sure there is a choice and that there is something for everyone. Because we can't go to Wagtail Hall (our 'village hall' space) for activities or events, we are just in our 'house bubbles,' the amount of one-to-one time staff spend with residents has increased, which has been lovely.

"Some residents just want someone to sit and hold their hand, so that's what we do."

Whatever they need at this time, we find a way to give it to them. The number of residents have increased, which has been lovely.

The wider community here in Sunninghill have also been great. We've been given cupcakes, goody bags, chocolates, toiletries, PPE, flowers – it has been so nice to feel like people know we're here; we've needed that appreciation, it really helps us to keep going. Now that we are going into the flu season, that acknowledgement is so important.



I think the caring profession is having a moment in the spotlight because of the pandemic.

People are realising how essential good care is and the lengths carers will go to in order to look after their residents.

I hope that recognition lasts when we finally get 'back to normal'.





www.boroughcare.org.uk

0161 475 0140

9 Acorn Business Park,
Heaton Lane, Stockport
SK4 1AS

Glad to Care

Borough Care threw its support behind 'Glad to Care' (#GladtoCare), an awareness week showcasing positivity within the care industry and celebrating the amazing work done by those employed in the social care sector. Glad to Care week is an opportunity for people to show their appreciation for the extraordinary contribution that carers make to the lives of the people they care for.

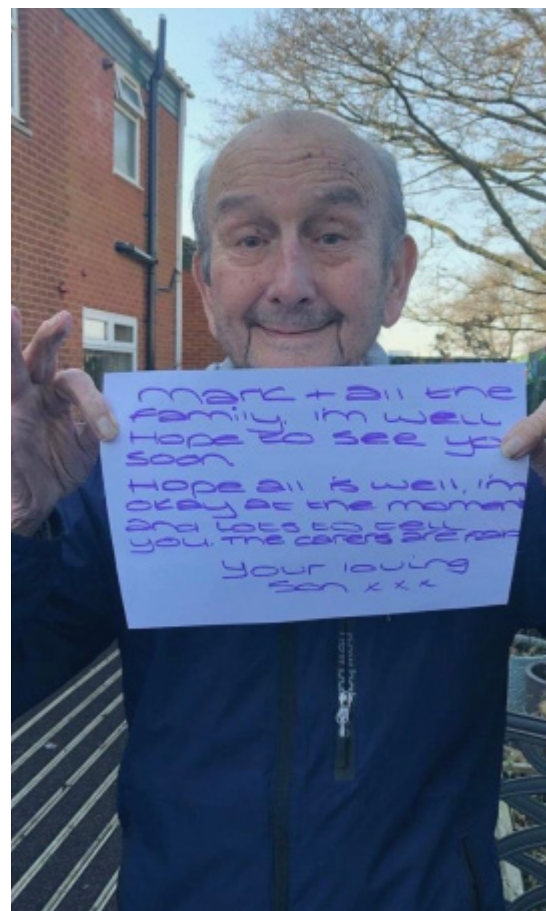
During Glad to Care week, staff and residents at Borough Care's homes for older people participated in a different activity each day, to highlight what goes on in the homes and to promote the positive aspects of care.

The week kicked off with Monday Motivation, which saw Borough Care residents and staff taking part in an armchair exercise session via Zoom. During Thankful Tuesday, staff chatted with residents about why they are glad to care and what they love about their job. On Thoughtful Thursday, residents shared stories about the things they have got up to since moving to a Borough Care home. Carers and residents came together on Feel Good Friday to participate in group activities, demonstrating the close relationships that develop between them.

Relatives of some residents also took the time to share stories on the care their loved ones have received

and how grateful they are to the carers. Janice Roberts, whose mum Lila is a resident at Borough Care's Bryn Haven home in Brinnington, is full of praise for the staff. Janice says: "The staff are kind and very considerate; nothing is too much trouble. My mum loves all the activities. She really enjoys singing and dancing, which makes so much difference to her wellbeing. The staff are brilliant and couldn't do anymore, especially during the Coronavirus crisis. I can't praise the staff enough. The care they show is far above what is expected."

Dr Mark Ward, CEO at Borough Care, says: "Glad to Care week is a great opportunity to celebrate the wonderful work done by everyone in the care industry. The last few months have been incredibly difficult for everyone in the care sector, yet our staff have continued to work tirelessly to ensure residents are supported emotionally and physically. I am so proud of all the Borough Care team and the incredible work our carers do to enable our residents to continue to live their lives colour."



"The last few months have been incredibly difficult for everyone in the care sector, yet our staff have continued to work tirelessly to ensure residents are supported emotionally and physically. I am so proud of all the Borough Care team and the incredible work our carers do."



Enriching Lives Before & During Lockdown

Brandon

Live free

the learning disability charity

www.brandontrust.org

0117 907 7200

Olympus House, Britannia Road,
Patchway, Bristol, BS34 5TA

Brandon is a charity which exists to enable children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and autism to live life in the way they choose. It provides high-quality, individualised support that focusing on enabling people to achieve their dreams and truly live free.

Lockdown brought about new challenges in many ways, but our staff teams continue to inspire us with their commitment to keeping the people we support safe and well during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To stay safe, many of the people we support had to stay at home, both before and after the country went into lockdown in March. This meant missing favourite activities, social get togethers, and clubs.

Cheddar Grove nursing home in Bristol is home to Angela, aged 65, and six others, all of whom have complex physical and mental needs. Fourteen members of staff work in shifts to provide around the clock care to residents.

Angela describes lockdown in care as "every day is a party".

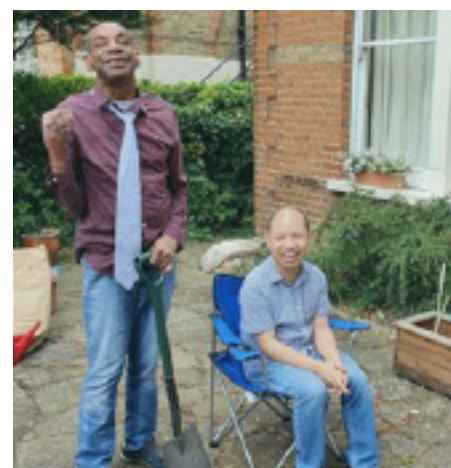
Prior to March 13, Lindsay one of the Team Leaders at the home, describes Angela's life before lockdown: "She used to get out and about by bus to the shops and cafes with a one-to-one carer and would take great delight in calling out 'hello people!' Angela loved going to help groom horses, visiting the seaside and going to Church."

“ Since lockdown we have had to think about ways of enriching Angela's life, but what has come apparent is how Angela enriches our lives – she really keeps our spirits up! “

"Now, instead of a trip to the seaside, we've installed a sandpit for sandcastle building; a visiting dog and guinea pigs bring contact with animals. We have puzzle sessions and sing-songs, painting a huge mural of the NHS rainbow, story time, cooking sessions, all of which are done with huge joy."

Keeping the communication with relatives and loved ones has been a priority, and it was very encouraging to receive feedback, such as this from Angela's brother Paul in June 2020.

"I cannot thank the people who care for Angela enough; she is so well and happy. They are the unsung heroes. April 1st was her Birthday and we had a Facetime call where she sang Happy Birthday and showed me her cake and presents. It seems that every time I speak to her there is something happening to keep her so happy."



BrendonCare Clubs

Contact & Support Service For Members



www.brendoncare.org.uk

01962 852133

The Old Malthouse, Victoria Road
Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 7DU

BrendonCare Clubs is a charity that brings joy and friendship to 1,700 older people in Hampshire and Dorset, thus preventing loneliness and isolation. With the temporary suspension of the 94 clubs, and many members living alone, the contact and support service will help to maintain the positive connections and friendships they usually enjoy through their regular clubs.

BrendonCare is entirely committed to helping older people at this time and is offering regular contact through telephone and written communications to all 1,700 members and volunteers.

A team of 100 BrendonCare staff and volunteers are providing this vital communication. The support is focusing on helping to alleviate the extreme loneliness that some older people face, regularly checking they have enough medicine and essential supplies, and putting them in touch with external resources and community partners, if needed.

Following a recent telephone call, a club member commented: "Thank you for calling us the other day to see if we needed anything – we are 100 per cent okay luckily, but you calling was a great boost knowing there was someone there if needed. We are so pleased we joined the Kurling Club."

Sam Agnew, Head of BrendonCare Clubs, said: "We have had such a positive response to the

"We have had such a positive response to the telephone calls, it is making a huge difference to our members' lives. I would like to say a big thank you to all the staff and volunteers who are helping to brighten up our members' days"

telephone calls, it is making a huge difference to our members' lives. I would like to say a big thank you to all the staff and volunteers who are helping to brighten up our members' days."

Future plans for BrendonCare Clubs include setting up virtual clubs, to maintain regular routines for members, as well as keeping them connected.

There are also plans for a virtual choir, and videos of Brendoncare's ever popular cooking-for-one sessions.

Internet sim cards and tablets will be provided for those members who do not have access to the technology to ensure they can join in too.





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www.ccht.org.uk
020 7922 5300
Cecil House, 266 Waterloo Road,
London, SE1 8RQ

"Having started my career four years ago as a care assistant, I had just assumed new responsibilities as Team Leader at Cecil Court when the COVID-19 pandemic started! On top of that, our home manager was forced to shield.

I had to take great care in ensuring that I performed my duties correctly to be a role model to my staff. This was while getting to grips with new technology such as Nourish (digital care plan system).

Most importantly was getting to grips with helping colleagues to maintain the ever-changing PPE guidelines. It wasn't easy at first.

"With every staff member wearing a mask during the entire shift as well as thicker aprons, this was initially very confusing for the residents."

Especially those living with dementia; they were not always able to understand staff as lip reading was impossible with the mask on. We had to make a great effort to capture their attention!

The team is very cooperative and committed to taking all risks. Some have to commute long distances to be at the home, making long working days. All have been aware of their attendance, avoiding the need for others to cover shifts and overwhelming their colleagues with more responsibility.

The residents have been very well supported and kept active throughout

the pandemic so there hasn't been any concerns from them.

But it's a different story for relatives who were subjected to the constant negative media in the early days. Understandably, many were upset and worried about their loved ones, and of course were desperate to visit. We moved quickly to set up video calls and encourage them along with the regular telephone calls and emails. Thankfully, we have a lovely garden and were soon able to introduce controlled visits.

Although Fiona the Home Manager was shielding, she was giving her full support. She ran regular video call sessions with us and the Deputy sharing her knowledge and advice to help us cope in the event of



any unexpected events. Fiona also surprised us many times with special meals - a lovely incentive to keep us going!

Of course, I consider myself lucky, I have been asymptomatic and yet my ability to perform my duties as expected was not hampered. My colleagues and I continue to respect the strictest infection control measures and ensure that we use the right PPE and regularly sanitise.

So do I regret becoming a care

Baptism of Fire: How I Coped With Promotion at The Outbreak of COVID

**By Joba Begum, Team Leader,
Cecil Court Care Home, London
part of Central & Cecil Housing
Trust**



home Team Leader at the start of a pandemic?

Not at all. I am proud to say that my experience during COVID-19 has made me even stronger and I am now able to face the worst crisis without any doubt. My colleagues and I across our care homes have enough confidence to face a second surge without panic if the case rise, my commitment to the residents and the home will remain as strong as ever."



Community
Integrated
Care

www.c-i-c.co.uk

0845 543 9911

Central Support Services Old
Market Court Miners Way Widnes
WA8 7SP



Personal Sacrifice to Keep People in Care Safe

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, so many of our social care heroes have went to great lengths to protect the people they support – none more so than David Young, Support Worker from Caithness in the Highlands, Scotland.

Like so many other care workers, David continued to work throughout the pandemic but was concerned that waiting for him at home was his 84-year old mother and 59-year old wife, who were both shielding. He knew how important it was to remain at work while the battle raged against COVID-19 but he was also aware of the possible dangers of

Care for their continued selflessness and enduring support at this trying time."

So, he decided to take one step further to protect himself, his loved ones and the people he supports... by moving out of the family home and into the greenhouse in his garden to allow him to continue working throughout the pandemic.

David Young says: "Well, it just made sense to me from the word go. I wanted to continue to work and do my bit at such a difficult time, but equally I knew I had a duty to help keep those around me safe too."

"So, I put a camp bed and a gas heater in my greenhouse, and my new abode was up and running! My wife would cook my dinner every night and leave it on the driveway for me to collect. I used a basin to get washed in and got dressed each day in the greenhouse. It seems like a big sacrifice but, as I see it, I was just doing my bit."

David went weeks without any face-to-face interaction to minimise any possibility of passing infections from work onto his family and to continue delivering world-class care to the people he supports. He spent just under four months in the greenhouse.

He continued, "Both my wife and my Mum were admitted to hospital with non-COVID-related illnesses, which only served to strengthen my resolve. Knowing I was doing the right thing to keep everyone safe really kept me going."

transmitting the virus to those around him.

Mark Adams CEO of Community Integrated Care said: "Social care workers have been going above and beyond on a daily basis to ensure elderly and vulnerable people in our society are not only kept safe and healthy throughout the pandemic but happy as well – often at the sacrifice of their own comfort."

"We're incredibly proud of David and everyone else at Community Integrated



Dedication On The Front Line

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had the honour of witnessing the lengths our frontline workers have gone to in order to support ECL's (Essex Cares Limited) essential care services.

In North Essex, one of our Healthcare Assistants, Donna Annand and her daughter, Community Care Assistant, Emilie Findlay, took extra measures to ensure that they were able to continue in their key roles, providing reablement support in people's homes, during this challenging time.

Donna's son, Ryan, falls into the government's high-risk category as he has had a full organ transplant and is on immunosuppressive medication, so he was required to isolate.

"Emilie and I both enjoy our jobs and love being able to support our customers to live day-by-day and regain their mobility and independence. Protecting my son is paramount to my family, which is why Emilie is now staying with friends, and we will continue, as we always have, to follow full infection prevention guidelines and the advice from official government sites."

At ECL, we are so thankful to have such incredible individuals like Donna and Emilie as part of our team. Thanks to them, we were able to continue our services through an incredibly challenging time for the social care sector.

"In order to shield him from any potential infection, while continuing to support our customers full-time, Emilie made the tough decision to temporarily move out of the family home and stay with friends."

Donna also went the extra mile to take all of the necessary precautions in order to continue in her vital role by implementing strict infection-control in her home; removing her uniform at the front door, sterilising all surfaces, using separate cutlery and utensils and regular hand washing.

In March, Donna said, "We believe it is important to carry on working in our roles as key workers, as many vulnerable, elderly people live alone and can't see their family. Along with ensuring their hygiene and diet requirements are met, for many, we are providing much-needed company."

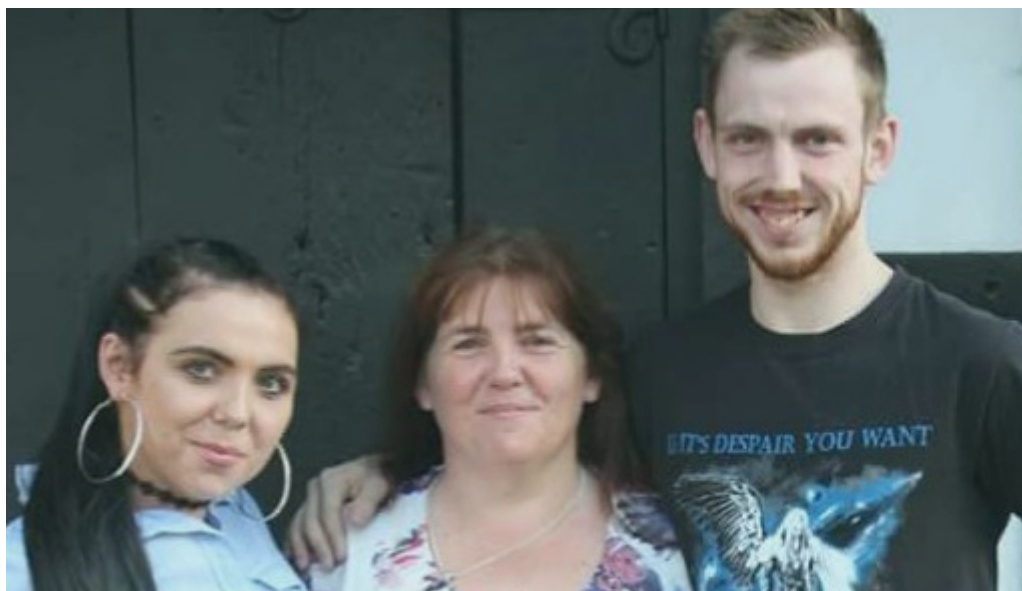
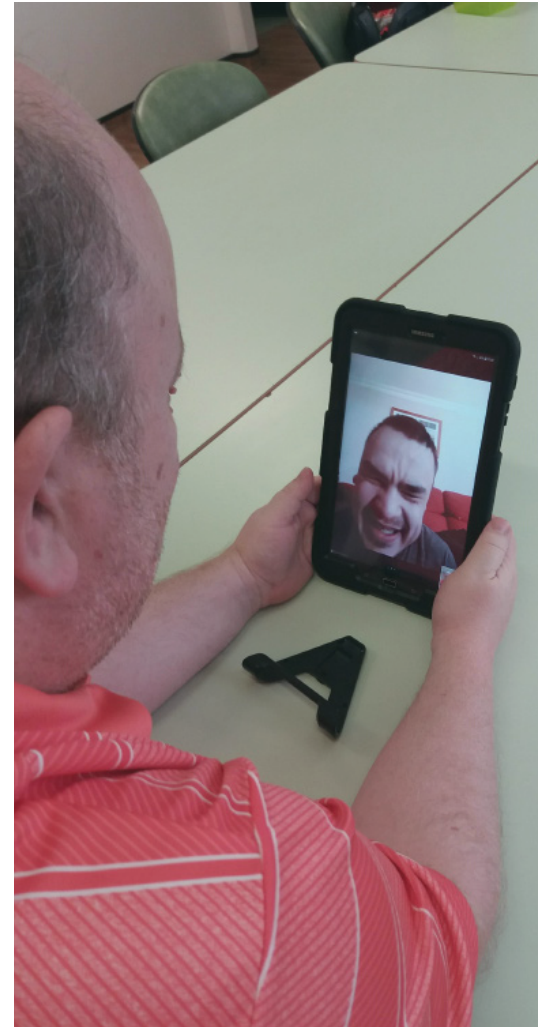


Person-centred care

www.ecl.org

03330 135 438

Seax House, Victoria Road
South, Chelmsford, Essex,
CM1 1QH





Heathlands
Village

www.thefed.org.uk
www.heathlandsvillage.co.uk
(0161) 772 4800
Heathlands Village, Heathlands
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M25 9SB

Today Was A Hard Day

At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Heathlands Village's Activity Centre Support Lead, Shoshi Black, shared the shock and fear felt by staff committed to keeping life as normal as possible for the vulnerable people in their care.

"Today was a hard day. Nothing in particular happened - just another regular day in Corona life. But for some reason I snapped and panicked and felt the weight of the world on my chest.

I'm lucky, I am one of those who still has a job. And a job that I love. But right now, that job is hard. I think I needed to pause and reflect on what it means to be working in a care home at present.

It's deserted. Like a ghost town. Instead of walking into a smile from Hymie, a wave from Millie, Mimi and Nathan in the atrium, and a crowd joining us in the activity room, it's empty. Staff rushing around with masks on. Five weeks on, and it's still a shock to walk into.

We go from room to room. Some have signs on their doors, warning of infection. Each time you see one of those, there is a nervousness in your

We take rummikub, cards, music into the lounges. We take our smiles, laughter and hearts and give them to our incredible residents. They have been through so much in their lives. They each have a story to tell, wisdom to share, and we're honoured to sit with them, two metres apart, and give them our time.

We are blessed that the sun is shining, not a small feat in a city that is renowned for its rain. We take turns walking with the residents around the garden. The spring blossoms are in bloom and it's beautiful!

Those are the good moments.

Then there is the sickness that surrounds us. The fear, anxiety and stress that we all hold onto, to keep everyone safe. The knowledge that our best efforts and all the love in the world can't always control the uncontrollable.

Those times are scary.

There are tears, raw emotion, and worry. And this is OK. That shows our passion, our devotion, our love and our care.

The Fed is a family. We are all in this together.

And that is our secret weapon.

When it's difficult and overwhelming, we take a deep breath and look around us. The building is covered in posters, letters and warm wishes from the entire community.

The PPE we are wearing has been donated by different people and businesses in the community. The staff around us are caring and devoted 100 percent of the time.

Everyone is looking out for each other, whatever position we're in, we know we are in it together.

The residents and families are forever thanking us and the clapping as we leave the building on Thursday nights is inspiring.

We can do this."

**"Hard days
happen, like
today, once in
a while, but
the warmth
and care we
share is
constant."**



Admirable Staff Swap Day Jobs For Care Positions

GuildCare 

www.guildcare.org

01903 528600

Methold House, North Street

Worthing, West Sussex

BN11 1DU

Back in March, as we entered the extraordinary times of a global pandemic and a looming lockdown, Worthing charity Guild Care, like many, had to implement measures to cope with the growing outbreak of COVID-19.

Mindful that these impending pressures would only be exacerbated by staff shortages due to continuous illness and shielding, Guild Care had to take action to ensure the welfare of their residents and clients.

In response to this crisis, Guild Care made the decision to redeploy their staff, whose services had otherwise closed or were no longer essential, and were deployed to other areas of the organisation in order to continue

Staff from both community and support services swapped their day-to-day roles for that of care positions within the charity's care homes and Home care service.

Kerry stepped away from her role as Community Liaison Worker, supporting people with learning disabilities, to join the Health and Wellbeing Team at Guild Care's dementia specialist care home, Haviland House.

She said: "I literally hit the ground running, I had a whistle stop tour of the different households with introductions to the wonderful residents and staff. It was a magical first day and everyday afterwards became as special as the last.

"Haviland House touched my heart and the wonderful memories I have from my time there will remain with me for a very long time. To be honest, it was difficult to leave and to go back to my normal role pre-COVID. If I think about it, I would probably never have had this experience if it wasn't for the lockdown and my redeployment.

"Being able to brighten someone's day, make them feel special and focus on them and what they would like to do is something very special to be a part of. To know that I may have contributed in some small way to their wellbeing and their day is a great feeling."



“Guild Care is immensely grateful and proud of their staff who stepped into care without hesitation and demonstrated an admirable go-getter attitude in unfamiliar territory, all whilst adapting to the new and complex way of caring.”



Interim Chief Executive, Alex Brooks-Johnson said: "At Guild Care, we are so proud of all of the staff members who stepped up to the plate to help support or care services in an incredibly difficult time. Their support helped ensure we could continue to provide the best and safest care to our residents and clients, and we are so appreciative of each and every member of our care staff for their courageous efforts on the frontline."



www.hestia.org

020 7378 3100

Maya House

134-138 Borough High Street
London, SE1 1LE

Nina is a Children and Family worker at Hestia and works across several of the charity's refuges. Nina reflects on some of her recent experiences during the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent lockdown.

"It's been a challenging time during the lockdown. Normally, I do a lot of face-to-face activities with the children in the refuge – from babies right through to teenagers. It's very hard for them to understand why they need to social distance and why they can't play with each other.

Sometimes it breaks my heart; one little boy said to me the other day, "Oh Nina, we understand we can't play together but it's so hard!"

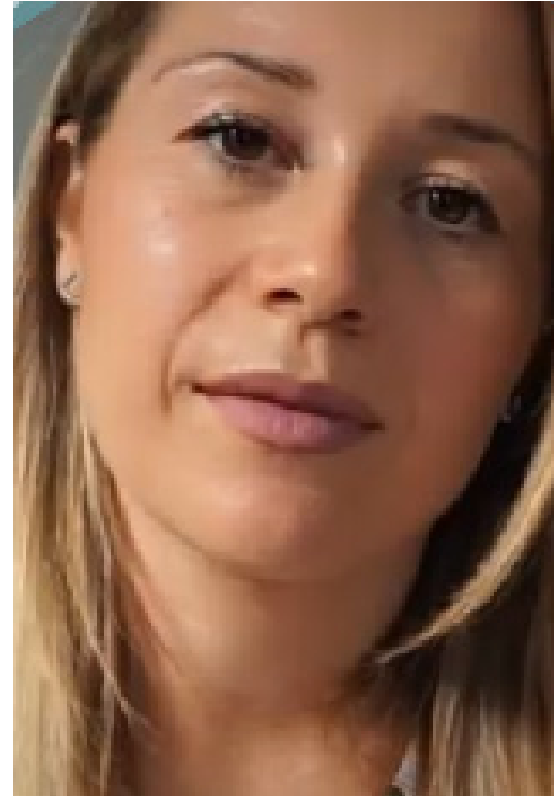


Life In A Refuge

The children have all been brilliant.

With their parent's consent I've been face-timing them and setting online tasks. I even sent them exercises that they could do in the garden. I won't deny it's frustrating at times, I'm used to knocking on their room door and saying 'How are you? How's school?'. I check in with the children every day and they are all doing so well. I usually call them around 11 or 12 to give them a chance to get sorted. I ask them if they need any help with their homework, send some of their work to their teachers and remind them about social distancing and washing their hands.

The other week it was a little boy's birthday so I left him a present on his doorstep, it was only a board game but he was so pleased and sent me such a lovely message. So, I'm doing what I can but I'm missing them.



"The impact of the lockdown on the children is tough. They are missing their routines and they ask me, "When will I see my friends again? When will I be back at school?"

Two of our families in one refuge have had to self-isolate for 14 days and they were used to going for their walk once a day so that's been very hard on them. When I call the children, they ask me, "When will we have our activities back and when can I play with my friends in the house?"

A lot of the families are now staying in one room and with the children being off school they are finding it very tough, especially if they have a toddler and a teenager. The mums tell me that they really appreciate the teachers now!

What's great is that all the children and family workers are really pulling together".

Redeployed to Care: Changing Roles to Help on The Frontline

In February 2020, Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) Care Management Team recognised Coronavirus was an emerging risk. The Incident Response Group (IRG) was formed, and it was obvious more staff were needed to support essential services for our residents, many of whom were vulnerable.

JRHT successfully recruited 78 staff into vacant care positions and redeployed 48 staff from other areas of the business. Between March and June existing staff and deployed staff delivered a staggering 123,000 hours of residential and domiciliary care to our residents.

JRHT received very positive feedback from deployed staff many who said would volunteer again in care if needed to do so. Here are some of their comments:

Jennifer Phillips said, "When I volunteered to be redeployed to Care, I wasn't sure what to expect. I have not had any experience working in a care home so was a bit daunted by the whole idea.

"I have been redeployed to work at Hartrigg Oaks and on arrival it was smiling faces all round. The staff were incredibly welcoming.

"Today I was shadowing one of the General Assistants, Stephen, and we were tasked with cleaning the patient's bedrooms and the communal washroom facilities. Stephen was very patient with me as he explained the various requirements and techniques, including how to keep items separate and prevent cross contamination between rooms."

Tina Feder, Complaints Officer said: "I've also been supporting Tracey (activities lead), who has never ending ideas for activities for 'her' residents at Hartrigg Oaks whilst in isolation. Tracey has arranged Skype contact for many of the residents to keep in touch with their families. Which I have to say has been no mean feat; with initially only one tablet between 40 odd residents, this has since increased to three tablets, and of course relatives are desperate to see and hear their loved ones regularly. I connected many people yesterday; all loved the experience and couldn't thank the Care Team enough for a wonderful job in such difficult times."

Volunteer, Leila said, "As transferable skills go, the leap from feeding flyers through the office laminator at the Homestead office, to feeding linens through an iron sheet press was not one I expected to find myself writing about!

"To put this in context, today I began my redeployment from an office-based role to assist in one of our care sites. Supporting in the laundry at Lamel Beeches, I contributed to ensuring our residents have a supply of clean pressed linen and clothing.



"By doing this I was able to free up time for the incredible Care staff to dedicate to supporting our residents, addressing their concerns around the uncertainties that come with our current circumstances, alongside continuing to meet their individual care and support needs. Whilst on site I saw colleagues continually demonstrating compassion and patience as residents navigated how being in lockdown will impact their connection with families, their forthcoming hospital appointments, and other aspects of their life and routines.

"When I arrived every single member of the Lamel Beeches team I met was so welcoming and treated me with such kindness. And I'm looking forward to going back on Thursday to do it all again."

**"I finished the day
feeling like, in
some small way,
I had done
something that
makes a difference."**

Resident Recovery From COVID-19 Boosts Staff Moral



www.longhurst-group.org.uk

0300 123 1745

50 Newhall Hill, Birmingham
B1 3JN

Here at The Spinney we had an 84-year-old resident who went into hospital twice during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the first discharge, the resident's health continued to deteriorate and she stopped eating and drinking. As a result, she was admitted back to hospital, and it was during her second admission we were informed she had tested positive for COVID-19 but was asymptomatic.

However, our resident was still very poorly and we were informed their passing was going to be imminent due to the way that the resident was presenting. As a result, they were discharged back into our care for end of life care and support.

"The staff team was absolutely amazing during this time"

Whilst supporting the resident to ensure that she received the best end of life care as possible, we ensured that all other residents and staff members remained safe by following our strict infection control policy by using full PPE good personal hygiene and ensuring the correct disposal of PPE as per the government guidelines.

Furthermore, staff kept a positive attitude to help everyone's morale.

We were absolutely delighted when we noticed a change in the resident's health, and she started doing really well. Furthermore, she had a negative COVID-19 test and she is now eating, drinking and taking her medication and is currently having Occupational Health and Physiotherapy support; encouragingly, she is now starting to get up out of bed and sit in her chair.



What is very important is, due to good leadership, an excellent staff team and very strict infection control procedures, there have been no further cases of COVID-19 at The Spinney.

This has lifted the team's morale immensely, and given them a boost in knowing they continue to have this person with them, and by following strict infection control procedures, the virus hadn't spread to other staff and residents.

In time we will come together and celebrate properly, but for now, even in these challenging times, we continue to support and care for our residents.



It was heartbreaking for staff as they cared for this resident, who was so ill all they could manage was sips of water and all medications had been stopped; as a team, we were now providing end of life care and support.



The Secret Ingredient is Care

Craig has been the cook at Sherley Court in St Helens for four years. He is an exceptional chef and always endeavours to meet the needs and wishes of residents in creative and cost-effective ways.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, the other chef at the service had to shield for 12 weeks due to being in the at-risk category. To avoid the service having to use agency staff and to reduce the risk of exposure to vulnerable residents at the service, Craig voluntarily worked every day without a day off.

"Craig took his first day off from the service in August."

Craig took his day off from the service in August a very generous sacrifice he made to keep residents safe in their home.

As well as being an amazing cook, he puts a lot of thought into preparation, presentation and finding solutions to mealtime challenges.

Craig involves all the residents in meal planning. When residents have wanted to try alternative diets e.g. vegan, vegetarian or low fat plans, Craig has researched the nutritional requirements and ensured that the residents physical needs and dietary requirements are met. This has included building a menu based on using food moulds for people who have dysphasia.

Craig ensures that mealtimes are positive. He understands they help enhance social interaction, build a sense of community, increase nutritional intake, and contribute to a person's mental and physical well-being.

Not only is Craig invariably cheerful, always empathetic and happy to provide a listening ear, he's positive, embraces new ideas and everyone is full of praise for him.

He is always cheerful and friendly and residents look forward to chatting with him as he visits all units in order to check that everyone is happy with their meals.

He does all this on his own initiative and has really embraced the life of a cook in a care setting. He doesn't just make food; he ensures that the whole dining experience enhances the lives of the people who live at the service.



The Frontline From A Customer Perspective

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Trinity Court

Molly Millars Lane

Wokingham, Berks, RG41 2PY

We spent time talking with the people we support, to understand the impact of lockdown and what effect service changes and adaptations are having on the individuals in our care.

Westmead provides day support to people with physical disabilities and long-term conditions. The centre has played an essential part in ensuring people are not isolated during these unprecedented times.

Satnam has continued to attend Westmead throughout the lockdown period. Without access to his usual support services, he admitted life would be difficult. He said: "I like coming to Westmead, if I didn't come here, I would be very bored."



Recently his support staff have noticed a positive change in Satnam. He seems to be flourishing despite the pandemic and its impact on daily life. One support worker commented: "I speak a little Punjabi, Satnam's first language, and we have been using the time to help improve his English."

Satnam said: "I have been doing worksheets, both English and Maths. These help me and keep me busy. My young grandson speaks English very well; I have a long way to go before I am as good as him!"

As part of the centre's Infection Prevention Control practices, a limit to the number of people able to access each area has been imposed. This is as well as encouraging extensive hand washing, sanitising stations, and a strict cleaning regime.

David who attends Westmead, reflected on the comfort this provided him and his peers: "I feel very safe and reassured by the measures that staff team members have put in place at the centre. From temperature checks on arrival to using separate rooms for activities and one-way traffic lines. It all helps build confidence and relieve any tension a visitor may have."

Paige would usually access her day support at a Community Centre but, with the temporary closure of the community base, Paige's service has transferred over to Westmead.

“ Things are quite a bit different; I have different staff supporting me and a new building to get used to...”

Paige has not been phased by her new routine, and despite the obvious social distancing measures in place and support staff wearing face masks as a step to protect the vulnerable people at the centre, Paige described the new set up as 'laid back'.



Most importantly, Paige has been able to enjoy many of her usual activities. In addition, Westmead has presented her new opportunities as she makes full use of the outdoor space available to her. "I have been doing some gardening, helping to look after the flowers. It is looking good. I have also been playing lots of football," she said.

Optalis has worked hard to ensure that the people we support can access the support they rely on, whilst staying safe and well.

It hasn't been easy for our colleagues, particularly those working on the frontline delivering care and support. However, it is testament to their dedication and kindness that customers feel secure and services have continued with minimal disruption.

Working in A Care Home & Overcoming COVID-19

For Sue Ferry, a carer at Dene Holm Care Home and asthma sufferer, the threat of contracting COVID-19 was a real concern but having endured the virus and returned to work, she shared her story with us.

"I was worried when COVID-19 started to become more serious, as an asthma sufferer, I knew I would be high risk if I caught it, so when I started to feel unwell over the Easter weekend, I was concerned. I got home from an evening shift at 10pm and felt really lethargic and was coughing a lot. After taking myself to bed, I phoned in sick to work and

"The paramedics wanted me to go to hospital, but I didn't want to go, I thought I wouldn't come back. I contacted my GP and arranged to have my observations done, as they had a tent set up for visiting.

"Unfortunately, my GP recommended calling an ambulance again and this time, my oxygen was so low, I had to go in."

Sue spent the next two weeks in hospital, she had pneumonia, and was put on oxygen as well as IV, as she was unable to eat. Using a walking frame to get to the toilet and taking morphine for the excruciating headaches, she slowly started to feel better and was able to go home and eventually, return to work.

"The recovery was slow, I stayed at home for days, not wanting to go out. But when I returned to work, my team were fantastic. At the start of the pandemic, it felt like care homes were not acknowledged by the government, with regard to PPE and testing, everything took a long time. But now, we have all we need and so I felt really safe coming back to work.

"Being at Dene Holm feels very safe, as we are in our own little bubble. We stopped accepting visitors quickly once the situation escalated and the situation with testing is now much better. When we come on shift, we're given masks, visors, hand gel and ensure we use it correctly."

**"It really hit me
in the night, the
high temperature
and the headaches
were unbearable."**

called 111, who advised me to isolate for five days, I could barely get out of bed, so that was no problem!"

A few days later, Sue tested positive for COVID-19 and continued to isolate but unfortunately, her condition worsened and 111 advised her husband to call an ambulance.



"I have worked at Dene Holm for 16 years and as a team, we're really pulling together, I received so many well wishes from my colleagues whilst I was off, so it was lovely to be back. We are upbeat, and morale is so much better than it was at the beginning. Of course, we have good days and bad days, but we help each other through, as we're all in it together."



www.sanctuary-care.co.uk
0800 917 0478
Cameo House, Chamber
Court, Castle
Street, Worcester, WR1 3ZQ

Sally Gregory only became home manager at Sanctuary Care Guy's Court Residential Care Home in February 2020, as the global Coronavirus pandemic rapidly gained momentum.

Just two months later some of her staff tested positive for the virus at the Fleetwood home. It was then, Sally made the quick decision to leave her 10 and 13-year-old children with family and move into Guy's Court for ten weeks.

She said: "Moving into Guy's Court was never really a hard choice for me, I just did it – it felt like the right thing to do and it really was. When I moved in, it was a time of uncertainty for the care sector but also the country. My residents didn't fully understand what it all meant for them and I just wanted to reassure everyone and make my residents' bubble feel safe again, reduce anxiety and continue to manage my home and lead the team."

Despite following strict infection control procedures, several residents developed COVID-19. Sally was meticulous about ensuring staff were strictly following the processes to treat and contain the virus.

"Sally supported doing laundry, cooking and cleaning, while singing to keep everyone's spirits high for the residents."

Sally supported doing laundry, cooking and cleaning, while singing to keep everyone's spirits high for the residents. All this in addition to running the



For the first two weeks Sally was joined by a core team of seven staff. New to the home she nurtured relationships with her residents, their loved ones and team. She learnt everything about her residents, their views and the things they loved, so that she could make sure their care was truly person-centred.



home and reassuring residents' loved ones during continuous phone calls.

Quickly learning so much about her staff and their individual strengths has enabled Sally to champion their progression through learning and development opportunities. Two care assistants have now become team leaders, thriving in their new roles.

Leaving Family to Care For Residents



Sally is also part of a care partnership with other local providers and the CCG. One of the first homes in the area to experience COVID-19 first-hand, Sally fed back vital information to the group so they could learn from her experience. She taught them to rely on their instincts and hammered home the importance of preparation – she wasn't just thinking of her residents, she wanted to protect those in other care homes too.

Reflecting on her experience, Sally added: "I have the most wonderful family, who are very understanding. They were fully behind me and were so proud too. And thanks to technology I was able to maintain virtual contact with everyone throughout my stay, which was a huge comfort to us all. It made the impossible possible. Even though I was pleased to return home, if I had to do it again, I would do so in a heartbeat."

Special Life Events & Green Fingers: 3 Stories From The Front

For 150 years, the Together Trust has been championing and caring for people with disabilities, autism and complex health needs. And providing life-changing support for looked-after children and care-experienced people.

Here are three stories from the frontline:

Ben's shop and drop experience

Ben works as a Finance Manager in the hospitality sector but was furloughed at the start of the pandemic. Despite the challenging times, people like Ben have found a fulfilling way to contribute to the community and make a positive difference to people's lives.

Ben chose to volunteer for the Together Trust from the beginning of the pandemic until June, and was delivering much-needed food supplies to the people we support on a daily basis. Routine trips to the supermarket can be difficult enough for families caring for children with disabilities, autism and mental health differences, let alone during these challenging times. We're beyond thankful to Ben for stepping up and gifting his time for a good cause.

Debbie's virtual wedding

To keep things fun has never been a challenge to us at the Together Trust! Despite the distance and unexpected circumstances over the past months, we have managed to find ways to celebrate the people we support and our staff's achievements and special occasions. One of our loveliest events was one of our residential managers' virtual wedding.

Debbie Ching, was looking forward to getting married and holding a traditional wedding in July 2020. However, due to the pandemic, she couldn't have the wedding she planned; so her colleagues decided to hold a Zoom 'wedding' - church bells and fascinators included!

It was a unique experience, full of lots of fun, champagne and balloons, which Debbie loved and will never forget. Staff members across the Trust were able to witness the lovely surprise from their homes and be part of Debbie's special day, despite the distance.

***Her colleagues
decided to hold
a Zoom 'wedding'
- church bells
and fascinators
included!***

Green-fingered students make a difference

In May, our students at Bridge College were busy putting their green-fingered skills to good use and making beautiful hanging baskets. Our hard-working students helped Katherine, the horticulture tutor, to create the baskets after growing the plants on from plug plants.

**TOGETHER
TRUST**

www.togethertrust.org.uk
0161 283 4848

Together Trust Centre, Schools Hill,
Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 1JE

Students made 15 baskets in total as part of a well-being project; this project aims to keep the relationship between staff and students during the pandemic, and bring a smile to the faces of some staff members who were unable to be in college. Staff names were picked out of a hat to receive a 'hug-in-a-basket'. These were later hand-delivered, from a safe distance, of course!

Staff member Ginny said: "Thank you to all the students and staff at Bridge College for my hug-in-a-basket. It was a lovely surprise and brightened up my day. Thank you Julie and Mandy for delivering them, it was lovely seeing you."

Elyse, another staff member at Bridge College was completely mesmerised by our students' skills too. Thanking all those involved she said: "Absolutely blown away by my surprise flowers today! It's put a smile on my face that's for sure! Take care and miss you all!"



Stories from the frontline: Katie Boyle, Care Assistant

Katie Boyle, began her career as a care assistant for the Whiteley Homes Trust in January 2020 working in the charity's nursing home, the Eliza Palmer Hub, but she could not have anticipated just how challenging the months ahead would be.

"This is my first permanent position after qualifying, so COVID-19 certainly threw me in at the deep end," she said. "But although it's been very tough at times, I feel a true sense of pride to be part of such a reliable and fantastic team."

"Whiteley is completely different to the other places where I trained. There's a genuine team spirit here and I feel very supported by my managers who have ensured we've never run short of PPE since the beginning of the pandemic. I believe this, and the systems put in place since the start of the pandemic, have been extremely effective in protecting our residents and our team.

"Astonishingly, so far, we've only had two cases in the Hub, both of whom we nursed back to health and only one other case in the rest of the Village. Of course, we're not out of the woods yet, but our success so far in helping keep residents safe is something we're all very relieved about and proud of."

Katie said one of the hardest jobs for the team during lockdown was keeping residents' spirits up through the weeks of isolation from their families and each other.

"Residents had to stay in their rooms for most of the day and only two or three could sit in the dining area at a time. Many found it daunting seeing us in full PPE and it's also difficult to communicate effectively with a mask on, especially for those who are hard of hearing. It is emotional at times, but everyone works hard to reassure our residents.

"When restrictions were relaxed it was still difficult to organise enough visits with loved ones as we couldn't meet indoors safely. We put up gazebos in the garden but sometimes it was just too cold or windy. So, the Portals and iPads that were donated to our charity to enable residents to video call their loved ones were very gratefully received. You couldn't help but cry sometimes when you saw how thrilled residents were to see their families and friends.

"The last few months have summed up so much about why I love my job.

"It can be extremely physically and emotionally difficult, but it really is one of the most rewarding jobs you can do."

"It means a lot to me and to the other care assistants and nurses that every resident knows they matter, and we've all worked hard to keep them as comfortable and happy as possible. I am sure the team's optimism and enthusiasm has really helped get residents through the last few months and it's a team I'm really proud to be a part of!"



The Whiteley
Homes Trust

www.whiteleyvillage.org.uk

01932 842360

The Eliza Palmer Hub,
Whiteley Village, Walton on
Thames, Surrey KT12 4ES





COMMUNITY & VOLUNTEER VOICES



Community & Volunteer Voices

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Care Home Residents Wave Hello to Wetherby Community

In March and April, residents living at Anchor's Wetherby Manor care home on St James Street put up hand drawn rainbows and rainbow coloured hands in their windows as a way of saying hello to the community to put a smile on their faces.

The care home came up with the idea as a means of giving their residents a way of keeping in touch with people. The rainbows and waving hands are the residents' way of saying 'hello' to their friends and family and letting them know that they are well and being looked after.

In addition to the rainbows and hands, Anchor's Wetherby Manor took part in the Neighbourhood Window Walk, an initiative for households to put pleasant drawings and images in their windows for passers-by making essential journeys.

Care Home Manager Judith Scurr said: "As our residents are unable to receive visits from local school-children and family and friends we wanted to find something nice for our residents to do as well as giving their families a sign to show them that they are okay.

"Our residents have always had a great connection with the local community, we are happy that we can do something that keeps this connection going as well as putting a smile on people's faces."

Resident Glenys Williams, 81, who has lived at Wetherby Manor for four and a half years, said she was happy to have created something nice for people to look at.

"We went with rainbows and hands because they are nice for people to look at and because it is a way of letting our residents wave to people outside and encourage them to wave back!"

"I think the rainbows and flowers look fantastic and we all really enjoyed making them and decorating the windows. People stop and smile and wave to us, it makes us feel so happy and cared for.

"We all miss our families but it's nice to have a way to show them that we are being well looked after and have lots to do!"



www.anchorhanover.org.uk

0800 731 2020

The Heals Building, Suits A & B,
22-24 Torrington Place
London, WC1E 7HJ



Harnessing The Power of Music Through COVID-19

A community music initiative hit the right note at Didsbury care village, Belong Morris Feinmann. In a live garden performance from the Northern Chamber Orchestra (NCO), as part of a project to lift the spirits of those living in care homes during lockdown.

Speaking of the event, Belong Morris Feinmann's experience coordinator, Angela Luckett said: "Music has always been a big part of our events calendar at the village as many of our residents are musicians and concert goers.

"As such, we have been thrilled that so many community organisations and performers have come forward. With the support of some very generous sponsors, we can continue to entertain residents during lockdown through some wonderful garden performances. This latest concert from the NCO was one of the real highlights."

The sun shone as a socially-distanced crowd of residents and care workers gathered in the garden and on balconies to hear the NCO's wind quartet play a range of much-loved pieces, from Celine Dion's

Titanic classic 'My Heart Will Go On' to the James Bond theme. And when the sounds of ABBA's 'Dancing Queen' filled the air, everyone was quick to their feet.

General Manager at the Northern Orchestra Chamber, Charlie Rowley, added: "NCO believes in the power of music to change lives and with many care home residents isolated from their loved ones during lockdown, we hope our performances bring them some joy at this difficult time.

"Whilst we love playing in our grand concert halls, there's something equally magical about performing to people in their own back gardens and the feedback has been fantastic. Thank you to our sponsors for their support and to Belong for letting us through their garden gate!"

The event was part of NCO's wider 'Mind Music' initiative, which explores the effects of live music on people living with dementia, with benefits including reminiscence, improved cognitive function and greater communication between loved ones. Sponsored by local technology firm, CDL, the project has funded



www.belong.org.uk

01270 610666

Pepper House, Market Street
Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5DQ



therapy-based, interactive sessions in care homes, but with lockdown putting these activities on hold, the orchestra's musicians decided to take their performances outside.

Adding to this, Frank Robinson, CDL's director of human resources, said: "CDL has worked alongside NCO for the past four years, and we are delighted that we can continue to support them in engaging community projects, albeit in a different format. These performances mean such a lot to everyone involved, including many of our team members whose relatives live in the care homes visited, so it's great to hear that they've had such a positive impact at Belong."

Commenting on the day, resident Shirley Kingsley,

"It was a truly wonderful afternoon, with smiles all around. Music has been a big part of all of our lives here at Belong, and so seeing such an acclaimed orchestra perform live, right on our doorstep, has been a real treat, as well as bringing back fond memories for many."





www.boroughcare.org.uk
0161 475 0140
9 Acorn Business Park
Heaton Lane, Stockport
SK4 1AS

Borough Care Staff Grateful for Support

Staff at Borough Care are extremely grateful to residents' families and members of the wider community for their donations and kind words of support, as they continue to care for residents during the current Coronavirus pandemic. Borough Care is the largest not-for-profit provider of care for older people in Stockport and has 11 homes across the borough.

Lindsay Hadfield, Activity Lifestyle Facilitator at Borough Care's Silverdale home in Bredbury, says: "We have received lots of wonderful

donations, including cotton laundry bags, hand creams, safety visors, fruit, cakes and other food items. One young person has sent us beautiful pictures she has drawn and coloured, which we have put in the windows at Silverdale.

"We couldn't be prouder to know that people of all ages, and from all walks of life, are thinking of us and sending their thoughts and gratitude. It means the world to all of us."

Staff at Bryn Haven in Brinnington have also received some lovely



"We couldn't be prouder to know that people of all ages, and from all walks of life, are thinking of us and sending their thoughts and gratitude. It means the world to all of us."



handmade laundry bags, along with cupcakes decorated with the message: 'After every storm there is a rainbow of hope'.

Dr Mark Ward, CEO at Borough Care, says: "All our staff are continuing to work so hard in these challenging times and it's heart-warming that people recognise their commitment. It means so much to our staff to feel appreciated and valued for the work they are doing supporting residents.

"On behalf of all Borough Care staff, I would like to express our thanks to everyone who has taken the time to make and donate things, send messages of support and show their gratitude."





www.brendoncare.org.uk

01962 852133

The Old Malthouse

Victoria Road, Winchester
Hampshire, SO23 7DU

"We wanted to raise funds to help improve and expand the services that we can offer and continue this great work with our residents."

BRENDONCARE KNIGHTWOOD'S STAFF SKYDIVE RAISES £4,500

Brendoncare Knightwood's staff and relatives recently took on the challenge of a skydive to raise money for the care home in Chandler's Ford, Hampshire. A team of eight members of staff and their relatives successfully completed the jump which took place in Salisbury.

Staff have been working relentlessly to care for residents during the Coronavirus pandemic and took part in this challenge to raise funds towards a summer house for the gardens at Brendoncare Knightwood, where residents and their families can meet in a safe environment.

Leeanne Broyd, Activities Coordinator at Brendoncare Knightwood and skydive team organiser, said: "The current pandemic has highlighted how important it is for our residents to keep in contact with their family and friends. However, as they have been unable to see each other in person inside the building, we have been providing services online for them, such as video calls. We continue to offer visits in our beautiful gardens.

"We wanted to raise funds to help improve and expand the services that we can offer and continue this great work with our residents. Not only does this service help us support our residents, but it also helps to provide reassurance to friends and family who desperately miss seeing their loved ones.

"We reached out to the local community and businesses to help us raise funds for the summer house for the gardens at Brendoncare Knightwood, where our residents can continue to meet with their families in a safe and warm environment. We were absolutely delighted with the support we received and raised a staggering £4,500! A big thank you to everyone who donated."

Brendoncare Knightwood offers residential, respite, end of life care in its 20 bedroom care home. There are also 30 close-care apartments and seven bungalows on the same site for independent living. Care at home is available to these residents, should it be needed to help remain living independently.



Sport, Culture and Creativity Changes Lives In the Crisis

Community
Integrated
Care

www.c-i-c.co.uk

0845 543 9911

Old Market Court, 2 Miners Way,
Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 7SP

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the social care charity Community Integrated Care has been supported by its incredible community partners. In countless ways, these sporting and cultural organisations have lightened the load in the most difficult of times.

Volunteers, players and colleagues from the charitable foundations of the sporting giants; Leeds Rhinos, Widnes Vikings, Liverpool FC, Middlesbrough FC and Portsmouth FC all gave thousands of hours of support to the charity. From distributing millions of items of PPE to delivering hundreds of treat boxes to help the charity thank its frontline heroes. Their heavy lifting enabled Community Integrated Care's teams to focus on what that they do best – providing exceptional care and support.

The charity also collaborated with its partners to develop innovative ways to ensure that even in lockdown, people could lead full, happy, and active lives. Identifying table tennis as a socially distanced sport, they collaborated with Table Tennis England

to introduce the sport to hundreds of social care settings. Working with their Ambassadors, the athletes Ted and James Chapelhow, they created the first guide to promoting the sport in social care – www.CareToPlay.co.uk.

This spirit of 'generous leadership' continued with the sport of Rugby League. Community Integrated Care is proud to be the Official Social Care partner of The Rugby League World Cup 2021, as well as Super League and the Rugby Football League. Together, they designed a range of resources to promote health, happiness and social connection.

Unique accessible guides were shared across the care sector, from a World Cup 'Arts & Activities Toolkit' to 'Active At Home' – an interactive guide to adapted exercise. The tournament also inspired new ways to have fun within the constraints of the 'new normal', such as gardening projects and walking clubs.

New innovations for digital delivery were created. The charity developed an exciting programme of accessible online activities, delivered by their partners via Zoom. From dance classes led by coaches from Leeds Rhinos, to Arts and Crafts programmes hosted by Liverpool's creative hub, The Bluecoat. There are a host of exciting sessions on offer. These have united care and support services across the UK to enjoy new experiences and good times together. With the excitement of the Rugby League World Cup inspiring many of these programmes, they have given hundreds of people a vision for a happier 2021.

John Hughes, Director of Partnerships and Communities at Community Integrated Care, said: "The pandemic has been devastating in many ways, but it has also inspired us to develop new

ideas and better innovations. Wanting to rise to the challenges of the crisis, we have worked with our partners to share our collective skills, resources and ideas to make a difference together. We have learned so much and will build upon the best of this as we exit this crisis.

"We are incredibly grateful to all of our partners. They have made an indescribable difference to our colleagues, the people we support, and many others across the sector and we will never forget that."



TOGETHER,
WE ACHIEVED:

3,089 km!

4,053,805
steps!

162,152 calories
burned!

"The pandemic has been devastating in many ways, but it has also inspired us to develop new ideas and better innovations."



CornwallCare

www.cornwallcare.com

01872 597777

Cornwall Care House, Truro

Business Park

Truro, Cornwall, TR4 9NY

Mia's Amazing Journey to John O'Groats

HIGHLY
COMMEDED

Ten-year-old Mia Richardson spent lockdown running to John O'Groats on her cross trainer – a 1,347km 'magic' journey from Land's End that raised more than £18,500 for Cornwall Care's Blackwood House in Camborne.

Mia's mum, Bernie, has worked as a carer for Cornwall Care for six years. Prior to Coronavirus restrictions, Mia also visited the home regularly.

"She has always enjoyed going in and sitting with residents," said her father Dan. "She has raised money for them in the past by making cupcakes but decided she wanted to buy a Magic Table."

Before the pandemic, Mia enjoyed going to the local gym with her mum. That's wasn't possible during lockdown, so she started using her family's cross trainer to help her keep fit.

"We did home schooling in the morning and exercised around lunchtime," said Dan. "We knew publicity was key, so we let local media know what we were doing all along the virtual route that we had mapped out at home. That resulted in large amounts of coverage – including more than 20 TV and radio interviews." There were also celebrity endorsements from actress Thandie Newton, physicist Professor Brian Cox and Olympians Ben Ainslie, Jo Pavey and Hannah Cockcroft who all messaged their support and donated.

Mia ran the final 10k of her incredible journey in front of a socially distanced audience of family friends, care home staff and residents at Blackwood House in June. Cornwall's Lord Lieutenant, Colonel Edward Bolitho, was on hand to present her with a special medal to mark her incredible achievement and other gifts included flowers, cake and her favourite ice-cream.

"We can't even begin to describe how proud we are," said Mia's mum Bernie. "She has never complained about getting on the cross trainer each day and threw herself whole-heartedly into her fundraising mission from the start. She set off with the aim of raising £500 towards the £7,000 cost of an interactive Magic Table for residents and ended up buying two - plus a greenhouse - outright!"

Despite all the attention, Mia kept her focus firmly on her chosen cause.

"It's all been for the Blackwood residents," she said. "You can do different things with the Magic Tables and they're really good for helping people communicate in a



"The pandemic has been a very challenging time for my whole team, but Mia has helped us all stay positive. We can't thank her and her family enough."

fun way. I found going on the cross trainer easy at the start, but it did get harder. I did a little dance whenever I got a donation and am really happy to have raised so much money."

Blackwood is one of 16 homes run by the charity Cornwall Care.

"What Mia did was absolutely amazing," said Cornwall Care CEO Anne Thomas.

Young People Support Care Home

GuildCare 

www.guildcare.org

01903 528600

Methold House, North Street,
Worthing,
BN11 1DU

Worthing charity Guild Care's Caer Gwent nursing home received a helping hand from a group of ten young Worthing volunteers.

The volunteers, all aged 16, spent a whole summer's day at Caer Gwent cleaning and repainting the home's garden furniture and railings.

The help was set up by Concordia, an international Brighton-based charity where the students are all involved in its National Citizen Service (NCS) programme.

Kevin Burke, Caer Gwent Manager, said: "We're really very grateful to all the volunteers who did a fantastic job improving the garden furniture which is regularly used by our residents. So, a big thank you from all of us."

Fiona Callendar, Head of Volunteering at Concordia, said: "Concordia has been running NCS for many years - this year was exceptional in so many ways. We are pleased to be able to continue to ensure that young people are able to support their local community through projects like this one with Guild Care."

Lila, one of the volunteers, said:

"Our GCSEs got cancelled so it's not been the best time for us, but it's been nice for some of us to get back together again and I feel good giving something back to the community."





www.hestia.org
+44 (0) 20 7378 3100
Maya House, 134-138
Borough High Street London
SE1 1LB

The G.R.O.W. Project



The G.R.O.W. Project was started by residents and staff of Lynton Terrace to create opportunities for building skills, increasing wellbeing and progressing in their recovery journey. But residents started to see even more opportunities to connect with their community by sharing knowledge and produce grown in the garden.

The ethos of the project is based on residents' ideas about the most



important values of recovery; Gratitude, Resilience, Optimism and Wisdom.

● Gratitude Space

Residents creatively express what they are thankful for by painting stones and wood to leave in their gratitude space, and add to over time.

● Resilience Patch

Residents create Resilience Patch, where they grow plants that are as resilient as they are, able to thrive whatever the weather.

● Optimism Mural

Residents express what hope looks like to them, in a large scale mural.

● Wisdom Garden

Residents use signs around the garden to share their knowledge, what grows there and about wildlife including 'helpful pests.' Residents run sessions each week for members of the community to drop in to the garden and increase their skills, knowledge and take home some free produce.

The project will also include outdoor gym equipment, a sensory garden and residents, volunteers and staff will grow and harvest fresh produce both in their own garden and a local allotment. The produce will be used within Lynton Terrace and donated to community members.

The benefits are:

- » Spending time with nature has been proven by research to help mental health and physical health.

- » Gardening gives people a sense of achievement, and builds confidence and self-esteem.
- » People can acquire skills, knowledge and experience that could lead to a lifetime passion or a career.
- » Fresh, organic produce will be grown and eaten by residents, as well as donated to members of the community.
- » The garden and its features are specifically designed with good mental health as the focus.
- » The project affords lots of opportunities for people to build connections and support networks among their community.

Visitors will be able to come to the free Wisdom Garden sessions, where they can learn more about gardening (including plants, wildlife and 'helpful pests'), get advice for their own garden or allotment and take some free organic produce home with them.

Members of the community will be able to apply to volunteer for the G.R.O.W. project, which will involve taking part in gardening (both in the garden at Lynton Terrace and their local allotment), activities and being trained to volunteer for the Wisdom Garden sessions.

There is a place for everyone at the G.R.O.W. project, no matter the level of ability. Members of the community will be able to volunteer to transport fresh produce to people or services that cannot travel. Plus, they can use the G.R.O.W. project to socialise and develop connections.

Community Spirit Shines Throughout The Pandemic



www.hica-uk.com

(01482) 581000

1 Anchor Court, Frances Street
Hull, East Yorkshire, HU2 8DT

While the current COVID-19 situation has had, and continues to have, a huge impact on everyone in the country, there has been some shining positives that have helped make the situation more bearable.

At HICA we have been constantly touched by the generosity of community spirit as the local public made very clear that the residents in care homes are very much in people's minds.

Almost daily we were hearing stories of wonderful donations being made to our homes. Homes were delighted to receive fish and chips for residents, pizzas for staff. Cleaning products and PPE were donated in abundance along with many treats to help take residents minds off the situation.

And it wasn't just the care homes who received donations.

Across the domiciliary care offices donations came in to help the care workers in the community. HICA at Home in Hull received so many items they were able to put together gift bags for every care worker.

Over 100 gift bags were filled with items that had been donated by local companies and management then hand delivered the gift bags to all their many home carers during their own time.

There were a wide variety of items included in the gift bag such as pens, hand cream, moisturising masks, lip balm, hand sanitiser, and various snacks. Among the many companies that donated are Asda, and Tiger

Leisure. To add an element of fun all the bags also contained a scratch card and a strip of raffle tickets.

The feedback from the staff teams on the receiving end of the gift bags was very positive.

The HICA Group would like to say a HUGE thank you to all the companies, families and friends of HICA and local individuals who went out of their way to help improve the lives of HICA's service users and the dedicated teams who provide the services at this most difficult time.



At HICA we have been constantly touched by the generosity of community spirit as the local public made very clear that the residents in care homes are very much in people's minds.





www.mha.org.uk
01332 296200
Epworth House
Stuart Street, Derby
DE1 2EQ

Volunteer Sheila is One of MHA's Hidden Heroes

#HiddenHeroes



Volunteer Sheila Tatum has been named as one of a national charity's Hidden Heroes for supporting a Coventry care home during the pandemic.

Sheila is a former palliative nurse who worked for Methodist Homes (MHA) for 12 years until her retirement in 2015. But her dedication to MHA Abbey Park care home meant she

continued to support the home as a volunteer, helping with training and audits.

When the home closed to visitors in early March, Sheila took the brave decision to continue coming in to the home, despite being at high risk if she was to contract Coronavirus.

Since then, Sheila has been going in to MHA Abbey Park most days to support the team and residents, often being found cleaning or offering support to all staff. She has cleaned equipment, deep cleaned infected units, answered telephones, offered a befriending service to vulnerable staff who have been shielding, offering to do their shopping and collect prescriptions, as well as supporting staff emotionally.

MHA Abbey Park manager Tina Thompson said: "In our worst period, we had around half of our team off due to the virus and a high number of our residents were affected by COVID-19, yet Sheila still came in to support us despite the high risk to herself.

"These were some of our darkest days in the home, and even more when we were sadly losing some of our residents to the infection, but Sheila's empathy and understanding for staff was invaluable. On one occasion I thanked her for coming in and helping and her response was 'No. Thank you for giving me a purpose...'. I have no words she is truly inspirational."

Sheila is now one of MHA's Hidden Heroes, a campaign which aims to highlight the work of people in the charity by sharing their stories across social media using Hidden Heroes.

Commented Sheila: "I felt the need to support my friends and colleagues during this crisis. It also gave me a purpose to my time, when I would have otherwise been isolated during lockdown. Hence, I had the time and opportunity to help."

"I am so proud of all of my team but for a volunteer to dedicate so much of her own time to us is truly remarkable."



Supporting Stronger Communities



www.oakleatrust.co.uk
01539 735025

Second Floor, East Wing,
Station House, Station Road
Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 6RY
United Kingdom

Oaklea Trust provides care and support to disadvantaged communities across the north of England. We also run a social enterprise in the rural Eden Valley of Cumbria; when lockdown hit, we ensured our community cafe was able to deliver food and other essentials (like medical supplies, PPE, prescriptions, etc).

Our Marketing Manager Simon got hold of a bus and he and his 14-year-old son Rowan started delivering freshly prepared food from the Appleby Hub to those who were shielding or isolated. As school was also shut, young Rowan ended up assisting with this venture for nearly six months (this garnered much praise from his school and the wider community for his volunteer role.)

The enterprise captured the hearts* and minds of people of all ages and we provided a valuable source of contact - both physical and virtual (and nutritious) on our daily rounds. In a very sparsely populated rural area, we may have been the only human contact individuals were getting during the height of the pandemic.



Many people said it was a 'lifeline' service for them, as normal forms of support had been withdrawn or couldn't make it due to Coronavirus restrictions.

Rowan was even invited to write a blog about his exploits for the Yorkshire Dales National Park website (he is a volunteer Young Ranger) to illustrate what young people locally were up to during the pandemic. This can be found on the Yorkshire Dales blog.

In another lockdown, we expect to resurrect the service - as it

proved a huge hit with our communities. The Oaklea charity mantra is all about 'supporting stronger communities' and this was a living, breathing example of this (locally sourced and ready-made food as well).

*A local author even wrote a poem and eulogy on our exploits and it attracted the attention of people far and wide.





www.osjct.co.uk
0800 988 8133

1 Des Roches Square Witney
Oxfordshire OX28 4BE

Introducing Clive, One of The Fantastic Volunteers at Chestnut Court

Clive has provided Chestnut Court with brilliant support and memories during his time volunteering with us.

The volunteers at The Orders' of St John Care Trust (OSJCT) play a crucial role in supporting the home teams, particularly over the past few months.

Clive has been volunteering at Chestnut Court for two years and he is incredibly popular with the team and residents throughout the home.

Reflecting on his reason for becoming a volunteer at Chestnut Court, Clive said: "I decided to volunteer at Chestnut to stay involved with everything going on at the home. My wife lives in one of the households, so this also gives me the chance to see her before I start the working day and before I leave to go home."

During his time at Chestnut Court, Clive helps at the home around three to four times per week. He has built up a bit of a routine for his visits.

"On Monday, I do 'Men's Club' – so this gives me the chance to go around and speak with the gentlemen throughout the home. There is a gentleman in one household that I now play dominoes with every Monday. On a Wednesday I do a singalong for one of the households, Friday is Bingo and Saturday I do a singalong over two households."

Over the past two years, Clive has made some fantastic memories at Chestnut Court and he has found volunteering incredibly rewarding. It is therefore no surprise that

Clive would wholeheartedly recommend volunteering at an OSJCT care home to anyone.

"Volunteering at Chestnut Court has been a great experience for me. It was very easy to get involved. I had to get my DBS done and I have now signed up for weekly COVID-19 tests. It has given me a routine each week and I have also found it very flexible with the ability to choose the days and hours that suit me best. There are a wide range of activities you can get involved with to help out the home."

"My favourite thing about volunteering is making a difference to someone's day, I think it's so lovely to take someone back to a special moment in their life. Especially those living with dementia. If I had to pick a favourite memory from my time here, it would be my Saturday singalongs with our residents. It's very rewarding to see them all getting involved and enjoying themselves."



Chance Discovery Helps Two Volunteers Maintain Contact With Shottermill House



www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk

(0300) 303 1400

175 Tower Bridge Road

London, SE1 2AL

One morning Norman Allen, who lives at Shottermill House, Surrey, with his wife Wenda, spotted a knothole in the garden boundary fence. Next door live Elizabeth and Ken Lockwood, long-standing supporters and volunteers at the home.

that a part of our lives is missing."

Elizabeth and her husband Ken have been as much at home in Shottermill House as in their own house next door, with Elizabeth

"We feel bereaved. We are missing our chats and our residents."

Peeping through the knothole on impulse, Norman saw Elizabeth and Ken sitting in their garden having a cup of coffee in the sunshine, and he called out to them through the fence. Ken fetched a step-ladder and he and Norman chatted over the fence, relaying Elizabeth's comments from the ground, all the while keeping a good social distance.

Our volunteers haven't been able to visit as usual during lockdown, which has been hard on them. Most have been coming into the home for many years, and they have made lasting friendships with residents.

Most are retired and had to self-isolate anyway, but regardless, they were mandatorily locked out when the lockdown began in March. For weeks and weeks, they've been missing the companionship and of their regular visits. Elizabeth Lockwood echoed many when she said: "We feel bereaved. We are missing our chats and our residents. We've been part of Shottermill House for over 30 years, and we feel

even relying on Shottermill's visiting hairdresser for having her hair done.

Now both in their nineties, Elizabeth and Ken have been part of the life of the home since it was built in 1990. They



donated part of an L-shaped piece of their land in the planning stage to make the grounds a good shape and size.

For years they've been on the devotions rota, often playing hymn duets on the two pianos that used to stand in the main lounge. They've prayed with staff and residents and organised events and coffee mornings.

They also helped arrange fundraising events, and jars of Elizabeth's homemade marmalade have raised hundreds of pounds over the years. Everything was abruptly cut off in March, when the government announced lockdown and isolation, leaving the Lockwood's bereft.

However, since Norman discovered the knothole in the fence, things have changed. Now, Elizabeth and Ken enjoy a chat with Norman most days, that is, when it's not raining.

They're still looking forward to the time when they'll be able to go back into the home and see all the residents

Luton Care Home Thanks Volunteers For Their Kindness During The Pandemic



www.quantumcare.co.uk
01707 393293

Quantum Care 4 Silver Court
Watchmead Welwyn Garden
City Hertfordshire
AL7 1TS

Trefoil House care home in Luton has been overwhelmed by the support of their volunteers during the Coronavirus pandemic and want to thank them for their generosity and kindness.

Helen Irons, the Activities Co-ordinator said: "The last few months have been challenging for everybody, but the support we have received from our volunteers has been amazing, and has made such a difference to us all.

"Volunteers are a massive part of our everyday lives, but since the lockdown measures were introduced, they have been unable to visit and have therefore not been able to help in the ways they normally would. Despite this, they have been in regular contact to let us know that they are thinking about us, and that has meant so much to everybody. In return, we and have sent them cards and messages from the residents and the team to let them know that they are missed.

"Volunteers Mick and Rob who run our O'Brien's bar evenings have been messaging us regularly to let us know they are missing us as much as we are missing them. The residents know them as the "Thursday Boys" and often ask after them. They love to see Mick in his purple wig dancing with his inflatable guitar, and they enjoy Rob's rather generous measures!

"The volunteers known as the Gardening Club have also been a very important part of our journey here at Trefoil House. Unable to visit, they have been really keen to ensure that the garden still looks pretty and

is a tranquil and a relaxing place to be. They have donated plants and planters to the home that come with handwritten diagrams on how and where to plant them. They have also grown plants for the staff at Trefoil House to have in their own homes and gardens and our teams have been so grateful for such a lovely, kind gesture.

"Although she has been unable to come into the building or gardens, our amazing Gardening Club member Chris has been tending to the plants outside the front of the building and we have a stunning array of flowers. She has also been sending in activities and resources to keep the residents busy and engaged. Another volunteer Julie planted a beautiful afternoon tea flower and has donated flowers and plants for us to use. She also gathered together a group of relatives, who surprised us by making a 'Thank You Trefoil' rainbow banner which they unveiled one Thursday evening when many of them arrived to clap for our carers. It was a very emotional moment with tears all round.

"In addition, the Watering Club have been keeping in touch. We are also looking forward to the day when Linda and her puppets can come back into the home along with John and Janet for a little 'Music Madness'.

"We miss every one of our volunteers, each one providing something different to our home, but each one very important in enriching the lives of our residents in such special ways. We want to thank them all from the very bottom of our hearts and hope to see them all very soon."



Communities Step-up to Help Veterans' Care Homes During Pandemic



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

www.starandgarter.org

020 8481 7676

Royal Star & Garter
15 Castle Mews, Hampton,
Middlesex, TW12 2NP

Royal Star & Garter has been able to draw on the love and support of its local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The charity, which has Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe, has always benefitted from close ties with its neighbours. This includes enjoying visits from local schools and nurseries, [nearby cadets](#) and military organisations, and going on trips to attractions and landmarks in the area.

However, the charity has been bowled over by the support it has received since the spread of the virus caused the Homes to close their doors to visitors in March this year.

Aware that residents would be missing visits from loved ones, volunteers and entertainers, Royal Star & Garter launched its hugely successful [Letters with Love campaign](#) in March. The campaign came about after the residents asked for letters and drawings, saying it "brightens up our days". It resulted in a slew of correspondence from people of all ages, and was warmly welcomed by Royal Star & Garter residents.

And the [Share a Smile campaign](#), which launched in June, invited members of the public to send in homemade videos aimed at bringing cheer to veterans cared for by the charity.

Also in March, the Surbiton Home was inundated with donations after [appealing for toiletries for its residents](#). The charity's Homes in Solihull and Surbiton also received free meals from local restaurants and takeaways.

In April, Kingston Police showed their support by visiting the Surbiton Home to take part in the weekly clap for NHS staff and key workers.

Hand soap and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) have also been donated to the Homes from local groups and schools, including Pipers Corner School, which gave neighbouring High Wycombe Home 40 face shields.

The community has also taken part in fundraising for Royal Star & Garter during this time. Lockdown meant the cancellation of mass-participation fundraising events such as the London Marathon and Prudential RideLondon cycle ride. As a result, members of the public [helped raise £15,000](#) for the charity through the 2.6 Challenge. Among those to fundraise were the great grandchildren of a High Wycombe resident.

Senior Community Fundraiser Lauren Baker said: "We've been amazed at people's kindness, love and generosity over these difficult months. Support

has come in all different shapes and sizes, from toiletry donations, letters, takeaway dinners and fundraising. It's allowed us to continue providing exceptional care to our residents."

"Support has come in all different shapes and sizes, from toiletry donations, letters, takeaway dinners and fundraising. It's allowed us to continue providing..."

Senior Community Fundraiser
Lauren Baker



Furloughed Worker Puts Up Hand For NHS Volunteer Responders

ROYAL
VOLUNTARY
SERVICE

www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk
0330 555 0310

Beck Court, Cardiff Gate Business Park
Cardiff, CF23 8RP

At the start of the pandemic, Anthony Easton was placed on furlough from his job at Plymouth University. Despite finding this difficult at the start, Anthony knew he wanted to do throw himself into doing something meaningful to help those most seriously affected by COVID-19.

When the call-up came for people to apply to be NHS Volunteer Responders, Anthony said it was “a no brainer”, and he was excited to receive his first task.

Seven months on and Anthony is one of the programme’s most active volunteers, completing over 550 tasks for people in need in his community.

“It’s an absolute honour” said Anthony. “Some days I receive up to 20 alerts, so it’s like a full time job, but I absolutely love everything I’m doing. I’m naturally a people person, so I really enjoy dropping off shopping for people because it means we have a little chat from a distance. I really see first-hand the difficulties that people face.”

Despite being one of the most active NHS Volunteer Responders, Anthony says that this “never feels like a burden and that “making people who are lonely

smile and feel better is reward enough”.

Anthony has predominantly been picking up food shopping and collecting prescriptions and although it has been an incredibly rewarding experience, he has also had some difficult conversations.

“Sometimes when I turn up with the shopping people get really overwhelmed. Some people feel so emotional that they start crying. There have even been a few times when people have told me how frightened they were thinking they might not be able to have a meal. It really hits home how much the volunteer support impacts people’s lives.”

To some affected by this pandemic, it can be hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel, but Anthony continues to go above and beyond in his role to make people feel better. He says “I always try to have some friendly banter. One woman asked me for flat peaches and I was so confused as I thought she wanted me to sit on them on my way back! We had such a laugh about it.”

Having now gone back to work, Anthony isn’t able to dedicate as much time to volunteering, but is still keeping

himself on-duty on the app whenever he has a spare moment saying “as long as there are people out there who need me, I will be here for them.”



“Seven months on and Anthony is one of the programme’s most active volunteers, completing over 550 tasks for people in need in his community.”

Rainbow Trail Spreads Messages of Joy



www.sanctuary-care.co.uk

0800 917 0478

Cameo House, Chamber Court, Castle Street, Worcester, WR1 3ZQ

Thanks to the Rainbow Trail that gripped the nation, Sanctuary Care's residents and teams used this national initiative to remain creative, active and connected to their neighbourhoods, by displaying beautiful rainbows and messages in their windows.

Starting in Peterlee, the team and residents at Birchwood Court Residential Care Home spread joy and hope to their neighbours with a handmade beautiful message to passers-by.

The message, which was a stunning rainbow made using the residents' and team's handprints with the words 'After the storm comes a rainbow of hope', was proudly displayed for the wider community to enjoy, with the aim of simply uplifting spirits and inspiring their neighbours and friends.

Home manager, Katie Jowers, said: "Our amazing residents and teams across Sanctuary Care have shown that, yes, we are in a global pandemic, but we can still come together, share exceptional moments and still enrich lives."

Elsewhere, Glenfairn House Care Home in Ayr also joined the Rainbow Trail. Glenfairn's rainbows were joined by individual messages penned by the home's fabulous residents, including 'Sending love, hugs and kisses', 'We can fight this, stay strong' and 'Wash hands'.

But the Rainbow Trail was not the only way Sanctuary Care's residents remained connected to their neighbours. In the height of the virus when care home visiting restrictions were in place across the UK, Sanctuary's teams had to think outside the box for their residents to still have a community voice. And similar to the Rainbow Trail, this involved coming together to display messages of wit, advice and solidarity.

Just like the team at Lammas House Residential Care Home who came together to create a makeshift sign, with a beautiful and simple message to their community and for their residents' loved ones: Stay strong, stay safe.

Home manager Rukmi Silva added, "It was a heartbreaking time for our loved ones. We knew we were continuing to deliver outstanding care to our residents, but we wanted to do something for them."

And the community messages didn't stop there! Residents from Wantage Nursing Home shared messages with loved ones to reassure them they were happy and okay, including Heather Cottrell, who said: "To all my children. Missing you very much. I love you all."

And finally, residents from Bartley Green Residential Care Home in Birmingham, were busy spending their time sharing their pearls of wisdom during the pandemic.

Their advice was clear, simple and effective – including: "Stay safe and have a cuppa!" Messages, which were photographed and shared with loved ones, as well as displayed in the home's window, proved to be a real talking point for the residents and the home's community.

Home Manager Leanne Carter concluded: "To many, sharing words of wisdom in a window doesn't mean much, but for our residents it truly meant the world. It meant they were reaching out to others and they were excited to share with their loved ones a new message for them to see."



Volunteers of All Ages Make Good Things Happen

Sheffcare
enriching lives

www.sheffcare.co.uk

0114 2808888

Springwood House
192 Penrith Road, Sheffield
S5 8UG



Schoolboy Jack Oadley received a hero's welcome when he gave a cheque for almost £1,848 to our Knowle Hill home.

Jack, who is 12, completed a ten-mile lockdown run to raise money for the home where his 88-year-old great aunt Pat Tory is a resident.

He ran 12 times around a local playing field after hearing about the care 88-year-old Pat has received from the home; when he arrived at the home to present a cheque for £1,848, staff came out to give him a special round of applause.

Another one of our volunteers, in fact our oldest volunteer, Mr Brian Birks took bigger steps to maintain effective volunteering.

Once the lockdown was relaxed enough, he gathered unwanted items from friends and neighbours and had a garden sale and a car boot sale to raise money for Sheffcare and NHS.

In addition to this, before the pandemic, he had come up with an idea to help our residents keep in good spirits with the

power of music. Brian had read about the wonderful effect music has on our brains and this is particularly noticeable for people living with dementia.

Brian sourced some speakers that have been converted into music players by a community group called Aspire – a community based group who support vulnerable people in the community – an additional nice touch.

Each speaker has a USB port at the back to play music and it also works as a radio. Brian has gifted all ten of Sheffcare care homes with one of these speakers, each one packaged-up with a wide selection of music. This music that has been purchased and loaded on the USBs.

USB musical selections are:

1. A Large Reminiscence playlist (over one hundred songs)
2. A Party playlist
3. A Musicals playlist
4. A Christmas playlist
5. A Hymns playlist

The speaker also has a port to add

a microphone, which could be used to announce things for when you have social events in the future and also as a Karaoke speaker.

These speakers are adding more accessible portable music for all occasions to all the care homes and have been very well received by the activity workers.

Each care home is sending a note of appreciation to Brian and he is noticeably touched to see that his idea has had such a positive effect.

This is such a lovely example of volunteering in such a proactive way in these difficult times. As well as a demonstration of generosity and kindness.

Our volunteers show that in times of difficulty, good things can happen.

“Brian has gifted all ten of Sheffcare care homes with one of these speakers, each one packaged-up with a wide selection of music.”



St Monica Trust

www.stmonicastrust.org.uk

0117 949 4000

Cote Lane, Westbury on Trym
Bristol, BS9 3UN

The SMT Creative Club

Early on in the COVID-19 pandemic of Spring 2020, the Trust invited its community (residents, relatives, staff and volunteers) to participate in the SMT Creative Club.

Inspired by Grayson Perry's Art Club (Channel 4), the Club was a chance to get creative, boost well-being and bust the boredom of lockdown.

We invited everyone, however artistic (or not), to get creative.

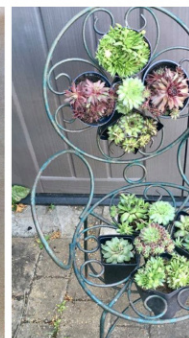
Initially the Club was met with concerns about how busy our colleagues were at that time, why would they get involved when they were so overwhelmed with the realities of COVID in a care environment? And it was important for us that everyone felt included.

However, we underpinned the campaign launch with evidence around how taking part in art and creative activity can have so many benefits to mental and emotional well-being, confidence, feelings of achievement and calm and were delighted with the response.

The varied and inspiring forms of artwork – from poetry to knitted Colonel Toms and painted stones - were shared on the Trust's [Our Creative Community](#) hub, an easily accessible page on our website to help keep our communities connected throughout the pandemic.

We would like to thank all the talented St Monica Trust colleagues for their wonderful contributions and a special thank you to Rachael Dutton, Head of Research and Intelligence, whose tenacity and resilience made this happen. And to our comms team colleagues Simon Lexton,

Marketing and Communications Manager and Ben Dunn, Senior Digital Communications Executive for enabling the Community Hub idea to become a reality, and is much appreciated by all our residents and community.



“

We are truly lucky to have such a dedicated and creative team member such as yourself and the residents together with all the staff really appreciate all your support - thank you!”



Virtual Job Clubs



www.surreychoices.com

01483 806806

Fernleigh Activity Centre,
Fernleigh Close,
Walton-on-Thames, Surrey,
KT12 1RD

Surrey Choices hold job clubs for disabled and autistic people to support them on their journeys into employment by helping them with CV writing, applying for jobs, interview practice and to learn about different roles and sectors.

These are important sessions, not just for the practical tips and advice, but also from a social and motivational point of view too.

The team were keen to keep this support going, so used the Coronavirus pandemic as an opportunity to adapt their job clubs to being online. They have used Zoom to create bespoke meetings for disabled and autistic people to take part in to continue helping them on their employment journeys.

They have had a number of guest speakers from different industries including the media, interior design, buyers and retail assistants. The participants are able to ask them questions about their roles and use the breakout rooms function in Zoom, for individuals and small groups to explore job opportunities and get advice on job seeking.

The online job clubs have been a huge

success in keeping the people we support motivated and enthusiastic about job seeking and to keep learning about the opportunities available to them in the job market.

It has helped people to connect with other job seekers and to keep in touch with their Employment Support Specialists.

Alongside this, the online job clubs also played an important role in supporting people who were struggling with their mental health due to isolation throughout lockdown. The job clubs became a real lifeline for people to interact and connect with each other and set goals to focus on.

Some of the disabled job seekers have feedback that they have found the job clubs to be more of a benefit to those held in community venues. They lead the way in providing supported employment in a creative and inclusive style.

As lockdown measures relaxed, the team continued to provide some of their online job clubs for those who have benefited from them.





Sussex
Housing
& Care

www.sussexhousing.org.uk

01323 875240

Ronald Simson House

24 Sutton Avenue, Seaford

East Sussex, BN25 4LG

Peter & Elijah's Story

“Peter was very moved by this action and shed a tear of joy...”

This is a story about two strangers, an elderly man and a young boy; they met by chance, and have continued to bond by writing letters to one another. Peter is a resident at Saxonwood Care Home in Battle, East Sussex. Elijah is a young pupil at Battle and Langton Primary School, next door to Saxonwood.

They first met when Battle and Langton pupils joined us for a game of target sports and to chat to one another about themselves. The children really did like listening to all their stories. Target sports is Peter's favourite game and one day Peter and Elijah were playing very well together, laughing and joking around.

After this we received a message from Elijah's mum saying how fond he was of Peter and that he would like to write him a letter and would this be okay for us to pass onto Peter? Elijah wrote to Peter about all the things he likes and asked Peter about his favourite things, this was the start of a beautiful friendship.

Supported by a Saxon wood carer, Peter wrote back to Elijah and they continued to talk about their likes and dislikes. During this time when Saxonwood's doors were closed to visitors, conversations like this with the local community makes a tough time a little easier. Elijah wrote to Peter as he was quite concerned about him and how he was feeling, asking if he needed anything during this time.

Peter was very moved by this action and shed a tear of joy with the thought of a young boy caring about him with everything that is going on in the world, he asked why him? With the letter, Elijah and his brother Malachi had created lovely pictures of rainbows and ants in their nests. Elijah included a drawing of him and Peter; Peter asked for both pictures to be hung on his bedroom wall.

Peter folded up the letter and placed it in his top pocket and said that he wanted to keep this close to his heart, he really felt very moved by such a touching act by someone so young, that he'd only met once.



From Furloughed Jeweller to Volunteer Village Shop Worker



whiteleyvillage.org.uk
01932 842360

Whiteley Homes Trust
The Eliza Palmer Hub
Whiteley Village, Walton-on-Thames
Surrey KT12 4ES

"Some volunteers really do make all the difference and Nigel is definitely one of those - willing to turn his hand to anything", said Carol Raynsford, who manages the Whiteley Homes Trust's Village Shop. "He's great fun to have around too – and is the best salesman I've ever met!"

Nigel Bradshaw responded to the charity's urgent call for volunteers back in April. Like tens of thousands of others across the country, he was initially furloughed from his job at a London jeweller and later made redundant. But Nigel was determined to make good use of his unexpected spare time and joined the volunteer team at Whiteley, where he was later asked to support the charity's village shop.

Whiteley Village, which is owned and managed by the charitable Trust, has around 450 older residents, who are mostly low income, with around two thirds living independently. At the height of the pandemic the Trust established a daily grocery and hot meal delivery service for residents supported by staff and volunteers.

Carol said: "The delivery services were a lifeline for some and I'm sure it helped protect the Village, (which to date has only had three confirmed cases of COVID-19 and only one death), as it meant residents didn't have to run the

risk of shopping in town when online supermarket slots were so scarce.

"Nigel was a key part of that service at such a stressful time for residents and staff, he was willing to do whatever was needed. He's been such a help to me personally too and was able to deputise for me when necessary, which helped enormously at exceptionally busy times.

"Now lockdown has relaxed we've been able to welcome residents back into the shop and Nigel is a firm favourite with the customers. It's still an anxious time for everyone but Nigel lifts everyone's spirits with his great sense of humour, and no one can sell the bargain biscuits that are about to reach their sell by date like he can!"

Modestly Nigel said: "My desire to support Whiteley Village wasn't entirely selfless, as it helped give structure to my week after I was furloughed. I started helping in the shop by calling residents to take payment for their orders, soon I was helping take the orders and then I was working in the shop as lockdown measures eased.

"It's extremely rewarding to be a point of contact and conversation for residents who may not see many people. For example, it was fantastic talking with Colin about



his life in the North West during the war, because that's where I grew up.

"It's also great to be part of the team and always enjoyable to join in the chat and jokes. I have a reputation for being able to sell produce that is about to go out of date, but the truth is I love a bargain and passing them on to the villagers!"





KEEPING IT FUN



Keeping it Fun

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Accord

www.accordgroup.org.uk

0300 111 7000

178 Birmingham Road

West Bromwich, West Midlands

B70 6QG

Amber Wood Dementia Centre of Excellence Keeps Everyone Connected



Lockdown hit everyone hard, but it was especially difficult for those in care and their families. This was felt most when we sadly had to inform our residents' families, that following government guidelines, we were closing the doors to all visitors.

We needed to look to new ways to keep our residents and their families connected.

We started off by making Skype calls on a laptop, and quickly got a mobile phone to use for WhatsApp calls. This made such a difference as it enabled residents who couldn't get out of bed, to still be able to see and speak to their loved ones.

But we didn't stop there. We wanted to make the video calls more special and focused on happier topics.

We encouraged families to send us photos and videos of what they were doing so our residents could still feel involved in their lives. Videos were watched on repeat and photos were sent along with letters and cards and wonderful pictures from grandchildren.

These were so well received and everyone felt involved with the bread making, decorating and painting of rainbows. Tips were shared and residents were motivated to take part in activities so they could share their own stories during the catch-up video calls.

We created a weekly newsletter, sharing government guidelines and updates on what activities were going on at our scheme. The newsletter was a really useful way to communicate with residents' families. It meant we could ask for things to be sent-in, such as sun hats to wear in the garden, without making numerous phone calls.

Families felt more involved with the home and started to make donations of plants for the garden. Residents looked forward to doing things we could put in the newsletter, and families looked forward to reading it, and talking about the activities in their regular video calls.

Everyone reminisced about days gone by and dug-out old photo albums which were shared during the video calls. This really helped lift everyone's spirit and created lots of conversations about happier times.

As guidelines changed, we were able to introduce outdoor socially distanced visits. It was a very cheerful time as it meant so much to both our residents and their loved ones. Although it wasn't the same as normal because hugs had to be put on hold, it provided

a degree of much needed normality.

Feedback from families has been incredible. They have shown great support and gratitude for the level of communication and information sharing.

Families told us how video calls and social visits have been a lifeline and something to look forward to. They said it has been brilliant to be able to keep in touch, and seeing their loved ones faces made it much more personal and kept them feeling connected even though lockdown kept them apart.





www.ambient.org.uk
020 8502 3933
Unit 9, Bourne Court,
Unity Trading Estate, Southend
Road, Woodford Green
1G8 8HD

Stevie's Hair Raising Event

Stevie, a care worker on the Ambient Team at Gardenia House Care Home in Dartford, knew she wanted to make a difference to the older people supported at the home during the pandemic and brighten their days. But when she came into work on a summer's day in June, she did not expect to end the shift having agreed to take part in a 'hair'-raising event!

Care Home Manager, Nigel Odd, suggested that Stevie dye her head of flowing hair - every colour of the rainbow. This would be in tribute to the exceptional staff team and other keyworkers, including herself, who

have gone beyond the call of duty time and again throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Gardenia House had seen by now a few residents leave for hospital unwell with the virus, and return again to the care home completely recovered. Staff kept spirits high throughout these anxious times. They worked with numerous local companies during severe lockdown months, taking donations and ensuring that residents never felt isolated from their community; the constant reminder that they had not been forgotten about.

With all this in mind, Stevie shook hands on the rainbow hair-do. Starting at 10am on 6 July, the transformation took no less than five hours.

Stevie said: "We had to bleach my hair three times! At first I was nervous, I came into work that day shaking. But once we started, I was

really excited to see the results."

The residents at Gardenia were overwhelmed by Stevie's colourful makeover, and very touched by her act of dedication to them. Not only this, but Stevie's hair raised triple the original target amount, enabling Gardenia to spruce up the garden space with a gazebo and patio lights. This newly revamped space has proved particularly meaningful to residents for socially distanced visits with loved ones.

Thanks to Stevie's bright and bold endeavour, Gardenia House residents and the people that they love, now have a garden they can rely on to be comfortable, secure, and ready for making more memories with friends and loved ones.

"This would be in tribute to the exceptional staff team and other keyworkers, including herself, who have gone beyond the call of duty time and again throughout the COVID-19 crisis."

Talent Showcased at The Yorkshire Show



www.anchorhanover.org.uk
0800 731 2020
The Heals Building, Suits A & B
22-24 Torrington Place
London, WC1E 7HJ

The Yorkshire Show might have moved online because of the Coronavirus pandemic but five care homes run by not-for-profit provider Anchor Hanover organised their very own version on Zoom on Thursday 6 August.

Residents and their families vied for the top titles in a variety of competitions, including the largest vegetable challenge, best Yorkshire pudding, a dog show or most impressive flowers grown in their garden.

The five care homes that took part were The Manor House Harrogate, The Manor House Barnard Castle, Oulton Manor in Leeds, Wetherby Manor in Wetherby and The Manor House Knaresborough.

Residents were also entertained by films of Morris dancers and a horse show thanks to staff from Wetherby Manor which was broadcast on Zoom.

The day had special significance for Ernest Hewick, 85, who has lived at The Manor House Harrogate since June this year.

Ernest followed in his father's farming footsteps, and after leaving school at 15 years old, worked on several farms, working with horses, and ultimately got a job on the Ribston Estate in Walshford where he was promoted to foreman and where he worked until he retired in the year 2000 although he continued working part-time as a labourer until he was 70.

During the care home's Yorkshire Show, Ernest took part in the Wellie Wagging competition to see who could throw a boot furthest.

Ernest said: "I had a lovely

"The day brought back many memories. I worked for three generations of the Dent family while working on the Ribston Estate, and that's where I met my beautiful wife, Vera, who was employed as a nanny. We were married at Hunsingore Church and had four children."

time at the Yorkshire Show.

"Farming is still in my family and my grandson now works for the Dent family driving a tractor. But times have changed. When I was younger it would take 13 men to farm 400 acres but advances in technology mean two men can now farm 2,000 acres in the same amount of time."

"Unlike today's farms which specialise, Ribston Estate was mixed farming so I raised stock as well as producing crops. I used to shepherd 350 ewes and the Dents used to exhibit some of them and cows and pigs at the Wetherby show."

Helen Maude, Lifestyle Coordinator from The Manor House, said: "We organise a wide variety of meaningful activities for our residents, which includes visits to the Yorkshire Show."

"The residents were so disappointed when it was cancelled so we decided

to organise our own Yorkshire Show to showcase the great talent we have in Anchor's care homes, whether it is master bakers, talented dogs and their owners or keen gardeners."

"We also wanted to bring life in the country to our residents hence us organising films of local Morris dancers and different types of horses."

"It was such a fun day with everyone having such a great time, and it was an opportunity to bring back many happy memories for our residents."





A Serenade With A Difference At Amherst Court Care Home



'It's about thinking differently'

With care homes now under isolation for the safety of the residents and staff, with non-essential visits stopped and social distancing in place, it has been a time for rethinking how care homes ensure residents are still entertained and interacting with each other.

Staff at Amherst Court care home in Chatham have not let the current pandemic stand in the way of residents' day-to-day life at the home and have come up with some fantastic ideas that work within the social distancing rules.

On Thursday, 19 March musician Fred Clark played a set in the home's courtyard garden. Residents and staff could view the talented musician at a safe distance from their balconies, with plenty of room to have a dance and sing along!

The set was a great success which Fred kindly performed free of charge to Amherst Court.

On Monday, 23 March, the social distance serenades returned to Amherst Court with a number of musicians and volunteers playing in the sunshine in the pretty courtyard.

Marie Taylor, Activities Co-ordinator said: "Protecting residents and staff from Coronavirus is our main priority and focus and will continue to be for as long as it takes, but while we are doing that we want to ensure residents continue to feel comfortable, happy, settled and entertained at Amherst Court. We have all had to think outside the box as a staff team about how best we can introduce entertainment and activities, which keep to the rules on social distancing between residents, staff and entertainers.

"We came up with the idea of using the courtyard as a stage area to serenade everyone at the home, as musicians can do so at a safe distance.

"Last week's music session was a great success thanks to Fred Clark. We were overwhelmed with how much interest and engagement we generated on social media. I hope this idea will spark ideas with other homes to do something similar. Activities do not have to stop during this current crisis, it's just about thinking differently. We will continue to provide a community for our residents to support them to have a vibrant and fulfilling life while living at Amherst Court."

Bake Offs and art competitions have also been introduced at Amherst Court during these times of isolation as well as an increased accessibility for all residents to Facetime or Skype families and loved ones, something which was welcomed on Mothering Sunday.

"Thank you to Fred Clark and all the musicians who kindly volunteered their time and musical talents with us all at Amherst Court, we had a great time," concludes Marie.





www.belong.org.uk

01270 610666

Pepper House, Market Street
Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5DQ

Recreating Iconic Portraits and Dating Words of Advice From Octogenarians

Octogenarian 'life models' at the state-of-the-art Belong care village in Crewe recreated some of the world's most iconic portraits to celebrate National Day of Arts in Care Homes 2020 while subject to lockdown restrictions.

Captured on camera, the portraits are being used to create a fundraising calendar, donations for which will go towards purchasing a telescope for residents to enjoy.

Among the paintings captured include works from some of history's most renowned artists, including Picasso, Van Gogh and Grant Wood, spanning from 15th century Northern Renaissance to 1930s Modernism.

Natalie Ravenscroft, experience coordinator at Belong Crewe, who led the project, explained: "Many of our residents love art, and keeping everyone active with creative projects is a key part of what we do at Belong. Due to the ongoing lockdown restrictions, we wanted to do something extra special for Arts in Care Homes day, this year."

Belong colleagues stepped outside their usual roles to become stylists, make-up artists and photographers, working with residents and using recycled materials, props and face paints, to bring their characters to life. The subsequent photoshoot, which took eight hours over the course of two days, saw staff capturing their model's alter egos for the project.

Another resident, Gillian, 80, spoke of taking on the role of Frida Kahlo and her distinct facial features: "Look at my eyebrows! They are marvellous!"

All profits from the 2021 calendar will go towards the not-for-profit organisation's fundraising for residents' activities, with the team



American Gothic
by Grant Wood



Harry and June - Belong Crewe

For one of the more ambitious photos, Picasso's 'Portrait of Dora Marr', Jean, 85, commented

"The make-up tickled my face and felt so relaxing. I can't remember having my face painted – it looks bright and joyful."

aiming to use the funds to purchase a telescope to enable the village's residents to enjoy stargazing.

Another activity saw state-of-the-art Belong care village in Newcastle-under-Lyme residents' dating advice reach one million people during lockdown.

With decades of courtship behind them, the octogenarians decided it was time to pass on a few tips from their experience to young people embarking on the search for love. Support workers created a series of photographs showing residents holding up their words of wisdom.

The photographs, which were posted on the care village's Facebook page, have since been viewed by over a million people and received over 22,000 reactions, comments and shares.

Among those offering the benefit of their experience was Winnie Barnes, 89, who advised people going on a date to be mindful of their appearance: 'make sure you look nice.' Going to the cinema was the most popular recommendation for what to do on a first date from residents, including Brian Pugh, 84, who said: 'Take them to watch a nice picture.'



Support for life

www.ben.org.uk

01344 298100

Lynwood Court, Lynwood Village

Rise Road, Ascot

Berkshire, SL5 0FG



MAKING MEANINGFUL MOMENTS

BY ANTHONY BRANNEN, TOWN
THORNS CARE CENTRE, RUGBY



Town Thorns care centre is one of three residential care centres run by Ben. We provide compassionate, personalised care to our community of 60 residents, some of whom are relatively independent. Others are at various stages of dementia or frailty so we have a wide range of individual needs.

During the pandemic we've made a conscious push towards creating sensory experiences for our residents. I believe in making activities really meaningful, so they really connect and stimulate people's senses. We dance, we sing, we do karaoke – I'm not afraid of making a fool of myself and if I can make people laugh that's a definite win in my book!

Time outside has been really important. Not simply going outside but really engaging with nature, touching leaves, smelling flowers, noticing how the sunshine feels on your face, breathing in the fresh air, listening to birdsong – using all our senses to absorb how it feels to be outdoors.

It's about making each little thing outside an experience that you can react to – and we're getting our vitamin D too which is an added bonus. Ten minutes of a high-quality activity is worth an hour of something less engaging. We made Rice Krispie cakes the other day; it didn't take very long but people were licking chocolate off their hands and remembering when they were homemakers, so it was a lovely, quality moment.

While some of our residents are quite independent, others would be happy to sit in a chair all day. They might be happy doing that but it's not very good for them in the long run so we

find ways to engage them. We have a big iPad which we use to play games like jigsaws, hangman and quizzes. If we're doing a quiz, someone who you thought was having a nap will suddenly answer a question! So even if they're not directly involved, they're still engaged.

YouTube has a fantastic channel we use to play nostalgic old songs that remind residents of times gone by. We'll be enjoying a singalong and residents who don't usually join in these kinds of activities will come and sing too, so it brings people together.

We've streamed local church services online, so people haven't missed out on their Sunday worship – technology has been a godsend!

For residents to be able to video-call their families has been great too, and I think they see more of their lives that way. They get to see into their homes, see their pets, their children, their garden – they see more than they would if the person visited so there are upsides in amongst the challenges.

Without the usual visitors and families coming in, we're conscious that passing the time is harder so we've pulled together as a community. All the staff are working really well together. We've stepped up because our residents need us more than ever and if we're anxious they'll pick up on it so we make sure we're always cheerful and supportive.

We had a 100th birthday recently and recorded video messages from their family and friends which made it a really special day.

It's all about making meaningful moments and having fun along the way.

VE Day Anniversary Celebrations at Borough Care



www.boroughcare.org.uk
0161 475 0140
9 Acorn Business Park
Heaton Lane, Stockport
SK4 1AS

Residents at Borough Care's 11 homes for older people across Stockport marked the 75th Anniversary of VE Day in a variety of different ways, with the homes decked out in red, white and blue.

At a time when hospitality outlets had been closed down across the country, Residents at Bamford Close in Cale Green were perhaps the only people in the country to visit a pub to toast the war heroes.



Bamford Close has its very own pub in the grounds of the home and residents spent time there enjoying their favourite tipple.

At Bryn Haven in Brinnington, residents tucked into a three course lunch, followed by some great entertainment. The residents watched a live 1940's themed variety show, streamed via Facebook.

Over at Shepley House in Hazel Grove, everyone made the most of the lovely weekend weather with a party in the garden.

Residents at Meadway Court in Bramhall also celebrated with a special VE Day party. During the afternoon, they took the time to write messages to their loved ones, which were shared via social media.

Dr Mark Ward,
CEO at Borough Care, says:

“ Despite the challenges we faced during lockdown, our staff pulled out all the stops to ensure VE Day was celebrated. Our residents had a lovely day, with lots of laughter, singing and reminiscing.”

BrendonCare Filling Our Homes With Laughter

“We never get tired of doing little things for others, sometimes those little things occupy the biggest part of their hearts.”

Filling our homes with laughter Creativity, fun, innovation, care, kind-heartedness, companionship, honesty, friendship, entertainment, leadership, hard work, community relations, enthusiasm and decision maker - these are just some of the words that describe BrendonCare's amazing activities and care teams, even without a global pandemic.

In the past six months, when things have been tough, we have kept our residents motivated and our homes filled with laughter.

Lockdown caused our homes to respond and to adjust to a new way of thinking. Craft projects have supported the homes, whilst bringing together residents who are isolating through work that contributes towards a shared end result.

Woodhayes created a beautiful blossom tree, displayed in the hall. The Hand in Hand together project encouraged the homes to get a little messy and explore hand painting and crafts. Our September Recycling challenge has seen our own take on work from Banksy at Park Road and a crisp packet dress at Knightwood and fashion show at Stildon! A donation of funds enabled us to purchase bird feeders and feed for all of our homes, allowing us to bring us all closer to nature with our visiting parakeets at RGH.

Knightwood challenged themselves to walk to Lands End (around the garden). Making daisy chains, took the team back to basics. Woodhayes created a fairy garden, tidying up a rockery area and placing fairies and little gnomes.

Our gardens became the stage, as volunteers, community members

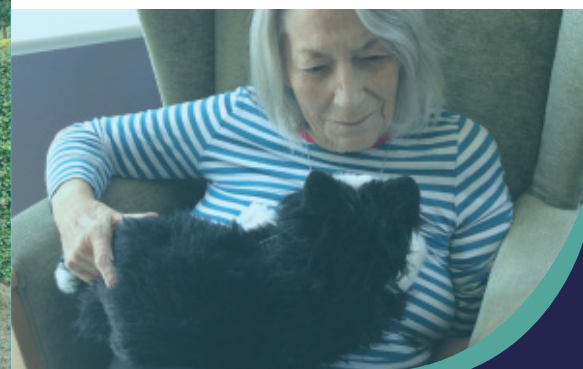
and entertainers visited to sing with the residents, brightening moods and bringing smiles. Easter, Father's Day, birthdays, anniversaries and themed days were still celebrated.

Wild West theme at Chiltern View has been a success as well as popular picnic week and afternoon tea at Meadway. The Easter Bunny even made an appearance at Otterbourne Hill.

We have had movie afternoons with documentaries too, whilst served pots of ice cream and toasted tea cakes for them to enjoy. Two furry robotic pets were welcomed at Froxfield. Our OMI interactive table at Alton used every day. All the staff have been getting involved, lounges have become salons, with hair curling and setting in rollers, nail painting and hand massages and the all-important finishing touches remembering a resident's favourite lipstick.

With new looks you need a new outfit, so a staff member popped out for a resident who wanted to shop, asking before they what colours and patterns they liked, almost like a fashion designer, a new shirt and blouse was chosen, she was delighted and felt very involved with the shopping experience.

No day is the same, the team have had to think on their feet, we may not always know what we will be doing but if there is something a resident has in mind that they would like to do we will try our best to be able to do it with them.



Care Home Activities Going Viral

By Jessica Corlett, Arts and Fitness
co-ordinator, Central & Cecil Housing Trust

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020 7922 5300

Cecil House, 266 Waterloo Road,
London, SE1 8RQ

As half of my role involves organising activities across our four London care homes, it was terribly sad to see our incredible programme of arts, fitness and outings suddenly cease in early March.

While each of the homes already runs their own daily activities – and continued to do so throughout COVID-19 – my role is to plug-in external facilitators, organise seaside and other special trips, develop special projects with charities, local schools and prestigious organisations such as the Royal Opera House.

At first, I worked furiously with some facilitators to develop special activity packs to supply the care teams with plenty of things to keep residents active and entertained. We bought lots of craft kits, puzzles, board games and more DVDs.

But something was missing.
We needed to go virtual!

We started gently and after bending the ear of our IT team, we got the lounge TVs set up and showed the care teams how to connect a laptop and use Skype.

The first session with our regular G-fitness instructor Georgia was a bit painful getting all homes connected. However, after battling through technical glitches, we had our first weekly session up and running; the residents absolutely loved seeing Georgia again. They responded well and got involved from the comfort of their own homes!

After a few weeks getting used to this class, we added a new class with Wim, our regular music therapy facilitator. He also went down a storm! We'd heard other care homes across

the country were struggling with similar initiatives, so we decided to also trial a one-off fitness class on Facebook Live, which attracted over 100 views. It was so well received we did it again.

For National Arts in Care Day, we teamed-up with Live Music Now for a special acoustic session. It attracted over 300 views, including other care homes.

Facebook Live aside, we've now added music and dance, bringing us to four virtual classes a week. It's not quite the same as being there, but our residents agree it's the next best thing. Importantly, it's given vital support to staff too.

By Jessica Corlett, Arts and Fitness
co-ordinator, Central & Cecil Housing
Trust

Here's what a few of our staff had to say:

“**The residents do engage with the online activities. They see the staff joining in having fun with the activities and they join in too.**”

“**The staff carry on after the online session finishes, doing more exercises, ball games and more singing. It's given us lots of new ideas too.**”

“Setting up virtual classes is a challenge at the best of times. But when it comes to care home residents and a very busy care team, where technology is not always second nature, there was a big risk of failure.”



Community Integrated Care Celebrates With Its Big Walk & Talk Week!

Whether it's walking, running, or climbing, colleagues and people supported by the national social care charity, Community Integrated Care, have been staying active throughout lockdown thanks to a week-long challenge and celebration event.

Back in 2019, Community Integrated Care was recognised for its implementation of a ground-breaking strategy and was crowned by Charity Times, 'Charity of the Year'. The strategy, 'We Dare', has seen the charity invest to create a greater social impact, meet gaps in community provision, and champion the care sector in an era of austerity.

The organisation was set to celebrate this achievement with its 6,000 dedicated colleagues, 4,000 supporters as well as the incredible local communities, by holding its first organisation-wide celebration day; We Dare Day. The COVID-19 pandemic may have temporarily put these plans on pause, but the charity ensured that it returned bigger and better than ever, celebrating the dedication and commitment of its colleagues throughout the toughest of months.

Community
Integrated
Care

www.c-i-c.co.uk

0845 543 9911

Old Market Court, 2 Miners Way
Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 7SP

Community Integrated Care's Big Walk & Talk Week!

On Monday 17 August, Community Integrated Care began a week-long fundraising challenge which saw everyone connected to the charity collectively travel the distance between its most Northern and Southern services. From the tip of the Scottish Highlands, Thurso, to the most Southernly provider in Dorset the target was set. Volunteers covered a huge grand total of 1,092 kilometres!

From wandering around gardens to conquering great heights, everyone rose to the challenge and contributed to Community Integrated Care's target.

Colleagues, people supported by the charity, and local communities safely came together, with each person

adding towards the charity's goal.

Throughout the week, colleagues also reminded themselves of the founding principles of Community Integrated Care by talking and sharing their ideas on best practice around inclusion, equality, and diversity, aimed at making the charity as inclusive as possible for all.

By the end of the week the charity had collectively hit not one, but two giant goals! Their second target of 1,988km – the year the charity was founded – was also smashed, thanks to the commitment of those who took part. As a finale to this incredible week, We Dare Day saw a celebration take place in 450 of Community Integrated Care's services, marking everyone's efforts.

What was collectively achieved during Community Integrated Care's Big Walk & Talk Week:

3,089 KILOMETRES

4,053,805 STEPS

162,152 CALORIES BURNED



Coffee & Shopping at Coverage Care



During the COVID-19 pandemic here at Stone House we wanted normality as much as possible to keep anxiety levels down for everyone.

So, our Activities Organiser Vanessa spoke with management as we had a summer house that was being used as storage and she wanted to transform into a shop and coffee shop.

Once agreed, it was all systems go to get this completed as soon as possible!

Keeping in line with COVID-19 restrictions, Vanessa's daughter and her partner volunteered to paint the inside of the shop, with Douglas our maintenance man painted the outside. We chose vibrant colours for inside and outside, and soon the shed was transformed into a warm and welcoming place.

We were delighted and very grateful for the donations of a vintage till from a local shop, vintage scales along with cups and saucers; we also used vintage signs and vinyls to enhance the look of the shop.

One of our service users, Mary Abbey named the shop as Stone House Corner Shop, and we held an official opening where Mary cut the ribbon.

To make sure the shop was stocked with what people wanted, Vanessa chatted with service users on each unit. She then bought what they wanted; everything bought and sold in the shop was on a not-for-profit basis.

Even if the services users don't want to purchase anything, they love coming in to enjoy a cup of tea and biscuits instead.

Transforming the summer house into our shop greatly enhanced the wellbeing of our service users, and gives them some independence.

Everyone looks forward to visiting the shop each week!

We're opening up daily and we hope to keep it running so service users continue to enjoy their independence by shopping at Stone House Corner Shop.



"It has been a fantastic project to work on and its given staff and service users something really positive to focus on during these uncertain times."

Celebrating 75th Anniversary of VE Day

GuildCare 

www.guildcare.org

01903 528600

Methold House, North Street

Worthing

BN11 1DU

It wasn't quite the 75th VE Day Guild Care had planned, but a pandemic wasn't going to stop their residents from celebrating.

Staff at the Worthing charity's Caer Gwent nursing home made sure to mark the 75 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe. Celebrations were in full swing, including decorating the home in flags and bunting to create the 'street party' feel.

Despite the lockdown, the home was still able to create a lively party atmosphere and were keen to keep spirits high.

With the sounds of Vera Lynn resonating throughout Caer Gwent, staff went above and beyond to make it a joyous day for residents.

This included, for those who wanted to remain in their rooms, the team entertaining them by going room to room with a guitar serenading them with numbers like 'You Are My Sunshine' and even going as far as to perform dances for them, seeing the team gather in the garden for a round of the 'Hokey Cokey.'

Celebrations didn't just stop at activities, residents even dined on a themed VE Day supper, including London Particular Soup, Pork Pie Ploughman's and a delicious Bakewell Tart for pudding.

The special day had residents reminiscing about where they were and what they were doing the day that Winston Churchill declared the war officially over which led to some truly heart-warming conversations.

To top it all off, as a special treat staff and residents gathered in the garden to watch the Spitfire flypast to commemorate the historic day, marking the day as a flying success.

The atmosphere was electric throughout the home, bringing an abundance of joy in a time that felt so fearful, leaving lockdown at the door and becoming a momentous day felt by all celebrating.



Doorstep Activities For Residents Living in Extra Care Apartments in New Lodge



Doorstep activities, treats and singing in the atrium – this is how staff got creative during lockdown!

One of the biggest challenges for staff over the past few months has been to ensure that residents feel well looked after, well supported and part of the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) community. This has been no mean feat, when staff and residents have had to adhere to strict social distancing rules and residents have been unable to see family and loved ones.

With this in mind, staff across the care services have had to become even more creative in how they interact with residents and how they provide care and social activities during the crisis.

Peter Sanderson, General Manager at New Lodge, has come up with a number of 'doorstep drops', where staff come to the doors of

residents and get them involved with communal activities, while adhering to the strict social distancing and PPE rules imposed by the pandemic.

These "doorstep drops" have ranged from old favourites like bingo and quizzes to recitals from our talented receptionist Ruth, who is a trained singer. All recitals have been held in New Lodge's airy glass atrium, so that residents can be involved from the safety of their individual homes.

However, the most popular activity has been the now famous 'New Lodge Trolley', which has provided everything from afternoon tea and home-made cakes to ice cream sundae's and nutritious soups, again all delivered straight to the door of residents.

When the famous trolley isn't delivering delicious treats, it even doubles up as a mobile library, delivering books to residents, who can't access the communal libraries. In a more practical sense, the challenge for New Lodge has been to keep all areas fully sanitise to help prevent the spread of the virus. This has been done by using the redeployed volunteer staff from other parts of the

business, who have worked tirelessly to support the care teams keep the environment as clean as possible.

Peter Sanderson said of the last few months "This has been such a challenging time for all the staff at New Lodge, but our priority throughout has been to ensure that residents feel safe, secure and well looked after." Peter continues: "Our approach has been two-fold – ensuring that New Lodge is maintaining the practical needs of the residents by making sure the communal areas are scrupulously clean, strict social distancing is in place and groceries are being delivered. But that's only part it - the other part is about making sure that residents are still enjoying life at New Lodge, having fun and feeling part of a wider community."



“ Our approach has been two-fold – ensuring that New Lodge is maintaining the practical needs of the residents by making sure the communal areas are scrupulously clean, strict social distancing is in place and groceries are being delivered. But that's only part it - the other part is about making sure that residents are still enjoying life at New Lodge, having fun and feeling part of a wider community.”

FINAL LOOK AHEAD KEEPING IT FUN



www.lookahead.org.uk

0333 010 4600

Look Ahead, Kings Buildings
16 Smith Square, London
SW1P 3HQ

play the guitar and piano, whilst we supported others to follow daily exercise routines available on social media. One of customers, who is also a DJ, even brought out his equipment and put on weekly 'distanced discos' in the service. Who would have thought social distancing could be so fun?

It was also important we helped our residents stay socially connected despite restrictions, whether this be with family members, friends or professionals in their circle of support. We did this by helping customers socialise digitally with those who would normally visit them in person every week.

We spent time coaching customers how to use platforms such as WhatsApp and Skype for video calls, and after the first couple of weeks they were comfortable with this new way of speaking with visitors.

One customer in particular, who is 61, was reluctant to take part at first. After a couple of sessions training him on a laptop, we got him in touch with a relative who is based in the Middle East with the army, which he really enjoyed. Now that he's comfortable using the laptop, he now also stays in regular contact with many members of his family which has been great to see.

Being more familiar with technology has given our customers a greater sense of independence. We have used this opportunity to train customers on data protection, and help them identify potential scams.

It was really rewarding to be able to see our staff bring their skills and creativity to work with our customers in such new and innovative ways. Because staff were able to continually adapt to the changing circumstances, they were able to provide much needed

Oakview is a supported living service in Hertfordshire. It provides 24/7 support for ten customers with mild to moderate learning disabilities.

Our customers have a variety of support needs, some with high level autism and limited capacity, and we knew that lockdown would create a lot of uncertainty and anxiety. At the start of lockdown, staff were not entirely confident that customers would fully understand and therefore follow appropriate correct social distancing measures.

So we knew we had to get creative!

We turned social distancing measures into a game, encouraging customers to stay two meters apart and wearing face coverings when out and about. We even helped customers to make their own.

Many of our customers' regular activities were cancelled, so we had to improvise and bring a range of things in-house. We created a holistic 'activity village' in the service with activities for customers to engage with. We offered sports activities every day in our gardens, as well as music sessions and movie viewings. Some customers even learned to



consistency for our customers which helped to reduce the anxiety Coronavirus brought.

We'd like to think we provided some much needed stability for the people in our care during a difficult and unprecedented time.

From 'Jailhouse Rock' to 'A Little Less Conversation' one Elvis impersonator has been doing his best to keep the people who use Making Space services entertained during lockdown.

Elvis tribute performer Tony Beard, 51, is team leader at Devonshire Road supported housing in Liverpool.

The service enables 13 adults living with mental health conditions to live independently.

Frontline leader Tony, has been donning his full Elvis gear and gyrating and crooning his way through the pandemic, via a high-octane series of online shows. Toxteth's answer to the King has gone out of his way to raise a smile amongst 1,000 Making Space staff, 16,000 people the national health and social care charity supports and the people he cares for to ensure they are never Lonesome Tonight.

During one live performance on his own tribute page on Facebook, Tony took the opportunity to fundraise for the service, and managed to raise £30. Using the money raised, he purchased a new blender, along with a selection of healthy items, to make delicious soups for tenants.

Tony has been singing at the service on a Thursday evening during Clap for Carers. The socially distanced show delighted people at the Supported Housing service as well as the neighbours with all the classics such as 'Blue Suede Shoes' and a Liverpool hit – 'You'll Never Walk Alone'.

While social distancing remains in place, outdoor and virtual shows such

From Elvis Impersonator to Support Worker



as this one remains the only way for Tony to entertain people, from a safe distance and to keep the memory of the King of Rock 'n' Roll alive.

Tony has been doing this in his own time, away from his responsibility on the front line.

When Tony isn't shaking things up, he has been encouraging residents to use the outside space for activities.

At the service, Tony has instilled a culture of high-quality and person-centred care. During the pandemic, he has continued to encourage tenants to maintain their links with the local community and contacted their relatives. He has introduced activities that are centred around tenants.

Before turning his hand to social care, Tony was in hospitality, working as a senior service manager at Liverpool's swanky Radisson Blu Hotel. But the music fan came to realise he had more to give than ensuring the hotel's 194 rooms had immaculate bed linen

and opted for a change of direction.

Tony joined the service in April 2019 and was named team leader six months later.

“In June 2020, Tony made the national Independent newspaper's Happy List, which featured 50 people who have made an outstanding contribution to society.”



www.mha.org.uk
01332 296200
Epworth House
Stuart Street, Derby
DE1 2EQ

MUSIC FOR DEMENTIA 2020: THE GIFT OF MUSIC, AMAZON ECHOES IN OUR CARE HOMES

Music for Dementia 2020 (M4D2020) is a national campaign aiming to deliver music to everyone living with dementia. Working alongside the National Activities Providers Association (NAPA), they are able to support dementia support in care homes.

In April 2020, following the COVID-19 outbreak, M4D2020 wanted to send the gift of music to 100 care homes around the UK. The initiative advertised a competition for care homes to win an Amazon Alexa Echo

Show, together with a six month Amazon Unlimited Music subscription.

We submitted a number of entries to the prize draw and were lucky enough to win five Alexa devices for our care homes - Anjulita Court, Beechville, Weston House, Torrwood and Warde Aldam.

Our music therapists in these homes have offered support by creating general playlists to play in the home, but also playlists that are specific to individuals that they know well.

The Alexa Echo Show also has a screen that displays song information and lyrics which has proved very helpful as it can be read by staff and residents so everyone can join in! The Alexa Echo Show can be used for individual engagement and interaction but also in larger group activities and in communal areas and daily living activities such as meal times.

MHA music therapist Ella Cross at Walde Aldam, said: "The Amazon Echo Show has brought great joy to the residents, whether that's hearing their favourite songs, dancing to rock and roll, or singing along using the words on the screen. It's been great for our music therapists to be involved in creating individualised playlists, based on the knowledge of residents' preferred music from group and one to one sessions."

"Having the Amazon Echo has also facilitated conversations with care staff and families, who are often a great source of knowledge on residents'

musical preferences. Music plays such an important role in residents' wellbeing, and the technology we have with the Amazon Echo Shows enables recommendations from sessions to be implemented outside of music therapy sessions. This could be playing a particular song to help a resident to feel calm and relaxed, or encouraging a resident to sing along to familiar songs, which exercises important cognitive functions that are vital to wellbeing."

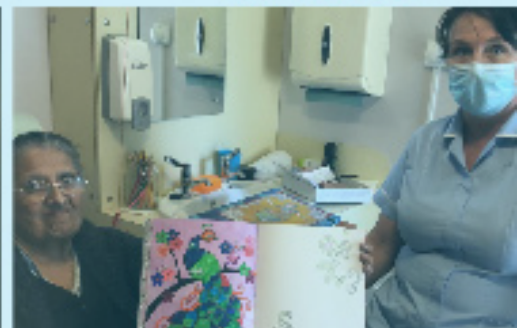
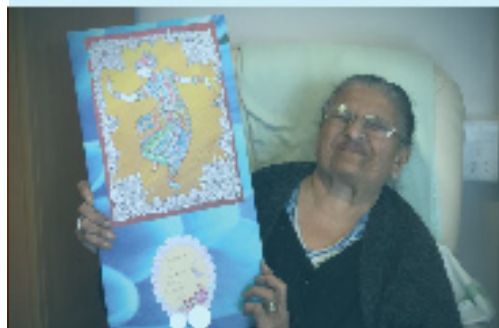
"The Amazon Echo Shows have brought great joy to the residents, whether that's hearing their favourite songs, dancing to rock and roll, or singing along using the words on the screen."

Flexibility in Changing Times

Marcia, Activities Coordinator at Medlock Court explains how she has kept residents motivated and active in these challenging times.

"I'm proud to work at Medlock Court in Lees. I've been based there since 2011 and it feels like a second home.

It's also home to the MioCare Group's



Residential Enablement Service! Put simply, Medlock Court provides short stay accommodation and enablement support for up to 32 people. People who need a short spell of care before returning home, rather than a prolonged hospital stay or admission.

The last few months have been very different and at points, difficult. It feels like no one has been unaffected by the pandemic. Even if you've not been poorly, lots of the routines we had and the privileges we didn't even think about have had to change.

I think of people like Thelma, a lovely 90-year-old lady who needed some physical therapy after a fracture. She's doing brilliantly and is looking forward to returning home soon. But she's missed her family and friends even more than she might have in recent weeks, as they've not been able to visit as they would have in normal circumstances.

We've had to put in extra effort to keep her spirits up!

Thelma said of her experience in our service: "Staff are patient and caring. I've been practicing the stairs again today with a physio - 12 up and 12 down! I was tired but proud of myself. I feel much more confident now about going home."

For me as an Activities Coordinator; things have changed so much. I'd normally be arranging projects, often with local community groups and facilitators, but we've had to stop

quite a few activities and put a pause on the delivery of traditional sessions.

I've taken to doing a daily room check, handing out 'activity packs' and talking to people one-to-one. I've been asking if there's anything in particular people need or want. Not everything we get asked for is doable(!) but on occasion it is...

For example, one gentleman used to love playing guitar in his youth so to his surprise, we managed to get him an acoustic and he's been playing again since. Music's been a great therapy for many, while others like books, crosswords and puzzles. Some just need that human interaction, a reminder and some reassurance as to why things have changed.

Laxmiben, who's been with us for a couple of weeks so far, absolutely loves the 'mindfulness' colouring books for adults. She's great at it and we've framed some of her artwork and put it up in her room, much to her delight.

When we explained to her that we'd love to share her artwork online too, she was very excited. So here we are Laxi - you're on the world-wide-web!

Things remain far from simple but my colleagues continue to be flexible, pulling together for every person that comes through our door. Always with the intention that people leave our care much better equipped to live a healthy and independent life at home."



One Housing

www.onehousing.co.uk

0300 123 9966

Atelier House, 64 Pratt Street

London, NW1 0DL

Moral Boosting Musical Event

The government's advice to 'stay in' and 'stay away' at the beginning of the pandemic addressed the physical safety of our residents, but as care professionals we were as much concerned about the mental health and well-being of our residents as we were the physical aspect.

We were incredibly mindful of the risk of social isolation that lockdown might bring and our staff worked tirelessly to ensure that our residents did not feel isolated and alone.

Morale boosting activities were much in need to support this imposed isolation and to reduce shared anxieties. Music was key to encourage residents out of 'refuge', to see each other, let off steam and enjoy a party atmosphere, albeit from afar from their individual flat's balconies.

Gerald Anderson, General Manager of Lorenzo House extra care scheme in

Haringey, invited a local DJ to come and play at the service in the summer. Speakers were placed strategically around the building to face the balconies on both sides so that all the residents could enjoy the music.

Gerald had instructed the DJ to send personalised messages on microphone and speakers for everyone to hear, addressing individuals, and to play lots of favourite songs, creating a feeling of intimacy and community.

Frontline care and office staff along with Gerald delivered snacks and drinks to the flats and then joined in the dancing around the building. Residents came onto their balconies to dance and wave, and families living opposite the scheme waved from windows or stood dancing along in their doorways.

The whole event was a great success and brought such a feeling of community and team spirit with it.



“There was a real sense of a bond as all, both young and old, from the service or in the wider community, could relate to this difficult situation that we all had in common.”



www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk
0300 303 1400
175 Tower Bridge Road, London
SE1 2AL

Leonora Home 'Travels' to France

A virtual visit to the Eiffel Tower, a Monet-inspired painting class and French cuisine enjoyed in café-style surroundings. These were some of the delights those living at Leonora Home, Chippenham were treated to as part of a series of multi-sensory activities for the summer holiday season.

"The inspiration for a French theme came from our residents," says Joanna White, Activities Coordinator at Leonora Home. "We have several former missionaries living with us who speak French fluently – one lady, who served in the Congo for example. And many of those living with us remember French from having learnt it at school."

By taking part in French conversation, residents had the opportunity to exercise their memory skills, stimulating social interaction. "One gentleman, who often doesn't say very much at all, was able to produce the correct phrase for ordering food in our French-style café. Another lady was able to help me with my pronunciation. I think they were pleased to discover how much they still knew," says Joanna.

Conversation flowed as residents recounted memories of previous trips to France. "One lady described to me walking down the tree-lined Champs Elysées, famous for its posh shops," says Joanna.

As well as bringing back the memories, residents also had the opportunity to try new things. As part of the Monet-inspired painting class, participants followed a step-by-step guide, seeing their painting take shape before their eyes. "One lady said to me 'I haven't done anything like this before'," says Joanna. "She couldn't quite believe what she'd managed to produce."

The virtual trip to the Eiffel Tower was made possible thanks to an internet-link, with a realistic lift simulation that made viewers feel like they were really moving. Even for those who had visited before, there were new things to see, like the ice rink installed on the Eiffel

Tower's first floor and the opportunity to 'walk' across a glass ceiling.

The French activities culminated with a special French meal served in 'Restaurant Leonora' by talented cordon bleu chef 'Oh la la Bev la' who donned a beret specially for the occasion.

Diners were treated to a menu of typical French dishes – a starter of French onion soup followed by boeuf bourguignon or quiche Lorraine, with sides of ratatouille and boulangère potatoes.

Dessert was a choice of tarte tatin or crêpes suzette, with crêpes cooked before their eyes on a hot plate.

Following the activities, staff decided to frame the Monet paintings and hang them in the dining room where they can be admired by all - a colourful addition to the walls, and a lasting memory.



Getting Creative at Meresworth Care Home



www.quantumcare.co.uk
01707 393293
Address: 4 Silver Court, Watchmead,
Welwyn Garden City, Herts,
AL7 1TS

In July, Meresworth Care Home in Rickmansworth held their very own version of the Great British Bake-off.

Staff at the home turned their hands to a spot of creative cake making, with residents Donald, Reg and Louis taking on the roles of judges Pru Leith and Paul Hollywood. Chef Manager Greg KA Adi and carer Zena were also drafted in to help with choosing the winner.

There were eight stunning creations for the resident judges to choose from. Important factors in the decision making were design, creativity and most importantly taste. The judges took time to deliberate, but it was a unanimous decision in the end.

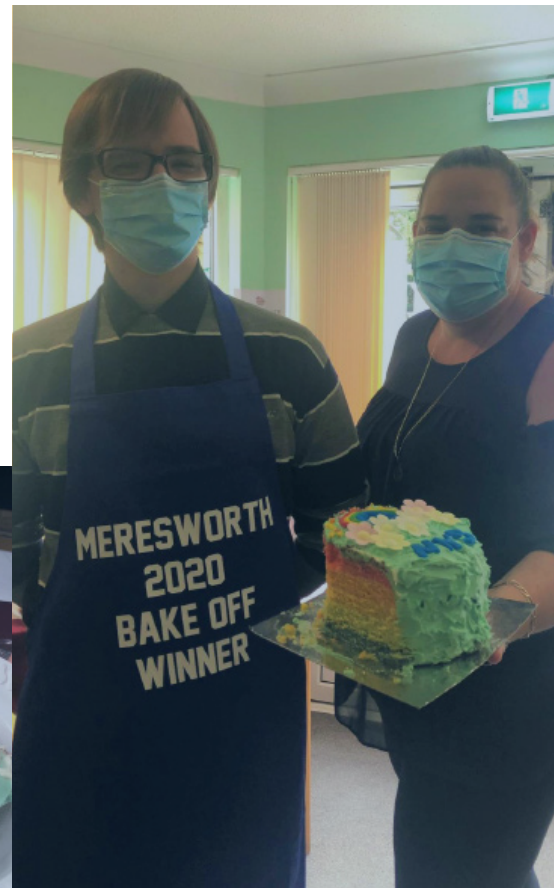
The top spot was awarded to Housekeeping Manager Nathan for his wonderful rainbow NHS cake. The judges commented that the skill and time taken to make the cake were obvious and that he should be commended for the sweet delicious flavour, as well as a wonderful and fitting design. Nathan was presented with the much-coveted Meresworth 2020 Bake-off Apron as well as a beautiful bunch of flowers.

Second prize went to Meresworth's Deputy Manager - also named Nathan - who created a Death by Chocolate cake, which the judges thought was very well-designed, tasty and extremely chocolatey.

Third prize went to Senior Carer Wendy, who made a treat cake which was covered in Smarties and Maltesers and held together with chocolate fingers. The judges felt it was both beautiful and delicious. The award for the most effort went to Senior Carer Wendy who

also created a rainbow NHS cake, which impressed the judges with its sweet smell and tasty gooey icing.

"The whole Bake-off experience has really inspired some of the residents and staff at the home to get baking. Despite being closed to visitors since the beginning of the pandemic, Meresworth is now open again for socially-distanced garden visits for family members, so we are looking forward to sharing some of our new-found talents with our families too."



Clare O'Neill Peripatetic Home Manager at Meresworth said,

“ Working through the pandemic has been extremely difficult and challenging for all those working in care homes, so I wanted to do something fun and exciting for the team at Meresworth. They have all been amazing throughout, but it has been a tough time for everybody, so the Bake-off seemed like a really great way of having fun, lifting everybody's spirits and of course getting to eat lots of delicious cake. Everybody at the home got involved and really enjoyed the whole event, from the planning stages right through to everybody's favourite part - the tasting.”



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

www.starandgarter.org

020 8481 7676

Royal Star & Garter

15 Castle Mews, Hampton,
Middlesex, TW12 2NP

Royal Star & Garter Residents Enjoy Tropical Caribbean Party



The taste of rum, the smell of delicious seafood and the sound of steelbands were among the exotic treats enjoyed by residents at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton during a Caribbean party at the veterans' care home.

Royal Star & Garter provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

The charity's care home in Upper Brighton Road was given a makeover for the celebration, with exotic backdrops, decorations and props used to help veterans get in the Caribbean spirit.

Staff also dressed up for the event, wearing leis, dressing as pirates and donning seashell tops!

The party took place over three days from Tuesday 18 August to Thursday 20 August, allowing all residents in the

Home's three floors to take part and enjoy while observing social distancing.

The Caribbean party was organised by Activities Manager Raquel Pena Aristizabal. She said: "We had a good time dressing up and being silly, having fun, listening to fabulous music and eating delicious food. It was great!"

And a resident added: "I'm amazed at how much effort staff put into organising these fabulous events. There's always something to look forward to. This was good fun. We really enjoyed ourselves and so did the staff."

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"I'm amazed at how much effort staff put into organising these fabulous events. There's always something to look forward to. This was good fun. We really enjoyed ourselves and so did the staff."



Sanctuary Care's 'Virtual' Cruise: Enriching Lives



Sanctuary Care
enriching lives

www.sanctuary-care.co.uk

0800 917 0478

Cameo House, Chamber Court, Castle
Street, Worcester
WR1 3ZQ

Residents from Sanctuary Care homes kept the fun going during the COVID-19 pandemic by embarking on a 'virtual' summer cruise.

Holidays abroad with family may have been a distant dream but that didn't stop residents from over 100 homes enjoying the summer months by virtually sailing to eight different holiday hotspots across Europe.

Homes were transformed into luxury ships, with residents and staff becoming the passengers and cabin crew for the two-month voyage, which proved to truly enrich the lives of both residents and staff from start to finish.

Just like any five-star cruise, residents spent the time with personalised passports, boarding passes and staff tour guides at every port so they could submerge themselves in the local cultures of their cruise destinations.

From Italy and Cyprus, to Greece and Turkey, each week the cruise-liner docked at a new destination, where passengers enjoyed authentic excursions, including Portuguese port tasting and creating Azulejos tiles.

Other highlights included turning their hands to making sangria in Spain, re-creating their own Monet masterpiece while soaking up the art culture in France and hosting their very own Maltese 'Feast of St Paul Shipwreck' festival.

As part of activity, cabin crew were provided with weekly staff handbooks, props and supporting literature, so they could deliver traditional festivities with real authenticity. While the travel calendar was packed with activities to keep the fun going for homes with highlights including dancing,

crafting, baking, tasting, drawing, quizzing, learning and celebrating, as well as a range of festivals.

The national initiative helped to unite Sanctuary Care homes during a time of such uncertainty for the care sector.

As well as providing a fun and safe environment for residents to connect with each other, the 'virtual' cruise evoked memories of holidays to European destinations for residents with their loved ones and truly enriched their lives.

Speaking about the summer voyage, 86-year-old Marie O'Grady from Sanctuary's Pinewood Residential Care Home said: "Oh it was fabulous to be on the cruise! It was great to be with everyone at the home and felt like a proper holiday."

Mary Stone from The Rosary Nursing Home added: "There was no stopping us, it was ever so wonderful. I loved all the food, memories and the music. And one point, I even took to the ship's wheel and pretended to be Captain - I secretly loved being boss!"

And resident Matthew Watt from Birch House Care Home had his own special role to play in the cruise: "I was the Captain! I loved the uniform and had the role of checking passports and boarding passes just like on any holiday. It was so much fun to be Captain and cruise around Europe with my 'family'."



“Just like any five-star cruise, residents spent the time with personalised passports, boarding passes and staff tour guides at every port so they could submerge themselves in the local cultures of their cruise destinations.”

Smiling Penguins Teach Residents About Social Distancing



www.sanctuary-supported-living.co.uk
0800 917 0478
Cameo House, Chamber Court, Castle
Street, Worcester
WR1 3ZQ



At the beginning of lockdown, staff at Sanctuary Supported Living's supported housing service in New Milton, Hampshire, found a unique way to help residents with learning disabilities understand the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing.

Inspired by a resident, Michael, who loves penguins and whose favourite film is 'Madagascar', they used the catchphrase from the penguins in the film – 'Just smile and wave' – and a handmade cardboard penguin named 'Smiley', to help residents understand how to stay safe while staying friendly.

Alison Notman, Local Service Manager and inventor of Smiley the penguin, explained: "Some of our residents are naturally outgoing and greet people by hugging them, so Smiley and his catchphrase helped us to explain something that could have been very difficult for them."

When staff realised how engaged residents were with Smiley, they began including him in more of their work. Since then, Smiley has become a big part of life at Old Milton Road. Residents gave Smiley a girlfriend (Wavy) and together

they have featured in many arts and crafts activities, and they are the guests of honour at any big events at the service, including VE Day and birthdays.

Smiley and Wavy are also YouTube stars, with their own channel dedicated to videos featuring catchy songs to spread the 'smile and wave' message. They even have their own 'smile and wave' penguin themed jigsaw. Alison was also invited to talk about Smiley and Wavy on BBC Radio Solent, with the hope that other people might be inspired by their message and to raise awareness of how challenging lockdown has been for people with learning disabilities.

Since their initial creation, Smiley and Wavy have had a wooden makeover, in

the hope that they will last longer than their original cardboard counterparts. They have also got married and had two chicks (named Happy and Clappy by residents). Most recently, they have starred, wearing face masks, in two new videos, walking around their local area, helping residents feel more comfortable both when wearing a mask, and when they meet someone else who is wearing one.

Alison said: "It could be quite scary for someone with learning disabilities to see someone wearing a mask, or to have to wear one themselves, if they didn't understand why – so I'm really glad Smiley and Wavy were on-hand to help residents feel more comfortable."

Michael added: "I thought it would be really hard, and at first it was, but Smiley and Wavy made staying at home fun. Even though everyone who lives here is different, Alison and the others always know what we need."

"We're all still having a fantastic time with Smiley and Wavy and everyone is taking part in ways they like. I'm doing lots of painting and drawing which I didn't used to enjoy, and others are singing and making videos. Because the team know me so well, I really enjoyed staying at home, even though I never thought I would. I have a personality, not just a disability."

"When staff realised how engaged residents were with Smiley, they began including him in more of their work. Since then, Smiley has become a big part of life at Old Milton Road."



St Monica Trust

www.stmonicastrust.org.uk

0117 949 4000

Cote Lane, Westbury on Trym
Bristol, BS9 3UN

Safely Having Fun On & Offline

While much of the Trust's regular activities were postponed due to the Coronavirus, our residents continued to have fun and stay connected through many channels online (for example the [connected community](#)) and offline, in a safe way.

Residents and staff got involved in knitting hearts, rainbows, bears, 'wonky eyed teddies' or baby clothes - the knitting needles kept clacking.

At Cote Lane, residents enjoyed innovative telephone therapy sessions where the tutor rang each resident individually and ran tailor-made sessions.

In care homes our residents engaged in indoor beach parties, high teas and mocktails, music and quizzes. Across our retirement villages residents played 'socially distant' bingo, had a treat with a porter impersonating Elvis from outside their homes, shared stories on VJ day, joined remote services (including the Harvest Festival service recently) which were streamed live into residents' homes.

In the gardens during spring and summer, residents made the most of the sunshine by tending to their plots. And we loved an idea from a Helping Hand colleague, Cam at Sandford Station, who created a walking quiz to encourage residents to get out and enjoy the wonderful grounds. One of our residents even took made a beautiful video of images from the Cote Lane gardens.

At John Wills House, care home residents enjoyed taking care of chickens, which brought lots of joy. So many of our residents engaged

in making bunting, painting, writing poetry, making peg dolls and lavender bags, flower arranging and 'growing' a thank you tree at Monica Wills House.

One of our colleagues shared this about Activities Therapist, Domenica: "We are truly lucky to have such a dedicated and creative team member such as yourself and the residents together with all the staff really appreciate all your support - thank you!"

We're also grateful to all those colleagues from all the different areas of the Trust who made masks and mask clips in their own time, using their own materials; they told us this was fun and kept them connected too.



“

We are truly lucky to have such a dedicated and creative team member such as yourself and the residents together with all the staff really appreciate all your support - thank you!"





www.sussexhousing.org.uk
01323 875240
Ronald Simson House
24 Sutton Avenue, Seaford
East Sussex, BN25 4LG

Sussex Housing & Care

Saxonwood Care Home Dog Show

For seniors in care homes, it's easy to begin to feel cut off from the outside world, especially when mobility is an issue and a nasty virus closes the doors to their loved ones and the community. However, having access to a pet or animal can help to prevent loneliness in seniors, cheer them up, and even improve their quality of life. Here at Saxonwood Care Home in Battle, East Sussex, we thrive on giving our residents the best care and quality of life as possible, usually having regular visits from family pets, visitor's pets or the Petpals group. These pet interventions were key for our residents. They enjoyed seeing them, petting them and sometimes having a nice cuddle whilst relaxed in a chair, and COVID-19 stopped all that.

We thought, as a team, it was time to step in and make a change. We rallied together and created the idea of using our beautiful garden space and patio with the large windowed doors, to host a dog show. A lot of our care team have pets, and kindly agreed to bring them along. They sent over pictures of their beloved pets and a small description of their personalities. These were then put together in a little leaflet, posters went up and our plans started to come together. The leaflet showed all the photos, animal personalities and right at the back was a voting slip - so residents could vote for their favourite pooch. This could only mean one thing...prizes! Off to the pet shop we went buying toys, bones and treats to create doggy bag prizes.

As the beloved dogs arrived, adhering to social distancing of course, each was given a number - relating to their entry on the leaflet so each dog could be identified. They got in number order

and awaited the call. As each pup was called, they slowly made their way up the ramp and paraded in front of the windows for the residents to see. The oohh's and ahhh's were breath taking, residents' eyes glimmered and smiles beamed across their faces like Cheshire cats. The dogs definitely put on a performance too. Some, just sat proudly showing off their stature, others wagged their tails and rolled over in excitement, and from big to small, we had them all.

You could see from the residents' reactions that this event was very much needed. It brought fun and laughter to every single one of them. They enjoyed watching the dogs playing together and having fun in the garden and pets bring unconditional love, friendship and fun to everyone they meet. Our residents have expressed how much they loved this and some have even asked to have the photos up in their rooms and keep hold of the leaflet so they can look back and reminisce about the day and the emotions they felt.

Our team here made magic happen on this fun day, and it will be forever in the hearts of our residents.



Keeping it Fun With Dancing at Drovers House



www.wcs-care.co.uk

01926 864 242

Newlands, Whites Row

Kenilworth

CV8 1HW

In early May 2020, residents and staff at Drovers House came-up with an idea to help keep everybody smiling, as national lockdown restrictions continued during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

It started as a one-off but became so popular, that it turned into a twice daily opportunity for everyone to let their hair down, sing along and simply enjoy some time together, whatever the weather.

At 11am, Drovers House staff set up a speaker in the garden, then everyone who could, downed tools and joined in dancing in the garden and on the balconies, wearing fancy dress and sharing their favourite moves to songs residents had chosen such as Dancing Queen, YMCA and anything by The Beatles.

Even residents who couldn't (or wouldn't) dance came out to watch, sing along and laugh.

Although it was clear to see the impact the daily dancing had by the smiles on people's faces, staff and residents reported feeling uplifted and energised by this simple action, which immediately became a much-loved daily routine.

Passers-by in the surrounding streets stopped on the other side of the fence to see what was going on and joined-in, some even came outside of their houses just to take part. And family members got to know about it, showing their support by dancing and waving to relatives.



If they were able to, visiting District Nurses timed their visit so they could join in with the fun – and once, even the COVID-19 testing team joined in too.

It wasn't long before other WCS Care homes heard about the success of daily dancing and it quickly caught on elsewhere in the group. Residents and staff at Castle Brook and Woodside Care Village were keen to get involved too, creating their own daily dance sessions.

It became quite a competition between the homes. Each one wanted to demonstrate the best dance moves, while enjoying plenty of fresh air and laughter at the same time.



KEEPING THE CONNECTION

TO ALL My Family
Thank you for taking care
of me
I'm doing okay
and all the Staff are
lovely and taking care
me.
I miss you all love you
♥



Keeping The Connection

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Accord

www.accordgroup.org.uk
(0300) 111 7000

178 Birmingham Road
West Bromwich, West Midlands
B70 6QG

Amber Wood Dementia Centre of Excellence Keeps Everyone Connected

HIGHLY
COMMEDED

Lockdown hit everyone hard, but it was especially difficult for those in care and their families. This was felt most when we sadly had to inform our residents' families, that following government guidelines, we were closing the doors to all visitors.

We needed to look to new ways to keep our residents and their families connected.

We started off by making Skype calls on a laptop, and quickly got a mobile phone to use for WhatsApp calls. This made such a difference as it enabled residents who couldn't get out of bed, to still be able to see and speak to their loved ones.

But we didn't stop there. We wanted to make the video calls more special and focused on happier topics.



We encouraged families to send us photos and videos of what they were doing so our residents could still feel involved in their lives. Videos were watched on repeat and photos were sent along with letters and cards and wonderful pictures from grandchildren.

These were so well received and everyone felt involved with the bread making, decorating and painting of rainbows. Tips were shared and residents were motivated to take part in activities so they could share their own stories during the catch-up video calls.

We created a weekly newsletter,

everyone's spirit and created lots of conversations about happier times. As guidelines changed, we were able to introduce outdoor socially distanced visits. It was a very cheerful time as it meant so much to both our residents and their loved ones. Although it wasn't the same as normal and hugs had to be put on hold, it provided a degree of much needed normality.

Feedback from families has been incredible. They have shown great support and gratitude for the level of communication and information sharing.

Families told us how video calls and social visits have been a lifeline and

"Families told us how video calls and social visits have been a lifeline and something to look forward to."

sharing government guidelines and updates on what activities were going on at our scheme. The newsletter was a really useful way to communicate with residents' families. It meant we could ask for things to be sent in such as sun hats to wear in the garden, without making numerous phone calls.

Families felt more involved with the home and started to make donations of plants for the garden. Residents looked forward to doing things we could put in the newsletter, and families looked forward to reading it, and talking about the activities in their regular video calls.

Everyone reminisced about days gone by and dug out old photo albums which were shared during the video calls. This really helped lift

something to look forward to. They said it has been brilliant to be able to keep in touch, and seeing their loved ones faces made it much more personal and kept them feeling connected even though lockdown kept them apart.



We Are Family! #CAFC Family!

Riverdale Court care home in Welling, owned and operated by Avante care and support, is a popular and well supported home in its local community.

Prior to the pandemic lockdown, the home would regularly host groups and events within the grounds or attend local activities and events, so residents were always out and about in the community.

The team at Riverdale Court is passionate about providing good care and follow the Avante Philosophy of Care, the Eden Alternative. This has been adopted by all staff, is at the heart of their care delivery and is evident on a daily basis.

Resident, Peter is a perfect example.

Peter is a keen Charlton Athletic fan and has been since he was 15 years old. He would go regularly to the Valley to watch his beloved team and would follow their every game each season. Peter has continued to follow 'The Addicks' with pride while living at Riverdale Court and care staff have actively encouraged this interest.

The start of the pandemic lockdown in March sadly meant all football matches were suspended, with millions of football fans left not knowing when they would see their favourite teams take to the stadiums again. Peter, of course, included.



"The team at Riverdale Court is passionate about providing good care and follow the Avante Philosophy of Care, the Eden Alternative."

To help try to fill this void, care staff at Riverdale Court thought it would be a nice idea for Peter to connect with a pen pal who shared his love of Charlton Athletic.

The request was put out on social media and there was a huge response. Peter has since been inundated with kind letters, cards and signed memorabilia all from his beloved football team. Peter didn't think it could get much better than this until shortly after, Charlton Athletic footballer Jason Pearce, posted a video message thanking all staff

at Riverdale Court for their hard work and dedication followed by a hello to all residents!

Riverdale Court, and especially Peter, would like to say a big thank you to everyone at Charlton Athletic Football Club. The messages of support and kindness towards Peter and care staff are very much appreciated.

Watch Jason Pearce's video clip, on the Avante [YouTube channel](#).

A Care Home Shouldn't Be A Prison

Leading Sheffield Care Home Broomgrove has confirmed it will do all to continue face-to-face visits throughout the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Broomgrove was one of the first homes of its type in the country to allow family members to visit residents in June, following the original lockdown in March.

It believes the mental wellbeing benefits of visits, far outweigh the risks providing it is done in a safe manner following guidance.

The home was one of the first in the region to utilise technology to allow residents to communicate with relatives, but it didn't work for everyone.

Donna Pierpoint, manager, Broomgrove Care Home, explained: "Many residents took very quickly to using Skype and Facetime and other technology, but others didn't. The original lockdown proved there really is no replacement for face-to-face visits and we're determined to continue.

"Planning and managing them in a safe manner is hard but these visits are so important. Relatives have been incredibly supportive of our decision."

All relatives visiting Broomgrove Nursing Home are required to use PPE, complete risk assessments, social distance and follow strict infection control guidance.

"I think many people forget that many of our residents are some of the strongest people on the planet," Donna added. "They lived through the harshness of World War Two and the Sheffield Blitz. They deserve dignity and respect. A care home shouldn't be a prison."

To date, there have been no cases of COVID-19 at Broomgrove Nursing Home. Donna said: "We locked down early on 16, March and put all infection control measures in place the minute they were published. We didn't accept any new admissions into the home, to prevent the virus entering the home, when we had no testing in place. As a Not-for-Profit Organisation we were able to do this and still balance our finances. We've been ahead of the game with all government publications and ensured good communication with both our staff and relatives. Building up that relationship and good communication has been key to us working as a team. And as the Manager I'm very proud of Team BG.

"The way staff have pulled together in this crisis has been amazing."

"Rainbows for the NHS were everywhere, but what about Care Homes? Where were the rainbows and community support for them? One of my Care Assistants, Tony Enright, who has worked at Broomgrove for 14 years took matters into his own hands and started creating Rainbow messages for both residents and staff to tell us how important we are in this pandemic."

Each rainbow was personalised and done as a collage, with cuttings from magazines and newspapers to make



www.broomgrove-trust.co.uk
0114 266 1311
30 Broomgrove Road
Sheffield
S10 2LR

the words. He put a lot of love into each one of them; residents have them on their bedroom walls, and the staff have them either at work or at home.

"Each time we look at them, it reminds us of how important care homes are and the battle we have had over this year to keep all our residents safe," concluded Donna.

To date Tony has done over 50 Rainbows and he is still making them - he is our Rainbow Hero!



"The way staff have pulled together in this crisis has been amazing."

Cheer on The Cherries



www.care-south.co.uk
01202 712400
39 Commercial Road
Poole, Dorset
BH14 0HU

As Premiership football returned to our screens, without the live crowds, care homes across Dorset have been helping fans keep connected to the game they love.

Care South, a care home provider in Dorset, with 12 care homes around the county is partnered with the AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust.

Helping residents stay socially and physically active, before the pandemic, the Trust ran regular sports sessions for all residents. These included wheelchair football matches and football exercises.

Carers have gone above and beyond to ensure residents can still enjoy the spirit of football, by putting on football-themed parties. During lockdown, everyone has been cheering on AFC Bournemouth aka as The Cherries when they returned to action. What's more, The Cherries donated merchandise to the residents to wear at their lockdown parties!

As well as watching the game, which was the first live Premier League match shown on the BBC, residents loved reminiscing and sharing their memories of cheering on from the stands.

Throughout this pandemic Care South's staff are working tirelessly to ensure the safety and well-being of

all of our residents and service users, ensuring they are well cared for, well fed, hydrated and entertained in environments observing the very highest infection control measures, as always.

The staff are truly remarkable, and have been deeply touched by some of the comments from relatives' posts on our website:

"To all the amazing staff at Maiden Castle House who did an absolutely brilliant job in these testing times for my dad. I know that throughout his final weeks when we weren't allowed to visit him, he was very well looked after and cared for, and I know that many of the staff there went above and beyond in trying to ease his suffering and ensure his wellbeing. Thank you all for being so wonderful."

"I would just like to say a big thank you to Sue Revell, Activities Coordinator at Kenwith Castle, for setting up regular Skype calls between myself and my husband and my parents who are both residents. It is easy to book a time slot and she is usually running more or less to time. It can't be easy getting two elderly people sat in the right position, the technology sorted and tactfully ending the session so she is not late for the next one. Sue also is great at repeating the conversation when my Mum fails to hear. I think we all enjoy seeing each other which helps supplement the

letters and phone calls during COVID-19."

"I want to pass on my special thanks to everyone at Queensmead care home in Christchurch. The way you look after my mum during this difficult time is nothing short of brilliant and I am in awe of your dedication. I know she is safe and well in your hands and I appreciate that you don't mind me being a nuisance when I call. I don't honestly know how you manage to do your jobs with such patience and understanding – I'm just so glad that you do. I look forward to a time when I can see and hug my mum again but in the meantime the Skype facility you provide is the next best thing."



"Carers have gone above and beyond to ensure residents can still enjoy the spirit of football, by putting on football-themed parties..."

Keeping The Community Connection Alive



www.coveragecareservices.co.uk
01743 283200
Allison House, Oxon Business Park
Shrewsbury SY3 5HJ

With Stone House being situated in a small community of Bishops Castle Shropshire, we try to participate in as much as we possibly can to keep the community connection alive.

We have a very active team of volunteers from the community who help with library books, 'Knit & Knatter' and dementia friendly meetings; with the pandemic putting this on hold, we felt we needed to keep in touch with the community.

Each year Bishops Castle hosts a carnival, but this year due to COVID -19 restrictions, the carnival committee decided to do a virtual carnival. As Stone House usually participates each year by building a float, we didn't want to miss the opportunity to participate this year either.

So we got our thinking caps on and got everyone involved.

We discussed it with the service users and staff and the idea of a beach theme was decided. The motto of this was 'if we can't go to the beach, the beach will come to us!'

With the theme decided it was all hands on deck to get props and pull our idea together.

A discussion then held with Services Users to see who would like to participate and also staff who were keen to get involved. Everyone pulled together, bringing lots of ideas, seeing who had got what and what extra bits we needed to make our ideas a reality.

Our maintenance man made a Punch and Judy show and a staff

member brought in a paddling pool along with sun loungers.

We had seaside cut-out boards and we were donated sand to enhance the seaside look. Staff participated by dressing in beach wear and everyone enjoyed ice creams.

The day we decided to do this we had typical British weather (cold, wet and windy!).

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions the carnival committee could not go around to judge the entries so we had to send in photos. Not only did we have great fun doing this, but we won first prize!



"The idea of a beach theme was decided. The motto of this was: if we can't go to the beach, the beach will come to us!"



Care Staff Enable A Special Birthday Message

Operating a portfolio of ten high quality care homes located throughout England, Elizabeth Finn Homes provide the highest standards of care for the discerning individual. We pride ourselves in creating exceptional care in convivial surroundings and in the company of like-minded people.

With visitor restrictions in place, we had to come up with new ways to ensure residents could stay connected to their loved ones.

As always, our staff went above and beyond. When a daughter got in touch asking if their mother, a resident in one of our homes, could send a birthday video message for another

member of the family, at short notice, our staff member Helen came up with the solution.

We were delighted to receive this feedback:

"Doreen is my mother. I had cause to contact you at very short notice yesterday evening, because one of Doreen's grandchildren wanted to do a last-minute compilation of 70th birthday greetings for her dad, Alec, one of Doreen's sons-in-law, his 70th being today.

At incredibly short notice this was taken on by Helen.

"We had some technical issues but Helen, using her own phone, was able to record a video of my mum wishing Alec 'Happy Birthday'.

Helen's efforts were way beyond the call of duty and I can assure you that my mum's message has caused untold joy to Alec, and all of us, today - being part of the celebration: entirely due to Helen's persistence and compassion. "

The utmost thanks from the entire family: Congratulations Helen.



"Helen's efforts were way beyond the call of duty and I can assure you that my mum's message has caused untold joy to Alec, and all of us."



EMH Befrienders Project

We set up a phone befriending project in March when the country was about to go into lockdown due to COVID-19. There was a real concern of isolation and the emotional impact of it on the people who use our services, particularly those that live alone and have limited support.

The aim was to set up a temporary service that would offer regular wellbeing calls providing them with the opportunity to talk to someone about what is on their mind, if anything is worrying them or to just have a natter and brighten up their day.

Over the course of the project we had a total of 24 members of staff from

different departments who offered to be a phone befriender. Having such a range of volunteers meant that we could match people together, based on their interests or personalities and availability.

We provided the befrienders with information on each person they would be ringing. We approached Age Concern Chesterfield for support and advice on setting up a phone befriending service and put together a comprehensive information and guidance pack to enable the befrienders to feel confident and well supported.

The calls very quickly became person centred to each individual and property. Calls included regular quizzes, singing songs and the extremely popular 'This or That' game which tested their knowledge of each other.

People have talked about a number

of topics during the chats including people's goals for after lockdown, celebrating their birthdays and hobbies and one particular call tackled racism, equality/diversity, BBC News, and bullying all in one go.

Lockdown was a topic that came up quite often.

Below is a quote from a phone befriender on the variety of things she talks about with Margaret each week:

"I was transported on a weekly basis to the Second World War, to rock and roll, puffy dresses, braided hair, steam trains, ham sandwiches, for 20 minutes that week I was there I lived it, smelt it, danced it...with my friend Margaret together each week we escaped together."

Out of all of the benefits and positive effects the project had on people, the best is the friendships that have been built and the meaning that has been brought to the word befriending.

"Over the course of the project we had a total of 24 members of staff from different departments who offered to be a phone befriender."



Staying Connected With Technology

As many of our ECL (Essex Cares Limited) Day Opportunities sites had to reduce their service during COVID-19 due to the government guidance on social distancing, staff began embracing different forms of technology in order to stay regularly connected with our customers with learning disabilities and autism.

As well as ensuring that they maintained contact with customers over the phone, and via Facetime, the service quickly arranged daily virtual sessions via Zoom, including cooking, gardening, arts and crafts, and a book club. Service Manager, Kirsty Wright, says: "One of our customers, Rhys, had been missing the staff and his friends whilst being at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We spoke with his family and supported them to upload Zoom onto one of their devices at home to give Rhys the opportunity to link in with staff at the centre."

"When we called through to Rhys, he was extremely happy to be seeing the staff that he has missed and have a good chat with us all individually, including management. Since then Rhys has been helping us to organise a weekly customer quiz via Zoom, as we all love a quiz and it will mean everyone gets to see each other."

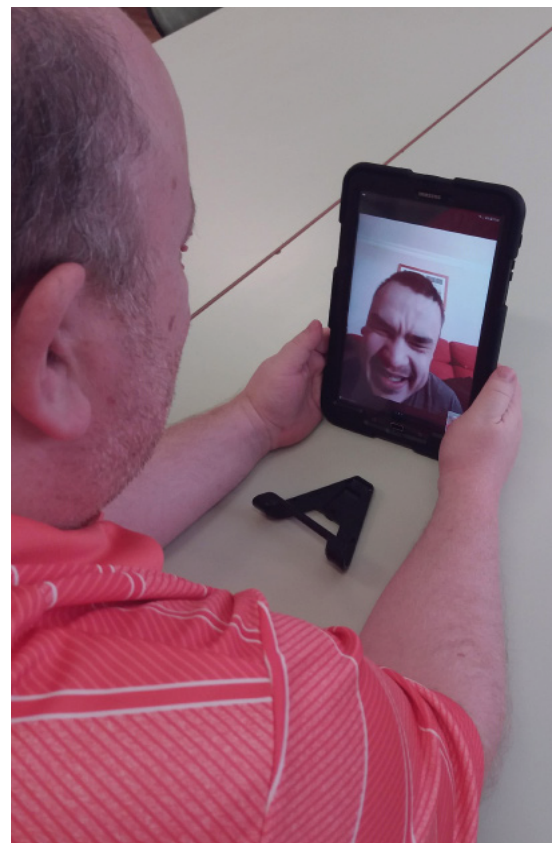
The COVID-19 lockdown was a tough time for one of our customers, Lisa. She didn't understand why she couldn't see her friends. The isolation took its toll and soon Lisa didn't want to do anything but sit on the sofa.

Her mum Ann mentioned this during her twice-weekly welfare calls with ECL, at which point her Community Support Worker organised some one-to-one Zoom sessions with Lisa as well as involving her in their virtual workshops.

Ann commented: "Lisa was so excited to see her friends that she was kissing the laptop. The Zoom sessions have been just great. There's been 'chit chat', singing and signing, get-up-and-go, and Zumba classes.

Lisa has been so much brighter since they started, it's enough to get her going for the day, I don't know where we would have been without them."

"Lisa was so excited to see her friends that she was kissing the laptop."



"ECL is amazing. I hope they continue to do what they're doing - I would definitely recommend them."

Karen Hales, Learning Disability Business Manager, explains: "When we trialled our virtual cooking session it was amazing seeing all of the customers and some of their families joining in and cooking. We had a few technical issues in the beginning, which is to be expected, but I think it's important that we continue to adapt and use technology to support our customers during this time."

Not wanting to miss out on their rehearsals, our ECL Drama groups utilised technology to continue to hold their sessions, with the Maldon group arranging weekly online sing-alongs to their favourite tracks, including 'All that Jazz' and 'The Bombay'.

Team Leader, Bethany Durling, is part of the team that runs Colchester's ECL Drama group and, as well as hosting virtual sessions, she has been sending videos of herself signing to customers, which she says they have found useful.

Bethany says: "It is important to use technology to connect with customers as it is a great way of being able to keep everybody up-to-date with information, as well as supporting them with activities. Being able to use technology means that we can keep everybody connected and continue to run sessions so that customers are still active and have something to work towards.

"Especially with times like now, customers do feel down about not being able to be around the ones they usually interact with. Having use of video calls or even phone calls allows us to remain connected and support their mental wellbeing."



"It is important to use technology to connect with customers as it is a great way of being able to keep everybody up-to-date."

ECL was also issued with 250 Alcove Carephones from Essex County Council, which we were able to distribute to customers that were identified as benefitting from them, or unable to access their own devices. The Alcove technology enables customers to receive remote care calls, as well as video contact with friends and family, through an easy-to-use touch screen display. ECL care staff supported with the distribution, training and installation of the devices, which operate via a built-in 4G sim card.

Karen Hales explains: "As the majority of our Day Opportunities customers were having to stay at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alcove technology enabled us to maintain contact, and ensure that their allocated

support workers were able to check-in on a regular basis. Many of our customers expressed that they were missing face-to-face contact due to social distancing, so being able to speak to their friends, family and key workers via the video chat has had a really positive impact on their wellbeing."



Friends of the Elderly, the charity which runs care homes and services for older people throughout England, has continued to put the mental and physical health and wellbeing of its residents and staff at the heart of all its activities during this unprecedented time.

The charity has been going that extra mile and focusing on the little things it does that have a positive and meaningful impact on the daily lives of its residents and staff, ensuring they are connected to families, loved ones and their local communities, whilst maintaining the highest quality of care during the lockdown period.

It's the little things here. It was designed by the charity to help its residents, care home teams, families and friends to keep in touch while they are missing each other. It allows them to express their own 'little things' as a way of sharing their love and affection whilst at the same time, looking towards the future.

Head of Marketing and Communications at Friends of the Elderly, Jessica Stone said: "It's the little things that gives our residents, their families, our care home staff and volunteers a way to share positive messages, keeping them connected during these difficult times. It's a lovely way for everyone to express the little things that matter the most to them about each other; their happy moments, love, appreciation and gratitude to show how much we all value each other and are looking forward to spending time together again."

For example, as the local vicar is now unable to physically visit Bernard Sunley Care Home in Woking every Friday, the team, together with the vicar,

It's The Little Things That Matter

created a virtual church service. Many residents were missing these weekly visits for their spiritual wellbeing, but now the service is live streamed into all lounge areas every Friday.

In Haslemere, the team at Redcot Care Home has continued with their varied programme of activities including craft time, gardening and music sessions, with the sing-along gatherings using the home's Alexa device proving very popular.

At The Lawn Care Home in Alton, residents have been enjoying regular quiz afternoons and at Little Bramingham Farm in Luton, two singers have performed in the courtyard since lockdown, which lifted everyone's mood. Finally, the residents celebrated Mother's Day with pink Cava and flowers.

In Bournemouth at the Retired Nurses National Home, the residents made

relatives and friends, and a pen-pal letter exchange has been set-up between a number of the residents and volunteers, a local cub scout group and a Duke of Edinburgh Award student.

At the three care homes in Malvern - Davenham, Bradbury Court and Perrins House staff created a pop-up hairdresser, 'Selena's Salon', so residents could enjoy getting their hair done. Staff have also been helping residents to make regular video calls and FaceTime chats to keep them connected with their families.

As the local vicar is now unable to physically visit Bernard Sunley Care Home in Woking every Friday, the team, together with the vicar, created a virtual church service.



Pod Allows Visiting to Continue

Glebe Court Nursing Home, part of the Glebe Housing Association, installed a pod in June to help families to visit. People need people and the pod has proved invaluable in helping the mental health of residents, allowing them to physically see their loved ones rather than just via a screen.

The pod has enabled hundreds of visits, including a family get together to celebrate the special 100 year birthday of a resident.

But as well as the essential visiting of family and friends, the pod has been used to maintain a stimulating programme of vital activities, so important to the life of a care setting.

These include weekly music therapy sessions, religious services, birthday tea parties, and entertainment in the form of local bands and

Glebe Court's own staff band.

The pod has been invaluable in so many ways emotionally, as it has been used for memorial services too. Furthermore, a resident mourning the loss of her son was able to hold a small Wake in the pod and garden.

Part of Glebe Court's planning for a second wave of the pandemic and all the potential visiting restrictions that might bring, the Pod will be staying in place for the foreseeable future as part of helping people to stay connected in a COVID-19 World.

Manager Susan Hill said: "The difference this has made to the emotional wellbeing of all the residents has been amazing. Families have loved it too and they have been comforted to see their loved ones. It has been a powerful medicine."



www.glebehousingassociation.co.uk

020 8777 1122

Bencurtis Park, West Wickham
Kent, BR4 9QD



"The pod has been invaluable in so many ways emotionally, as it has been used for memorial services too."



'Better Together' Service Makes Over 2,500 Calls to Isolated Older People

GuildCare 

www.guildcare.org

01903 528600

Methold House, North Street

Worthing, BN11 1DU

In the wake of lockdown Worthing charity Guild Care had to review how best to continue to support their clients whilst not being able to offer any buildings-based services.

In line with government guidelines, many of the charity's community services for older people, were closed.

With hundreds of vulnerable older people left without the support system they heavily relied on, Guild Care took action and introduced the new service, Better Together, to ensure no one was left behind.

Today, staff are supporting over 280 people who used these buildings-based services and in doing so have made over 2,500 weekly, friendly calls to keep in touch, be a friend, offer support and ultimately help tackle loneliness.

Nicki Freeman, Guild Care's Head of Community Services, said: "This has been an incredibly difficult time for our members, and carers are, of course, dealing with an extremely testing situation - living with someone with dementia twenty-four-seven. With no real proper rest or break and with some of our services currently closed it has been really tough on them. Our job right now is very much about helping to support their emotional wellbeing.

"Some customers have needed a lot of emotional support, others have needed help to access practical assistance and for many it is also about reassurance and human contact. I know that they have all been pleased to hear a friendly voice to have a chat and hopefully a little laugh too."

Calls have included singing happy birthday down the end of the phone, reminiscing about life stories, and generally making sure everyone feels safe.

Jo Sherman, Community Services Administrator, has continued to make calls since March and says it's clear the positive impact their service has had on members and carers.

Jo said: "This service has made such a difference to their lives especially during lockdown, people were so grateful and really looked forward to our calls. It was a lifeline to so many of them, as for some it was the only contact they had to the outside world. I gained 50 new friends from making my calls."

Christine, who used to attend the Friendship Club, which was a social gathering for the over 70s, said, "I've got a friend in Guild Care, you have always been there for me. I can't tell you how much this helps to get this call once a week. You have lifted me up. You have been my godsend."

"This service has made such a difference to their lives especially during lockdown, people were so grateful and really looked forward to our calls."



Claudette's Story



www.hestia.org

020 7378 3100

Maya House

134-138 Borough High Street
London, SE1 1LB

At Hestia we support adults and children in times of crisis. Before Coronavirus, Claudette's group came together, every Tuesday and every Friday. The group is still coming together, but doing so online, via video call.

This is Claudette's Story of hearing voices and finding the support she needs.

"Sometimes when I'm hearing voices, they are really hard to get rid of and I have suicidal thoughts. When I go out, because I often do my own rituals in public, people stare at me and say I'm mad. I need a space where I could be around people who understood.

"I have been attending the Hearing Voices group in Brent for about a year or so now. Beforehand, I was seeing a psychiatrist every two weeks but I didn't feel like I was getting anything out of it. When they referred me to the Hearing Voices group, everything changed.

"Coming together with the group brings me such great joy and it has really helped me in life. When you hear voices, you have to explain it to everyone you meet. But the members of the group understand who you are, what you are going through and how you are feeling.

"Being part of a group who are in the same situation as me has been life-changing."

"Before Coronavirus, the group came together, every Tuesday and every Friday. Now we're still coming together but we're doing so online, via video call. I think it's even better now. We share things we didn't share in person and everyone gets a chance to speak when we're on a video call.

"I still do hear voices and sometimes it makes me really sad. But when I consider that other people are in the same situation as me, it gives me a boost. To know I have friends in the group who are going through it too gives me strength. I reflect on what they have taught me, and I think to myself: 'Claudette, you are not alone.'

"I really look forward to hopping online every week. I'm overwhelmed with happiness that they managed to put the service online as a video call so quickly. I don't know what would have happened without it. When you can see each other live, speak to each other and share advice, it keeps you going.

"The group really changed my life. I always think that we are united as one together. We will get well together."

"Being part of a group who are in the same situation as me has been life-changing."



Book of You Helps Build Relationships



www.mha.org.uk

01332 296200

Epworth House
Stuart Street, Derby
DE1 2EQ

A simple life story app that has helped families at MHA care homes and retirement living schemes stay connected during lockdown, is now helping build face-to-face relationships as homes start to open up for visits once more.

Book of You is a reminiscence tool for people living with dementia and uses words, pictures, music and film to create a biographical digital portrait of an individual.

Methodist Homes (MHA) has been trialling the app at six locations to help build a story of a resident's life, filled with life events and memories. Families are able to add video and audio messages to the app, which have then been played to residents during lockdown, helping them stay connected with familiar faces and voices.

Now the app is helping families re-connect as socially-distanced outdoor visits have started at MHA's homes and schemes as they chat face-to-face about the memories.

David Moore, MHA's dementia lead, said: "Book of You was a fantastic tool before COVID-19, but it has become a real lifesaver for us since the virus struck.

"Lockdown created a lot of anxiety for residents, their loved ones and carers. Families are desperately worried about how their loved one will cope, whether isolation will hasten their decline, and whether they will still be recognised by the time they are allowed to visit again.

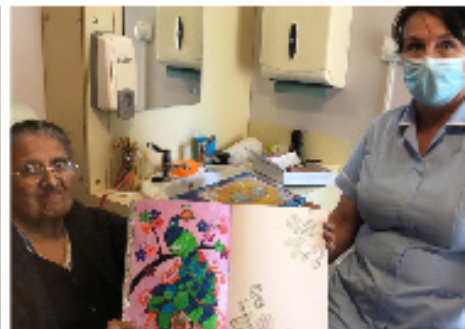
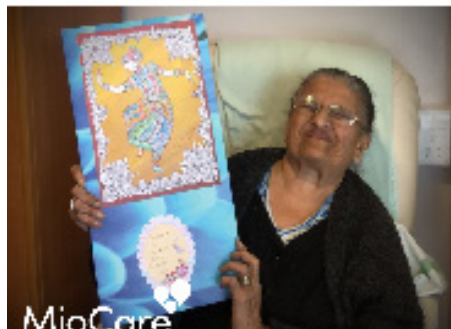
"The app has kept those crucial memories, connections and relationships alive and now they are able to talk about them face-to-face during visits.

"Our carers enjoy using it. It helps them to understand the rich, varied and wonderful lives lived by the people they are caring for. It brings people closer together and can help us improve how we care, because we understand who we're caring for so much better."

"Nicola Ugurbascicek, manager at MHA Aughton Park care home where it has been on trial, said: "Book of You has really helped our residents stay connected with their relatives and friends."

"Book of You has really helped our residents stay connected with their relatives and friends."





Staying Connected During a Crisis

Karen, Care Coordinator in the Shared Lives Oldham team shares her thoughts and experiences

"In June 2020, we marked both Shared Lives Week and Learning Disability Week. As a Care Coordinator in the MioCare Group's Shared Lives Oldham team I felt a connection with both of those events!

"With the theme of Learning Disability Week being 'the importance of friendships during lockdown', I wanted to write about how - as a service and community - we've kept connection and friendship at the forefront of our minds during the recent months.

"The Coronavirus pandemic has affected us all and although some restrictions have been lifted, we're all still managing some sort of lockdown. Many people with a learning disability continue to feel isolated, as they are unable to see much of their friends and families. At Shared Lives, we want to show the importance of friendship in helping deal with isolation and explore the different

ways of maintaining key connections during a potentially difficult time.

"Throughout the pandemic, our carers have supported the individuals they care for to pursue new activities within the home and also to build on some of the skills that they'd already developed.

"These have included hobbies like cooking, baking, gardening and DIY. Lockdown has meant more time together in the household and as the pace of life has slowed down, people have had the opportunity to really get to know each other better. In many cases, their friendships have become even closer than they were before.

"And again, with the support of their carers, Maria, Malcolm, Graham and many others in Shared Lives matches have been able to maintain contact with the friends they've got in the community. Friends, who before Coronavirus came along, they would sometimes see multiple times a week!

"They've used Facebook and other social media to keep in touch and have successfully taken part in online quizzes, bingo sessions and even karaoke (we have some keen singers in the Shared Lives Oldham family!).

"Carers have made sure that weekly plans now include regular telephone or video calls to family members and key people in service users' networks, so that no one feels lonely or secluded. The support to use technology has helped to manage isolation from family and friends and has been successful in maintaining crucial relationships and a sense of community and belonging.

"More recently, according to guidelines and where safe to do so, carers have started to support individuals to plan and meet up with family members whilst ensuring that everyone is staying safe and following social distancing rules.

"The scheme (and indeed the MioCare Group through its other services too) is about supporting people to get the most out of life.

"Shared Lives continues to live by that mission across our town and we're proud of the way families in Oldham have supported each other (and continue to support each other!) through the current crisis."

Virtual Art Classes Connect Mother & Daughter

One Housing

www.onehousing.co.uk

0300 123 9966

Atelier House, 64 Pratt Street

London, NW1 0DL



Eighty-five year-old Beryl Wall, a resident at Baycroft Flitwick care home with advanced dementia, has been participating in virtual art classes in order to interact with her daughter Wendy during lockdown.

The art classes, set up by Flitwick's Activities Coordinator Lu Lawrence, have been helping Beryl as well as giving her regular virtual contact and bonding with Wendy as she is unable to visit due to the visiting restrictions in care homes. The two hadn't seen each other in person since March until the art classes were arranged at the end of July.

Wendy had been finding it difficult to engage with her Mum as Beryl is not able to easily communicate, so as Wendy had been doing her own painting during lockdown, it was suggested that they hold virtual art sessions together.

The results of this have been incredible!

Beryl and Wendy now have regular virtual art club sessions together via Skype, where they both paint a picture within a set hour to a set theme.

Wendy said: "What's amazing is that Mum has never been artistic in her life. But more importantly, during the hour she is totally focused, engaged, absorbed. We talk about what we're doing, the colours we're choosing, how we're applying the paint. She has a conversation with me and is clearly proud of her achievement. Through our art we can enjoy the moment and rock the lockdown together!"

Lu Lawrence, Baycroft Flitwick's Activities Co-ordinator said: "What an incredible journey Beryl has been on exploring her artistic side during lockdown! I am very proud to be able to facilitate this and watch her in her element."

In August we started offering garden reunion visits to families of our care home residents.

Wendy and Beryl have continued their art club sessions with Wendy painting from outside Beryl's window.



www.osjct.co.uk

0800 988 8133

1 Des Roches Square Witney
Oxfordshire OX28 4BE

Multi-talented Bursar Steps Into New Roles

Michelle Law's day job is bursar of The Meadows Care Home in Didcot but during lockdown she stepped up and juggled that role while also working as a carer, housekeeper, family liaison and even chef.

The Meadows, which is run by The Orders of St John Care Trust, has 68 residents and Michelle is dedicated to its success, having worked there for nearly five years.

A key role Michelle carried out was acting as bereavement liaison with family members, and her commitment during this difficult time made a huge difference. She held Facetime calls with loved ones and, when they were ready, held a video call in which she showed them the possessions that were in the resident's room so that important keepsakes could be treasured.

She also attended residents' funerals and, on one occasion, live streamed it for a family member who was unable to attend due to travel restrictions.

Michelle had previously been a care worker and stepped-in to support when needed. She supported on a full Sunday of testing for all staff and then covered colleagues who returned positive tests, none of whom had displayed any symptoms. A lack of chefs - due to self-isolation - also saw Michelle step into the kitchen several times in the first month to prepare meals for all 68 residents. Despite never previously cooking for more than her family of six, she stuck to the published menu and had no complaints but plenty of compliments.

Michelle also cleaned rooms and carried out other housekeeping functions as well as ensuring that admin, such as recruiting agency staff, were attended to when other colleagues had to isolate.

Michelle said: "It was never a question for me really. I love working here and we are all part of a huge family. I couldn't sit back and watch other people struggle or see a need and not help to meet it."

Michelle was arriving at work at seven in the morning and working until six in the early evening to ensure that she could do the extra roles as well as fulfilling her main role as bursar. She also worked many weekends.

And to finish off her day, Michelle was then going home to carry out home-schooling with her youngest children, which saw them doing daily PE, maths and English lessons in the evenings!



Hero Care Worker Saves Maghull Man's Life



Parkhaven Trust

Established 1888

www.parkhaven.org.uk

0151 526 4133

Parkhaven Trust, Liverpool
Rd South, Maghull Liverpool,
Merseyside,
L31 8BS

Lisa Russell, a registered mental health nurse at Parkhaven Trust's The Beeches Centre in Maghull, went 'above and beyond' to raise the alarm when a resident's 88 year old husband Ted Birch sounded 'not quite himself' when phoning to check on his wife.

Lisa said: "Ted used to visit Maud daily before the pandemic began. He was a real regular at The Beeches. Since the start of the pandemic we have been unable to allow indoor visiting – so we can keep all our residents safe.

"Ted has since been doing garden visits and calling regularly to speak to his wife. When he called last week he didn't sound his usual self, he sounded like he was being sick and complained of feeling dizzy.

"We were worried about him so I called his daughter and also decided to pop round and see if there was anything I could do. When I arrived, he was shivering and had been sick. I immediately called the paramedics and they took him to hospital. Whilst in hospital he went into cardiac arrest and was brought back by the doctors.

"I am so glad I went over when I did and was able to help Ted."

Ted's daughter Nicky Taylor added, "I had spoken to dad just 15 minutes before Lisa called me. We were on our way to Wales for the weekend and he had sounded happy and well. When Lisa called, I was distraught. He had taken ill so quickly and we were three hours away stuck in traffic on the motorway.

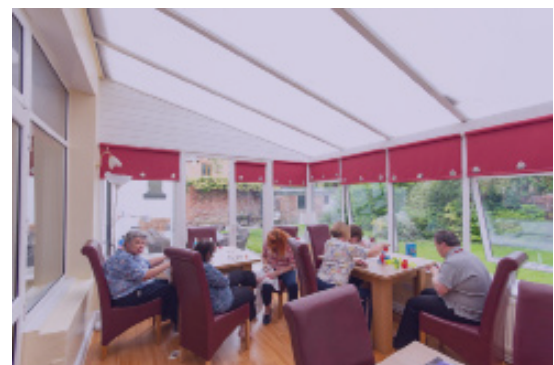
"I simply can't thank Lisa enough. It's thanks to her my dad is still alive. If Lisa hadn't noticed dad sounded unwell and hadn't gone over to check on him, he wouldn't have had the help around him when he went into cardiac arrest and he wouldn't be here today."

"Lisa is amazing; her help has been truly life-saving."

"Lisa and the team at The Beeches have been taking such great care of my mum (Maud). We didn't expect that care to extend to my dad too. But that is what the staff there are like! It feels like one big family and they really do care, which means so much to us."

Ted and Maud Birch are well known faces around Maghull, as they ran successful businesses here before their well-earned retirement. Ted and Maud have been married for 67 years and been together for 70. Ted is now back 'out and about' in and around Maghull on his bright orange mobility scooter.

"Lisa is amazing; her help has been truly life-saving."



Families Reunited At Care Home After COVID-19 Lockdown



www.quantumcare.co.uk

01707 393293

4 Silver Court, Watchmead
Welwyn Garden City, Herts
AL7 1TS

Jubilee Court Care Home in Stevenage welcomed back families in July after being in lockdown for nearly four months. First on the list to be reunited were Chris Jarman and her 89-year-old Mother Ann.

The home had been closed since March, when parent company Quantum Care made the difficult decision to stop all non-essential visits to its care homes which sadly prevented family members and friends from visiting. Since that time, residents had been keeping in touch with their loved ones by letter, telephone calls and video calls, but this was the first time that they could see each other in person.

All visits had to be carried out within strict health and safety guidelines for everybody's protection, which meant that the visits took place outside, at a distance and with no hugs allowed.

Ann, one of Jubilee Court's residents, couldn't stop smiling when she saw her daughter for the first time since the home's lockdown began. Despite the distance between them, Chris was able to send her mum a huge air hug, which Ann sent back to her. They then spent the rest of the visit chatting and catching up on everything they had missed.

After the visit Chris said: "It's been so wonderful to see Mum again. It's absolutely lovely because she looks so well and she's been cared for so well by everyone here at Jubilee Court, from the housekeeping staff all the way to the manager. Everyone's the same, they are a team.

"I have missed Mum but I have kept in contact. Every Monday I phone her, Tuesdays I send in a parcel for her with sweets and a book or a magazine, Thursdays I send a four-minute video for her and Friday I phone her again. When the Activity team show her the video, they send me an email afterwards to let me know how much she enjoyed it. They have been fantastic – they have kept Mum busy and she has been doing things that she has never done before."

Ann said: "I miss Chris when I don't see her, but I do see her on the video. I know that whatever she's doing, she's alright. It's so lovely to see her and I am looking forward to seeing her again next week. I've been looked after really well and I'm very happy here but today has been the best day ever."

“ Throughout this time, I have been so relaxed at home even though it's been so long, as I know she has been loved and cared for. Not only mum but all the residents. It's brilliant at Jubilee Court and we have had great contact so I haven't had to worry. You couldn't wish for a better care home; they are marvellous.”



Technology & Knitted Hearts

Keep People Together at The Calway House



Somerset
Care

www.somersetcare.co.uk

0800 8174 990

Acacia House Blackbrook

Park Avenue

Taunton, TA1 2PX

Loneliness has been a large concern for many during lockdown.

Particularly prevalent in the elderly, AgeUK reports 1.9 million older people can feel invisible. The government and CQC COVID-19 guidelines stipulate that care home residents are restricted to one visitor, outdoors, at a social distance.

With the above in mind, Somerset Care got extra creative with each resident in its 27 care homes and home care services. The primary focus was to create a stimulating environment that catered to the needs of each resident. This involved giving more one-on-one time with carers and using technology to connect residents with the outside world.

Calway House was the first care home to pilot Relsapp at the beginning of lockdown, which proved to be a hit. The safe, highly private app, bridges communication gaps between families and generations, allowing resident to exchange messages, pictures, videos, newsletters and music with loved ones.

The technology meant the home was able to share joyous occasions such as 100th birthdays with families, despite not being in each other's physical presence. Getting snap happy with the camera and video functions demonstrated to families that their loved ones were happy and in good hands; meanwhile the residents' spirits were kept high despite the uncertainty that surrounded everyone.

Designed with care homes in mind, creator Howard Bashford, whose wife is a former care home manager, originally built the technology to

keep his elderly mother, a care home resident, connected with his son. Fully aware of the importance of keeping residents connected and fully engaged with their loved ones for their wellbeing, drove Calway House to pursue the innovative technology.

However, the care home's methods didn't end there.

Calway House received generous donations from locals who knitted hearts in pairs; one heart was created for the resident and the matching heart was sent to the residents' loved ones, accompanied by a letter. The letter expressed how much the residents missed their families and friends with the heart gesture implying that they are always in their hearts.

This simple, kind offering was warmly received by all, and enabled both residents and their loved ones from afar to be very much involved in each other's lives and grateful to all to be safe and happy.

Calway House and the wider Somerset Care team cannot wait for the day when it is safe and fully compliant

The primary focus was to create a stimulating environment that catered to the needs of each resident.

to welcome visitors back into the homes.

For now however, they are fully embracing change and the creative challenges faced in staying connected, while ensuring those in their care continue to live fulfilling lives.



Breaking Down Barriers to Digital Inclusion

As part of Surrey Choices' Digital Inclusion Strategy, the team has been finding out what the barriers are to IT for the people we support and the people they share their homes with. Surrey Choices has been working to overcome those barriers by our input and signposting to other support, prioritising those people who live at home alone or with their families to reduce isolation.

Over several weeks, Surrey Choices has been visited Clare to get her online. Clare is deaf so it is very important that she can reconnect with her family and friends virtually whilst keeping safe at home.

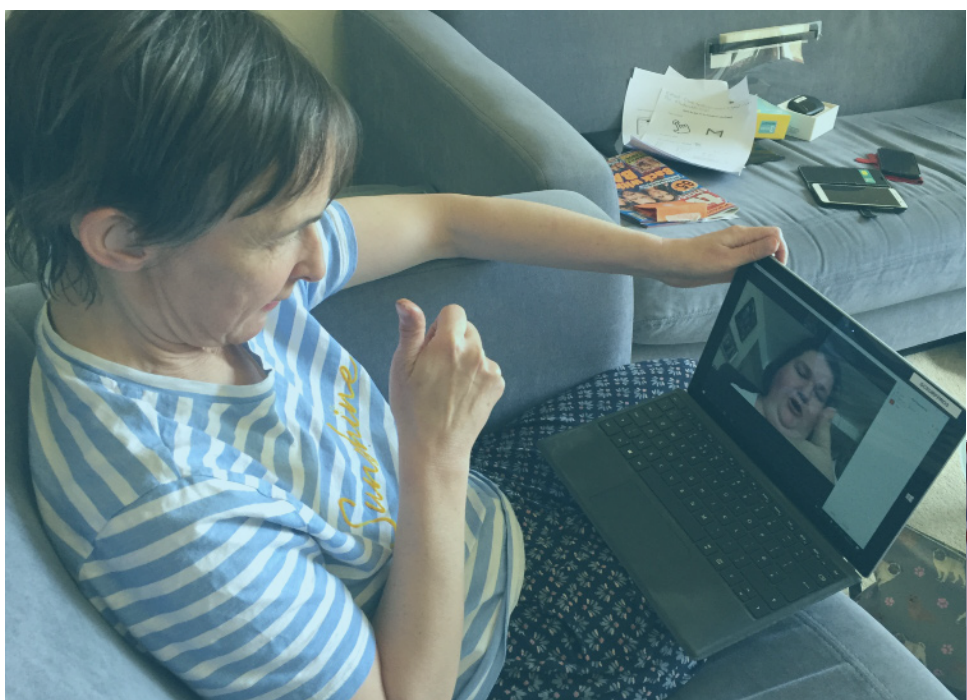
Clare was given a tablet and from there she was taught how to use it and how to access Zoom. The first virtual call she had was with her best friend, someone who she has not seen since February. This was an experiment to see how well she could understand lip reading and signing through a screen.

The Zoom experiment could not have gone better, Clare chatted, laughed and got excited for over 30 minutes. She could lip read and see her friend signing with ease.

This is a huge achievement and a massive step forward in helping her to connect and feel less lonely whilst at home.

Over the following weeks Clare was supported to turn on the tablet by herself and access Zoom independently. Clare's family also were keen to learn how to use Zoom so that they had another means of connecting and communicating with her.

"This additional communications channel brought about many positive outcomes; health and wellbeing, independence, life skills and communication with friends have all improved since the arrival of the tablet and zoom sessions."



"To support someone to not feel alone is one of the most important things to do during this global pandemic."

Helping Manage Anxiety and Enabling Emotionally Important Visits at Newlands Care Home J's Story



www.wcs-care.co.uk
01926 864 242
Newlands, Whites Row,
Kenilworth,
CV8 1HW

In July 2020, J moved into Newlands care home because she felt that she was unable to manage at home any longer. She was concerned about being institutionalised, lonely and losing dignity, and had seen a lot of negative publicity about care settings generally which made her anxious.

J quickly made friends with those in her household bubble at Newlands, and she was surprised that she was still able to continue enjoying what she'd always done, particularly having a glass of wine every night.

Restrictions imposed by COVID-19 at the time, meant that J could only have garden visits from her family. She was upset about her dog – she'd had him for many years and felt he'd been her best friend during difficult times.

In normal circumstances, the home would have welcomed pets.

Shortly after J moved in, her dog became unwell and suffered seizures.

She was worried that she would lose him without being able to see him again.

Newlands' home manager wanted to do the right thing by J (and her dog), so with J's consent, she made arrangements that enabled J to see and hold her pet safely. So, the leadership challenge was understanding how to make this happen, and once that decision was made, it wasn't that difficult.

Mindful of reducing the risk of infection, the home manager agreed that J's dog could be brought to Newlands to visit J, who agreed to wear PPE and use sanitiser after holding him. J also agreed to shower and change her clothes when she came back into the home to further reduce any risk.

J was so emotional and grateful that this opportunity was created for her and her beloved dog, and it was clear from the smile on her face just how much this meant to her.





THE MANY FACES OF LEADERSHIP



The Many Faces of Leadership

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Leading by Exceptional Example

By Kath Hennessy, Operations Manager,
Cartlidge House



www.accordgroup.org.uk
(0300) 111 7000

178 Birmingham Road
West Bromwich, West Midlands,
B70 6QG

As the news surrounding COVID-19 escalates, I make the incredibly tough decision that if needed, I would move into the care home where I work. This is not a decision I've made lightly. As well as being Operations Manager at Cartlidge House, I'm mum to an eight-year-old son who is awaiting heart surgery.

I'm very aware of just how everyone is feeling. These are such uncertain times and although we want to hope for the best, I want to make sure we are prepared for whatever we may face. Staff are apprehensive, wondering how this pandemic will affect our care home and lovely customers. Our families, many of whom visit on a regular basis are worried about being apart from their loved ones.

I reassure everyone that although things are changing rapidly, we will as always do our absolute best to provide the best care possible. We've got a great staff team and supportive senior management and everyone pulls together. Our staff work additional hours to manage rotas and cover shifts - a constantly evolving challenge, as staff members self-isolate for periods of time.

I'm on constant standby, closely monitoring staffing levels, wondering if today would be the day I make the ultimate decision to stay at the care home and not go home to my son.

Being apart from him would be heart-breaking but I want to look after our customers here and not risk taking the virus back to him. As a mother I'm anxious about him having surgery, especially during a pandemic, but I'm trying to focus on how much better he will be post-surgery. I can't wait to see him up and out of that wheelchair.

As the impacts of COVID-19 are felt within our care home I set up reflective sessions for staff so they get an extra level of support. I can see this is really helping my team to make some sense of this situation.

As a leader I look for opportunities to celebrate the happy and positive moments to keep up morale. We celebrated the 100th birthday of a customer who had suspected COVID-19 in May and was very poorly - we expected the worst. We did our very best to look after her and thankfully she made an amazing recovery.



Her birthday was a real milestone for all concerned and will be remembered as a monumental day.

Thankfully my son's surgery was a success, I can't explain what a huge relief to know he is okay and can start his recovery journey. I am so grateful he is safe and okay. He has just celebrated his ninth birthday; the wheelchair is gone and he is making progress every day.

2020 has brought many challenges, but I've learnt that we can make it through the toughest of challenges when we work together and take the time to recognise the special moments along the way.

"I refuse to take additional leave - I want to lead my team by exceptional example."





www.ambient.org.uk

020 8502 3933

Unit 9, Bourne Court,
Unity Trading Estate, Southend Road,
Woodford Green
IG8 8HD

Mark Milton An Agent of Change

Since his appointment in 2015, CEO of Ambient Support, Mark Milton, has been an 'Agent of Change.' And now, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, those skills to manage change have been called upon more than ever. His skills in change management meant that he headed-up a robust COVID-19 business continuity response that minimised the impact of the virus amongst both residents and staff.

His 'One Team' compassionate leadership response during this challenging period means 88 per cent of employees believe we handled the pandemic well, according to our Staff Wellbeing survey.

In some services where there were deaths attributable to the virus, tailored emotional support and guidance was provided by engaging the charity's Employee Assistance Programme to support staff teams remotely via the use of video technology as well as telephone support.

Whilst there were some shortages of PPE, services pulled through working together as a cohesive team to support each other and the residents. An internal Clinical Lead was appointed to spearhead the charity's clinical response throughout the pandemic and ensure all staff teams were kept abreast of the latest IPC guidance.

The Ambient Support COVID pandemic business contingency plan outlined maintaining safe levels of staffing and ensuring teams had the equipment, training and personal emotional support to work effectively.

New ways of acknowledging staff

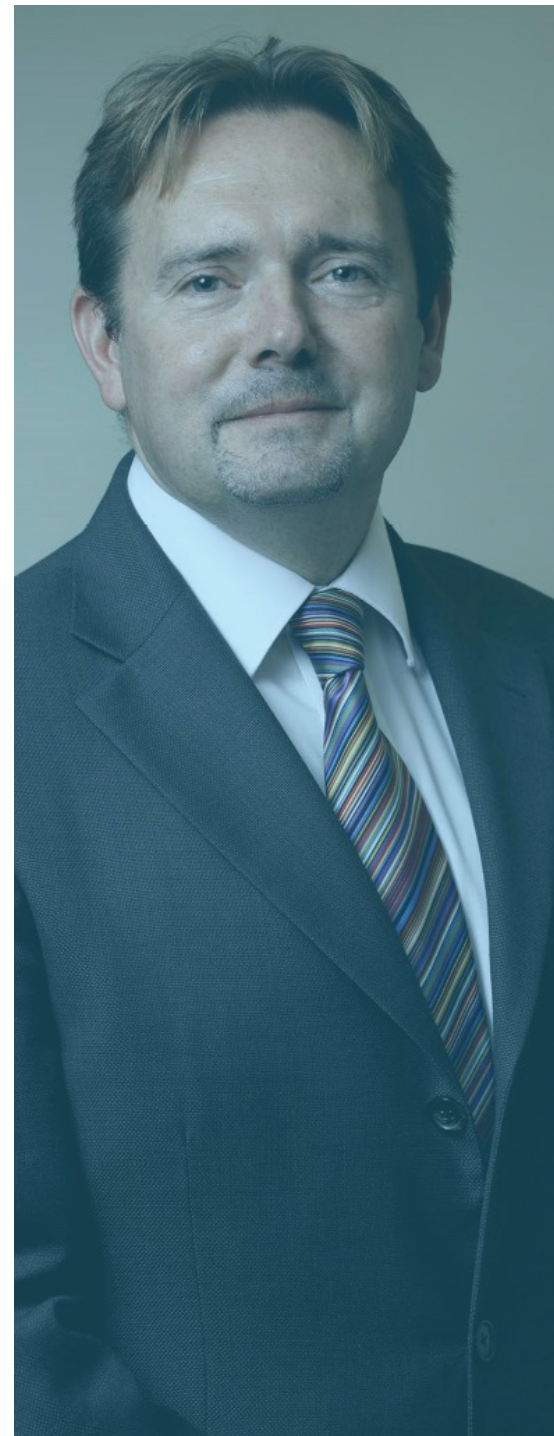
commitment and dedication were introduced to ensure staff continued to feel valued and supported. In addition a COVID-19 Heroes Award Scheme was developed. Members of the Senior Leadership team, including Mark, made regular virtual visits through Microsoft Team video calls to ensure that morale and motivation were maintained and managed.

A weekly COVID-19 Steering Group chaired by Mark Milton and, attended by members of the Senior Leadership Team and key operational staff meant that communications were consolidated, issues and outcomes discussed and explored before cascading communications to frontline staff teams.

The Learning and Development Team swiftly moved all training for staff to digital means so that there was no fall behind in quality and safety standards during the period of lockdown. In addition, 'Resilience and Mental Wellbeing' courses were developed and delivered to staff, to support essential self-care throughout unprecedented times.

During this period, Mark also oversaw the rebrand of the charity on the 1 April, a move to new corporate offices and the development of three new services for people with learning disabilities so far during the pandemic.

Without his clear headedness, compassionate leadership style and ability to inspire and motivate others during the darkest of days none of this would have been possible.



Caring For All



Support for life

www.ben.org.uk

01344 298100

Lynwood Court, Lynwood

Village, Rise Road, Ascot

Berkshire, SL5 0FG

Care centre managers are special people. Under normal circumstances they have to combine a special skill set to keep care homes running safely and efficiently, whilst fostering an environment of empathy and compassion across the teams they manage.

2020 has been a challenging year for all, but for those in care, particularly managers, these skills have at times, nearly been pushed to breaking point. Maxine Freeman, Head of Person Centred Care, joined Lynwood Care Centre at the height of the crisis.

Coronavirus outbreaks were taking hold in care centres across the country, testing was not widely available and staff were having to adopt new measures daily in the fight to keep their centres safe. Lynwood had the added challenges of key staff leaving on maternity and retirement so Maxine had to get up and running quickly.

Jump forward several months and everything seems much calmer and controlled, but it hasn't been without challenges. On top of her normal management duties.

“Maxine now has what seems like a second job on top, managing the effects of the Coronavirus on her centre, staff, residents and their families.”

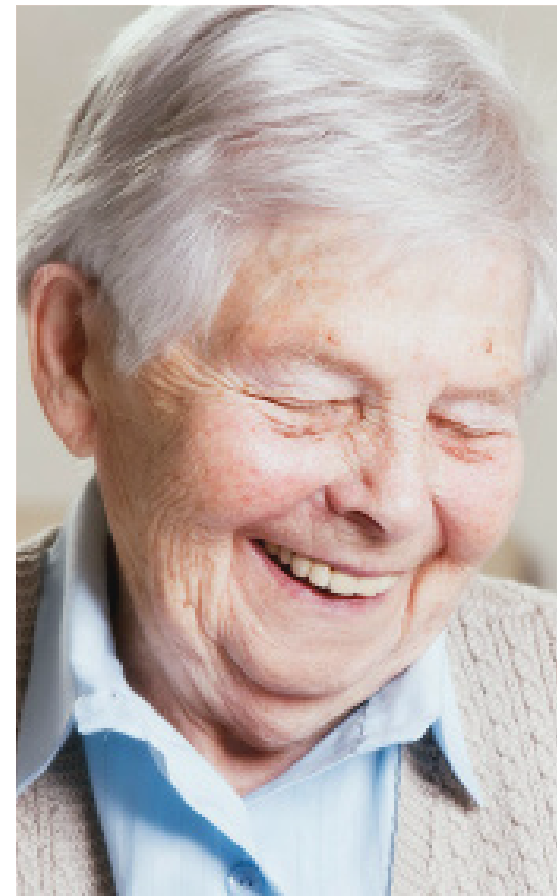
One day she can be supporting or counselling a member of a team, who is critical to providing care to our residents, but also needing to be at home to look after her son who is too unwell to go to school during these very cautious times.

The next day Maxine will be starting on the weekly staff testing, ensuring COVID-19 isn't finding its way into the centre.

Then there's looking after the residents' wellbeing – lockdown has been tough for them and many are feeling depressed, so she's always trying to come up with new and fun ideas to keep the residents engaged.

Alongside caring for residents there is a need to be supporting their families who have struggled through lockdown, with long periods of not being able to visit and regularly changing advice. There are relatives who understand, and some who are frustrated, but all have to be treated with kindness and respect.

It's then time to put on her professional hat – working with PHE or the local authority to keep information flowing back and forth in the national effort to track and manage the disease. With all of this, she's still smiling and a positive force within the team.



She embodies the requirements of care centre management – great communication and organisation skills, empathy, support, collaboration, creativity, resilience and compassion.

Care centre managers are indeed very special people.



How Being Stubborn Helps!

by Rachel Musrati, Care Home Manager, Compton Lodge (part of Central & Cecil Housing Trust)

Like many homes around the country, when lockdown happened the staff's initial fears spread across the home like a dark cloud.

Some were very apprehensive and had serious misgivings about the incredible challenge that awaited us. I was the same. So, understandably, there were some difficult conversations, and an inevitable early increase in staff sickness as anxieties and paranoia took a hold in that first period.



Infection control is what we do. The problem, of course, was that with a largely unknown virus, we were very much at the mercy of a government which appeared to be shrugging its shoulders.

It was obvious to us early on that the care sector wasn't getting the support it needed. In some ways, that made us even more determined to manage this crisis, together, as a team.

Then it switched.



From not enough communication I was then inundated with email upon email about PPE. We had regular discussions and planning with managers across C&C. But messages and guidance shifted all the time, with parts of the healthcare system on different pages, sending different messages – adding confusion when what we needed was clarity. And testing.

The information came in endless waves, not giving enough time to digest one set of guidelines before a new set came down.

What makes care managers like me a little different I suppose, is an absolute stubbornness not to concede.

We never give up on our residents and in fact our 'Out Not In' Strategy is all about bringing the best out of residents regardless of their health. So, I focused on reassuring my residents, my staff and my relatives – who would contact us day in day out – that we can get through this.

There's no denying those lockdown walks to work were ghostly. With only the birds for company, Camden, a usually thriving place now felt dead.

C&C
LONDON HOMES
SINCE 1926

www.ccht.org.uk
020 7922 5300
Cecil House
266 Waterloo Road, London
SE1 8RQ

I wasn't always 'at the races' though; one day I was stood in my kitchen at home, and my Harry asked me: "Are you OK. girl?" I just looked at him and burst into tears. He gave me a big hug and I knew I could do it.

The staff were fantastic and began to brace up. We are a family; the 'clap for carers' saw in the night staff as they arrived and warmed the day staff as they left.

We kept ourselves and our residents busy. We had gardening sessions, art sessions, singalongs and when the online classes started it was even better. We connected residents early on with their loved ones and introduced virtual activities too. The staff became more creative with activities and the relationships became stronger.



We have never been so spoilt, hand cream, cakes, wine, chocolates lots of chocolates are still regularly – and gratefully – received!

I know we've been very fortunate to date, having reported no positive COVID-19 tests for either residents or staff since March to the end of September. I really hope we can keep it this way.

BBC Panorama Special Portrays Social Care Challenges to The Nation

Community
Integrated
Care

www.c-i-c.co.uk
0845 543 9911

Central Support Services Old
Market Court Miners Way
Widnes Cheshire, WA8 7SP

Labelled 'low-skilled' workers by the government in March and then 'key workers' in April. The frontline teams that make up the social care sector have had the eyes of the world placed firmly on them during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In July, Community Integrated Care – one of Britain's biggest and most successful social care charities – was featured in a BBC Panorama special. The hour-long documentary charts the journey of the charity through the peak of this crisis and is a truly powerful film that brings to life the many challenges that the care sector has faced during the pandemic.

It sees Panorama spend three months in EachStep Blackley, a leading specialist dementia nursing care home operated by the charity in Manchester. It follows their colleagues through a dramatic period, which saw the service lock down early to protect residents, the devastating impact of the virus hitting the home, and their efforts to fight back and return to a more normal life.

Capturing tragic moments where the home lost much loved residents to the virus, as well as the joyful experiences of people making full recoveries from infections, it reveals the stark highs and lows that care services have experienced in recent months.

Mark Adams, CEO of Community Integrated Care, says: "When we first approached Panorama, we did so aspiring to document the important role that social care workers would play in the biggest crisis of a generation. At this time, the focus of the nation was centred on the heroism of NHS workers.

"We knew that social care workers were taking equally profound risks but doing so on the lowest pay in society and without the safety net of sick pay - their story needed telling too"

"What Panorama captured goes much deeper than we could have anticipated. They've portrayed the human story of a crisis that has been devastating to the sector, the people we support, their loved ones and our carers. Everyone who watches this film will see social care in a different light and understand how vital it is to society. You cannot watch this documentary and fail to be struck by the debt of gratitude that we owe to the people who deliver and support care."

Michelle Phillips, Home Manager at EachStep Blackley, says: "Everybody was so pleased with how Panorama portrayed us and the care sector as a whole – we were so proud to say we did right by the people who live in EachStep Blackley, and individually we're all really proud of one another."

"While it was difficult to have every move caught on camera, it was great for the team to be able to show the world how they responded to such an unprecedented situation. Throughout the pandemic, our colleagues were scared, but they kept coming in for the people they care for, and that was the same up and down the country. It was a privilege to be able to tell that story for the greater good of all care services."



Continuing to Lead Through Personal Tragedy

It was early March when Sue Aldridge last saw her mum Jean and brother Ian. She and her husband Alan had travelled up to the Midlands to visit after Jean suffered a fall and went into hospital. Satisfied that she was being well taken care of, the couple returned home only to be told, not long afterwards, that Jean had contracted the virus. Worse still, she had passed it onto her son.

"They both died within days of each other," says Sue, who manages Penberthy House, a residential home in Newquay that is run by Cornwall Care. "I come from a large family and we've always been close. Having to watch their funerals online rather than supporting Dad in person was awful. I loved them so much and it just didn't seem real."

Devastated by what happened, Sue, who has two daughters and three grandchildren, wanted to get back to work as soon as possible.

"Ian died on Friday and I was working again the following Wednesday," she says. "Everyone was incredibly supportive – including the CEO and directors who sent me a huge bouquet of flowers. They wanted me to stay on compassionate leave, but I needed the distraction."

Cornwall Care is a charity that runs sixteen homes, some of which have had COVID outbreaks. Online update meetings take place on a daily basis and the mutual support and learning colleagues have been able to provide has proved hugely helpful in managing the crisis and boosting morale.

"One of our residents tested positive and everyone was affected in different ways," says Sue. "Some members of staff immediately stepped up to the

challenge, whilst others were clearly terrified. Building confidence in the procedures we had in place was essential – as was reassuring those who were frightened that they weren't alone.

"Thankfully, two subsequent negative tests showed that the virus hadn't got into Penberthy. Our 29 residents are still infection-free, but no-one is complacent. Newquay is a busy tourist town and we're all being very careful about where we go and what we do. Visitors still aren't allowed into the home, but families have been able to enjoy socially-distanced meetings with loved ones in our garden throughout the summer and we're currently sorting out a special place indoors so personal contact can continue during the winter months."

As Sue discovered, COVID-19 has emotional, as well as physical, implications. "Being anxious is normal and it's important not to bottle things up. Alan and I managed to get to mum and Ian's internment once restrictions had been lifted and it was so therapeutic.

"We all need to laugh and cry and share our feelings with others. That's what makes us human."



"Building confidence in the procedures we had in place was essential."

COVID-19 Friary Court's Story 2020

by Sarah McClatchey, Extra Care Manager



www.longhurst-group.org.uk

0300 123 1745

50 Newhall Hill, Birmingham
B1 3JN



It's March 2020 and we are hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

What does this mean to us an organisation and more importantly what does this mean to our service users?

We remain strong, supportive to each other and united.

Services users are in isolation, lockdown. Care support workers too, but they remain positive and motivated at a time when it affects each and every one of us.

First thoughts, how on earth are we going to motivate and encourage our service users at a time of loss - losing contact with their family and friends.

Mothering Sunday approaching us, together with a sense of sadness for everyone in Extra Care.

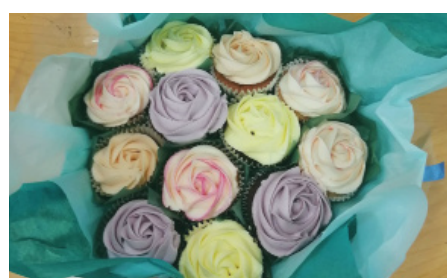
Then all of a sudden, out of the blue, unexpectedly, we were gifted with flowers, beautiful arrangements of coloured tulips, bucket loads. The team rallied together to deliver these wonderful tulips to our service users. Each and every one smiling as we helped display them in their homes.

A local supermarket also gifted a variety of fruits which were also distributed amongst the service users and staff.

How kind at a time of uncertainty!

Colleagues working in other departments are thinking of those working in extra care by delivering a variety of beautifully coloured cupcakes.

Still thinking of our service users and their well-being, I came up with the idea of sending out activity packs. Printing off pictures to colour in, coloured pencils and word searches to help stimulate brain activity. Myself and the team also encouraged exercise, encouraging our service users to come out of their home and gently walk along the corridor to stimulate circulation and activity.



I also worked with my friend who manages a nursery and another friend who is a health care assistant; we encourage our own children and the local community to get involved by inviting them to send in drawings and poems of encouragement to our service users. We took copies and delivered around the scheme. Our service users embraced these and every time we visit their home they are on display.

As time has passed, we have now been able to introduce outside visits; these are managed and scheduled by appointment. They have given each service user the opportunity to meet with their loved ones each week and helped with their mental health wellbeing. Each visit puts a smile on their face and a spring in their step.

We have all maintained a warm and happy environment. We remain positive and share any updates with our service users keeping them up-to-date of any changes - which in turn shows respect and inclusion.





Victoria, Contract Manager, (as pictured below) at one of our mental health services in Richmond, tells how they have adapted support for customers like Janine* during the Coronavirus pandemic.

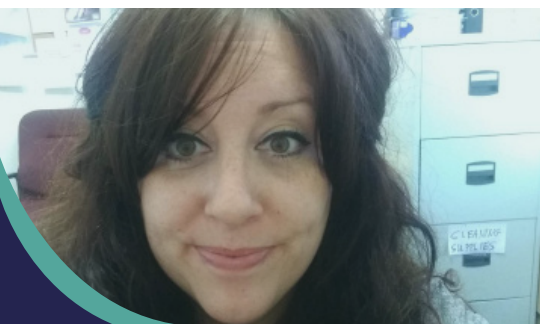
The social distancing measures to combat Coronavirus have had an impact on all of our lives and it's difficult to adapt. It has been particularly tough for our customers at our mental health services to adapt to the changes to their daily lives.

Our staff have done a lot of work helping them to adjust, assisting them with daily exercise and rearranging furniture within the service to help them stay further apart.

After a challenging start, customers are a lot more understanding and less anxious about the measures.

However, this has not been the case for one of our customers in particular. Janine has mental health needs and has been supported at our service for a number of months, setting goals and working towards independent living. Her main ambition is to travel, and we were happy to support her making her first trip to Nepal last year.

With the success of last year's trip, she arranged to go again this year, flying out in February and was due to return at the end of March.



However, due to the emerging global pandemic Nepal announced a nationwide lockdown, her flight was cancelled and Janine found herself unable to return home.

We were worried about her wellbeing whilst being stranded in Nepal. Janine needs monthly medical treatment to help her maintain her mental health, adding more complications to an already stressful situation.

However, we have been working hard to ensure we can continue to support her despite the challenging circumstances. Through phone calls and emails, we have managed to link her up with a psychiatrist in Nepal who can provide the medical support she needs, as well as finding her a hostel she can stay at.

We have played an active role in trying to get her home.

"Having not had much luck with phone calls or emails, we went to Twitter to try and get help."

From this, we managed to get her on to a waiting list for evacuation flights through the British Embassy. We have also been in touch with the Foreign Office in the UK who has been providing us with guidance.

Creating An International Support Team

We continued to give her the regular support she needs, despite the long distance and intermittent phone connection! We have been sending her games, puzzles and wellbeing activities to keep her occupied and mindful, and have been helping her keep in contact with her family. We even conducted her keywork sessions over email which worked really well!



It has been comforting to know that we have still been able to provide the support and the positivity Janine needed despite this situation. It's also shown how adaptable we can all be in times of challenge, and shows how we can all adapt positivity during Coronavirus.

*name has been changed.

Two-Way Communication Key to Effective Leadership

optalis
choices for living

www.optalis.org

(0118) 977-8600

Trinity Court, Molly Millars Lane
Wokingham, Berks, RG41 2PY

Good, effective two-way communication is an underpinning core value at Optalis.

When the pandemic struck, Optalis ensured robust mechanisms were in place for communication, both existing and new. It was essential staff had the information they needed to enable them to keep customers safe and well, and to ensure staff felt supported and listened to during what was a very challenging time for everyone.

Across the board, the Senior Management Team, Heads of Service, Team Managers have worked together to create a supportive and safe working environment for every colleague.

Optalis CEO, David Birch, issued weekly,



moving to fortnightly, video briefings. These included important updates from the organisation and expressions of thanks and recognition, on behalf of the Senior Management Team.

The Training Team also moved more of their content online, to ensure availability and accessibility. They created videos to accompany government guidance, such as, safe donning and doffing of PPE, along with infographics and animations to help ensure information was clear, relevant and easy to understand.

The staff e-bulletin pulled all of this information together, as well as a regularly updated Q&A and a 'You Said/We Did' document, featuring changes and improvements introduced following staff feedback.

For redeployed staff or those on the frontline without regular access to a work computer, a closed staff Facebook group was established. Around quarter of the workforce have joined. This platform is used to pass on information from the organisation, but also for staff to raise questions and to share best practice and good news stories from their services.

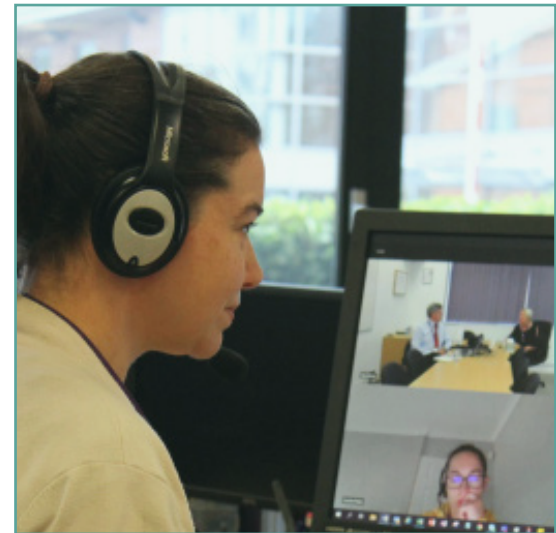
Optalis Head of Regulated Services, Jane Bartlett, initiated a twice weekly virtual meeting for Optalis regulated services. These meetings provided clarity in terms of guidance and support and how to manage during the pandemic. This support network for service managers has proved

**“ Support
network for
service managers
has proved
invaluable.”**

invaluable, and also ensured the Senior Management Team received feedback about developments and any operational issues.

Optalis is a Mindful Employer and committed to enabling good mental health in the workplace.

During the pandemic Optalis



increased its support, in addition to the tools and resources available to colleagues on a day to day basis. A weekly, confidential Mental Wellbeing Drop-in was established led by the company's Mental Health Champion. The HR Team also conducted welfare checks to all shielded staff and those on furlough.

A BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) risk assessment, was introduced providing peace of mind to staff and an opportunity to ensure individual needs were met.

A series of colleague insights have been published, featuring interviews from staff describing their experiences of working during the pandemic and how services have adapted. The interviewees were positive about the support and information they received, which in turn enabled them to effectively carry out their role. This was echoed by managers' reflections, who also reported that colleagues' confidence has grown. They are much more comfortable and have fewer concerns. This is largely attributed to the communication and support they have received throughout.

Tough Times Don't Last But Tough Teams Do



www.osjct.co.uk
0800 988 8133
1 Des Roches Square
Witney, Oxford, OX28 4BE

Cheryl Gilderdale has worked at The Orders of St John Care Trust for 18 years and has been Home Manager at Hartsholme House in Lincoln since 2012.

She has put all her years of experience to great use during the pandemic, ensuring that the 44-bed CQC Outstanding is a safe and vibrant place for people to live, receive care and work.

"Of course, it was almost overwhelming when we first heard that lockdown was coming," she explains. "But my first thought was 'how can I make a difference'? I wanted to make sure that my colleagues were supported and that residents were calm and entertained. "My motto throughout was that Tough times don't last but tough teams do."

The home offers dementia care which brought extra challenges.

When the lockdown began, Cheryl had to close all the communal areas; residents were spending all day in their bedrooms, including mealtimes, which led to confusion and some residents thinking that they were ill.

Having to wear PPE equipment also changed the dimensions of interaction between employees and residents. Dementia residents rely on smiles, facial expressions, touch and body language to communicate. Cheryl encouraged her team to

adapt their behaviour so that residents could see beyond the mask.

Cheryl brought in simple but highly effective changes, which included bringing the most comfy chairs from the communal areas into residents' rooms, arranging individual music sessions in the rooms, and encouraging her team to take ownership of being 'family and friends' to residents, creating a social atmosphere and a personal touch.

Cheryl adds: "It was really important that it was just Groundhog Day for the residents and everyone working at the home was great."

Cheryl donned a uniform and PPE and covered care shifts as well as liaising with family members directly and arranging and supporting video calls.

Cheryl said: "We always had a good supply of PPE from The Orders of St John Care Trust and that gave us all confidence.

"The families have been so supportive, which has really helped."



"I wanted to make sure that my colleagues were supported and that residents were calm & entertained."

Care Manager Rachel is An 'Absolute Rock'



www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk
(0300) 303 1400
175 Tower Bridge Road
London, SE1 2AL

"In the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic, the children of staff at Finborough Court, Great Finborough, each received a special letter."

Having spent 25 years with Pilgrims' Friend Society, Rachel Fishburne brings a wealth of experience to Finborough Court. Through the challenges posed by the Coronavirus, she's led the home with compassion, keeping spirits high.

The letter came from Rachel Fishburne, Care Manager at the home, and thanked them for letting their parents work such long, hard hours, even though they must be missing them very much.

"It was a huge boost to morale and helped everyone feel positive and valued," says Jonathan Dorrington, Business Manager at the home. "Rachel is an extremely caring person and the fact that she took the time to write these letters speaks volumes about her concern for our staff and their families."

In another thoughtful gesture, Rachel, together with her husband, spent many evenings making bags for each staff member to put their clothes in to the wash after each shift. This helped everyone stay safe, both at the care home and back at their own homes.

Rachel has taken on a variety of roles during her many years at Finborough Court, including Day Carer, Night Carer, Kitchen Assistant, Senior Care Team positions, and now the role of Care Manager.

The wealth of experience she brings has been invaluable during the challenging times of the pandemic. "At Finborough Court, we see ourselves as one big family. "That's definitely something that Rachel pushes from the top," says Jonathan. "Throughout the pandemic she has been an absolute rock. She's helped us pull together and focus on the needs of our family members."

Knowing that family members may be missing their loved ones, Rachel encourages carers to spend as much time as possible talking to them. And she always makes time to talk to residents herself.

"The way she is with our family members is lovely," says Jonathan. "Whenever she talks to them, she is fully invested. No matter how busy a day she's having, she won't let other concerns distract her. If someone needs something, she'll make sure it gets sorted there and then."

As well as facilitating visits for one regular visitor in line with government guidelines, Rachel ensures family members can connect to loved ones through video calls or by sending cards.

To our wider staff team, she's been a huge support. Jane Trimarco, Operations Manager, says: "Rachel and I spent many a Saturday



and Sunday evening on the phone, sharing ideas and gathering information.

"We became very close and I cannot thank Rachel enough for her sterling work during this very stressful period. She truly went the extra mile and was there through and through!"

Reflecting on her passion for care, Rachel herself says: "It's the desire to help other people that drives me. I love the feeling of satisfaction that comes from having made a difference to somebody's day."

A Care Manager's Ode



www.quantumcare.co.uk

01707 393293

4 Silver Court, Watchmead,
Welwyn Garden City, Herts

AL7 1TS

A lot of people have asked me, how has it been,

Leading my care staff through the dreaded COVID-19.

It's not a Disney movie, I can't yet see a happy ending,

So if you expected a happy story, I'm not very good at pretending.

Not knowing what was coming was one of the scariest parts,

Then when it came to our care home it truly broke our hearts.

You see these residents aren't just people, they are those whom we've grown to love,

So when we saw what was happening we began praying to whoever's above.

How can this be happening, how long can this go on?

You begin to start questioning everything and how did it all go so wrong?

Every day we went to work with a smile upon our face,

Something was missing in our hearts, that nothing could replace.

I didn't have the answers when they kept on asking me, why?

I kept hearing the bell ringing when I tried to shut my eyes,

So, I would open them up, only to be met with families' cries.

So you see it really frustrates us, people complaining about a simple task,

Like washing their hands regularly or wearing a "stupid" mask.

If they could only see the pain and loss that I wish wasn't so,

Maybe then they'd do their part and forget about their own ego.

When it came to our care home there was no testing, now it's every week,

But the numbers are rising in the country and the futures looking bleak.

Families are currently allowed to visit in the garden 2 metres apart,

When I see their happy faces with joy it fills my heart.

You see at times it nearly broke me but I strengthened for my team,

Now with courage, love and hope in our hearts we will fight this COVID-19.

One more thing that was beyond compare,

The support of the family around me known also as Quantum Care.

By Claire Doherty,
Registered Care Home Manager



Working in A Care Home & Overcoming COVID-19

For Sue Ferry, a carer at Dene Holm Care Home and asthma sufferer, the threat of contracting COVID-19 was a real concern but having endured the virus and returned to work, she shared her story with us.

"I was worried when COVID-19 started to become more serious, as an asthma sufferer, I knew I would be high risk if I caught it, so when I started to feel unwell over the Easter weekend, I was concerned. I got home from an evening shift at 10pm and felt really lethargic and was

"The paramedics wanted me to go to hospital, but I didn't want to go, I thought I wouldn't come back. I contacted my GP and arranged to have my observations done, as they had a tent set up for visiting.

Unfortunately, my GP recommended calling an ambulance again and this time, my oxygen was so low, I had to go in."

Sue spent the next two weeks in hospital, she had pneumonia, and was put on oxygen as well as IV, as she was unable to eat. Using a walking frame to get to the toilet and taking morphine for the excruciating headaches, she slowly started to feel better and was able to go home and eventually, return to work.

"The recovery was slow, I stayed at home for days, not wanting to go out. But when I returned to work, my team were fantastic. At the start of the pandemic, it felt like care homes were not acknowledged by the government, with regard to PPE and testing, everything took a long time. But now, we have all we need and so I felt really safe coming back to work.

"Being at Dene Holm feels very safe, as we are in our own little bubble. We stopped accepting visitors quickly once the situation escalated and the situation with testing is now much better. When we come on shift, we're given masks, visors, hand gel and we ensure we use it correctly. "I have worked at Dene Holm for 16 years and as a team, we're really

**"It really hit me
in the night, the
high temperature
and the headaches
were unbearable."**

coughing a lot. After taking myself to bed, I phoned in sick to work and called 111, who advised me to isolate for five days, I could barely get out of bed, so that was no problem!"

A few days later, Sue tested positive for COVID-19 and continued to isolate but unfortunately, her condition worsened and 111 advised her husband to call an ambulance.



pulling together, I received so many well wishes from my colleagues whilst I was off, so it was lovely to be back. We are upbeat, and morale is so much better than it was at the beginning. Of course, we have good days and bad days, but we help each other through, as we're all in it together."

Damian's Story



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Damian Walicki is a Lead Nurse at Royal Star & Garter's Surbiton Home. Here he talks about the toll COVID-19 took on him mentally and physically, the heartbreak of losing residents to the virus, and his pride in the staff who gave their all for the residents.

This has been one of the toughest challenges of my career, because we are kind of fighting with ghosts. You couldn't see the virus, but you knew that it was there.

"At the beginning, when I first heard of COVID-19, it was far away in China. It didn't seem that this might come here, to us. But I remember hearing about the first case in the UK, and then Kingston, and I thought 'OK, this is nearby, it's getting real.'

"Each week new research was published – what it is, how to fight it, what safety measures should be put in place. It seemed like the Department of Health was changing its guidelines every two days. If you had any time off, when you came back you had to work with different guidance. As well as the change in working style, there was huge pressure on hygiene and infection control.

"This included PPE (personal protective equipment) we went from having a family-centred care home to suddenly becoming like a full-time hospital environment, where every resident was isolated in their rooms. We were changing our equipment every time we stepped in and out of the residents' rooms. It was very challenging, no-one in this setting was used to working in this way."

"It's hard to express how difficult it was when we lost residents. We thought that maybe they would live longer if it weren't this situation. Our focus was on making them as comfortable as possible and keeping them company at the end. Throughout my career I've worked in acute care settings – in intensive care units and operating theatres – and quite often some patients passed away. However, I was never affected as much as I was here, so it was really difficult. We joke with the residents every day, and we're left

feeling like a family member has just passed away.

"It was almost impossible for me to switch off and let my emotions out. The staff were affected by the virus too. As a Lead Nurse I was trying to support my team even when I was at home; I was constantly in touch with everyone to make sure they stayed safe. I felt I was at work all the time. I was going home going to sleep and in my dreams I was still here, checking if the residents were fine."

"I was never concerned about my own well-being, I was only concerned about the residents and keeping them safe. I never prioritised myself over my residents and colleagues. But in the end, I too tested positive. I had no

"I felt I was letting down the team being at home."

symptoms, but I had to stay at home. And this was the first time I had a few days' rest. I felt I'd failed at some point."

"I feel I have to pay tribute to the residents, they have been amazing. I was in isolation and it was tough, so I can't even imagine how hard it was for them to spend so much time in their rooms. It's just unbelievable the strength that they have."

"I have to pay tribute to all the staff here too. I have never in my life seen people working together so hard as we have during this time."



We put a lot of safety measures in place and we were well prepared. So, when we had the first confirmed case in the Home, we felt we had failed somehow, even though we knew very little about the virus when this all started.



Leaving Family to Care For Residents



www.sanctuary-care.co.uk

0800 946 0478

Cameo House, Chamber
Court, Castle Street
Worcester, WR1 3ZQ

Sally Gregory only became home manager at Sanctuary Care's Guy's Court Residential Care Home in February 2020, as the global Coronavirus pandemic rapidly gained momentum.

Just two months later some of her staff tested positive for the virus at the Fleetwood home. It was then, Sally made the quick decision to leave her 10 and 13-year-old children with family and move into Guy's Court for 10 weeks.

She said: "Moving into Guys Court was never really a hard choice for me, I just did it – it felt like the right thing to do and it really was. When I moved in, it was a time of uncertainty for the care sector but also the country. My residents didn't fully understand what it all meant for them and I just wanted to reassure everyone and make my residents' bubble feel safe again, reduce anxiety and continue to manage my home and lead the team."

For the first two weeks Sally was joined by a core team of seven staff. New to the home she nurtured relationships with her residents, their loved ones and team. She learnt everything about her residents, their views and the things they loved, so that she could make sure their care was truly person-centred.

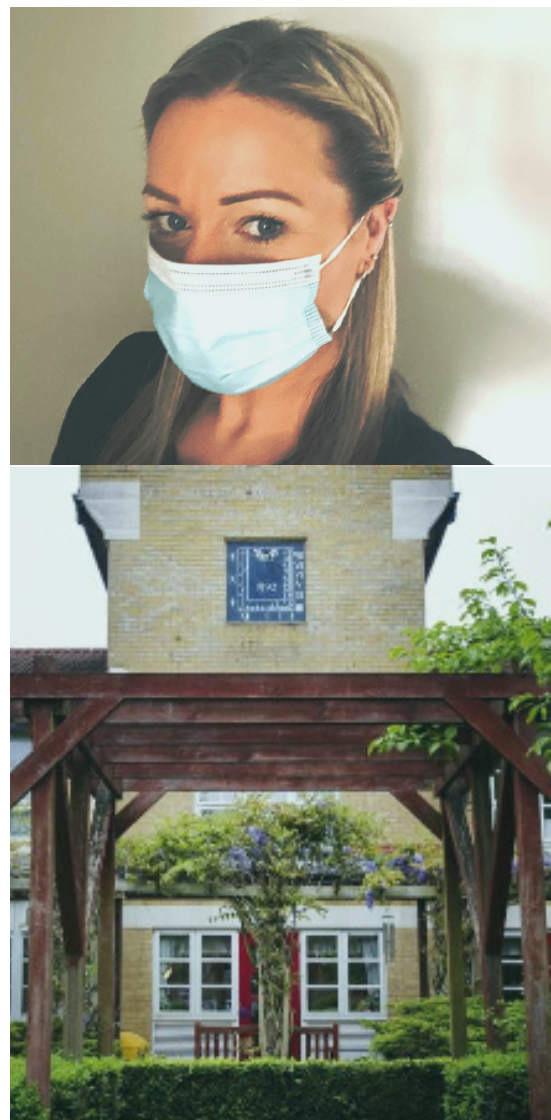
Despite following strict infection control procedures, several residents developed COVID-19. Sally was meticulous about ensuring staff were strictly following the processes to treat and contain the virus.

All this in addition to running the home and reassuring residents' loved ones during continuous phone calls. Quickly learning so much about her staff and their individual strengths

has enabled Sally to champion their progression through learning and development opportunities. Two care assistants have now become team leaders, thriving in their new roles.

Sally is also part of a care partnership with other local providers and the CCG. One of the first homes in the area to experience COVID-19 first-hand, Sally fed back vital information to the group so they could learn from her experience. She taught them to rely on their instincts and hammered home the importance of preparation – she wasn't just thinking of her residents, she wanted to protect those in other care homes too.

Reflecting on her experience, Sally added: "I have the most wonderful family, who are very understanding. They were fully behind me and were so proud too. And thanks to technology I was able to maintain virtual contact with everyone throughout my stay, which was a huge comfort to us all. It made the impossible possible. Even though I was pleased to return home, if I had to do it again, I would do so in a heartbeat."



"Sally supported doing laundry, cooking and cleaning, while singing to keep everyone's spirits high. for the residents."

Sara Keetley, Operations Director Shares Her Story

Sara Keetley is Operations Director for Sanctuary Supported Living, part of the Sanctuary Group. She leads on the Group's supported housing, retirement living and telecare functions – which supports around 6,000 people through 400 plus services, including over 50 delivering registered care.

Sara inspires her teams to achieve excellence, with four services now rated 'outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission since she took the helm. As a leader, her key aims are to inspire and involve her teams so they can perform at their very best, and, in turn, they can support some of society's most vulnerable people to be their best.

The impact of Coronavirus on vulnerable people, including those with learning disabilities and autism – and the challenges the pandemic poses to them – has only amplified Sara's commitment and passion for the supported housing sector. During the pandemic, all services kept running thanks to Sara's well-established support practices and innovative new approaches.

Her approach is to trust her staff and recognise their expertise within the operations; actively asking for their advice and listening to their feedback. Focusing on making vital, significant, yet proportional adjustments to the new environment, Sara and her teams have helped residents to stay safe and adapt by:

- Simplifying messaging about hygiene and social distancing in ways that resonate with residents with complex communication needs, including using 'Talking Tiles' technology.

- Ensuring all services have the PPE they need, even if that means driving to services and delivering it herself!
- Providing clear and regular communications to staff so they can adjust practices quickly and safely according to regulation and government guidelines.

Sara's vision for wellbeing and inclusion began long before lockdown.

The structure and practices were already in place to reduce isolation and promote community togetherness, which placed the organisation at a distinct advantage when older and vulnerable residents were shielding, and the country went into lockdown. The Wellbeing and

Staff know that Sara is genuinely interested to hear about what's going on in services. When she receives these emails, Sara takes the time to personally respond. This has created a culture where staff feel able to ask questions, raise concerns and share ideas – another factor which has meant that staff feel empowered and better equipped to deal with the Coronavirus.

In April, during the height of the pandemic, 813 supported housing units were added to Sara's portfolio, following an acquisition of services. Sara welcomed new colleagues as they joined remotely, ensuring it was a smooth transition at a difficult and unprecedented time.

Sara is committed to inclusivity for everyone and is determined to ensure that vulnerable or disadvantaged people are supported to live their lives in the ways they choose.



Inclusion Assistant's role became ever more important as they found new ways to keep residents connected.

At the height of the pandemic, Sara received many messages from staff at all levels thanking her for her support and encouragement in her regular Director's Update emails, or to simply share good news with her.





St Monica Trust

www.stmonicastrust.org.uk

0117 949 4000

Cote Lane, Westbury-on-Trym

Bristol, BS9 3UN

Good News, Thank You's & Recruitment Team Effort

The Executive Team initiated publishing weekly good news stories and thank yous, which have been running since April 2020. This idea was to encourage colleagues to unite and share their stories from the front-line and beyond.

Many of the thank you's received were to managers, for example, Caroline from our Russets Care Home, who shared that their management team "...step up and go the extra mile covering shifts themselves on their days off and going out on their days off to get prescriptions for residents on end of life, ... they never complain and are always smiling."

Early on in lockdown, Senior Catering Managers Adrian and Gary implemented a fantastic initiative of food boxes containing essential and fresh food, for residents and staff. The food boxes were widely used and a lifeline to lots of people.

Our Executive Team has made every effort to keep people informed using weekly Zoom manager calls, through video updates, colleague, resident and relative updates, through social media and being on the ground, sharing and talking to people.

Also, our Trustees awarded all staff pin badges as a 'thank you' for all their efforts during the COVID-19 Spring pandemic.

Leaders from across departments pulled together to recruit, select, induct, deploy and support our Helping Hands. The Trust welcomed around 200 new members of staff in this capacity – to help out across teams – during the year.

This has been a phenomenal effort, including:

- The recruitment team, who worked tirelessly to get them interviewed
- The interviewers themselves who gave up their time from their usual 'day jobs' from across departments
- The training team, who inducted each and every new Helping Hand
- The redeployment team, who placed our new colleagues into our services
- All the managers who provided a warm welcome and on-the-job training.

Helping Hands colleagues made (and continue to make) a huge impact on our services.

And finally, our managers and leaders are often surprising staff with treats, chocolates, cakes, pizzas etc. to keep our colleagues' spirits' up.



"...step up and go the extra mile covering shifts themselves on their days off and going out on their days off to get prescriptions for residents on end of life, ... they never complain and are always smiling."

Announcing The Surrey Choices Digitisers

As part of their Digital Inclusion Strategy, Surrey Choices have been finding out what the barriers are to IT for the people they support and the people they share their homes with. They have been working to overcome those barriers by input and signposting to other support, long-term and prioritising those people who live at home alone or with their families to reduce isolation.

To support this strategy, they now have Digitisers across Surrey Choices. These are colleagues who will enable the people they support to not only have access to technology, but to feel safe and confident using different devices and being online.

What can the Digitisers help with?

- Advising the people we support on what types of IT they might want to buy for their needs
- Setting up a tablet or computer so that they can keep it touch with friends, families and Surrey Choices
- Provide short-term internet access for example, a sim card for a device if they do not have it in their home now
- Offer some short-term support as people start to use their kit including:
- Socially distanced visits
- Telephone help

Here are some of the ways the Digitisers have been supporting people:

- Help with joining our Digital Choices Live and Video online sessions
- Online support to be able to search for jobs
- Teaching people how to connect with their friends and families no matter how far away they are
- Helping people to download apps
- Supporting people to learn new skills like sending an email or using WhatsApp
- Helping people to get Wi-Fi installed in their house

As a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic the people they support have been keeping safe at home.

In order to enable them to continue learning Independent Living and Life Skills, offer Employment, Volunteering and Vocational Learning, continue looking after their Health and Wellbeing and help keep them connected to their Friends, other Relationships and their Community, Surrey Choices launched Digital Choices; an online sessions platform which you can read more about on the Surrey Choices [website](#).

The Digitisers have been hard at work over the last few weeks, supporting over 30 people through socially

distanced visits or online help to get online and keep connected.



“These are colleagues who will enable the people they support to not only have access to technology, but to feel safe and confident using different devices and being online.”



Naterlene Forbes, Manager Trescott Road in Northfield, Shares Her Experiences

"When the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, safety for our customers was our main priority and our care home, Trescott Road, went into lockdown on the evening of the broadcast by the Prime Minister.

"We understood that this would be difficult for our customers as they all have great relationships with their families and friends, so we invested in learning about how technology may be able to support some of our customers. Facebook portals were purchased by two customers and they now have direct

video links to their families via large screen TV's. On one occasion I was invited into a customer's room to find her having a lovely conversation via the portal, using her own communication methods, with her sister who was ironing in her own home at the time. The technology allowed for the genuine feeling that both the customer and her sister were in the same room. This call lasted all afternoon, just chatting about general things as sisters do.

"We all learned to keep in touch virtually, conducting care reviews and GP consultations via video links and the customers and staff adapted well to this. Customers have also learned a new way to shop online and always look forward to their parcels being delivered.

"As a manager I feel that it has been difficult to keep up with the amount of guidance from government, local authorities and the organisation, though I do also feel that it is all necessary and vital. Our staffing levels were affected by members of staff who had to shield and new staff joining us couldn't have the usual face-to-face training we were used to doing, but again we found a way



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www.tridentgroup.org.uk
(0121) 226 5800
153 Hagley Road
Birmingham, West Midlands, B16 8UQ

to support each other with video calling to keep us all in the loop and introducing competency based assessments to replace the face-to-face training.

"Our care home was supported with food parcels from neighbours, local pubs and restaurants at the beginning of lockdown. We were even given a birthday cake for one of our customers who celebrated their birthday. Customers and staff thoroughly enjoyed the weekly 'Clap for Carers', which made us feel that we were all in this together.

"The staffing team truly showed their level of duty to care, ensuring that they were open and honest about their contacts during the lockdown, cancelling annual leave to ensure our staff bubble remained as close as possible and now taking weekly testing to help continue to reduce all risk to customers and colleagues.

"Trescott Road now has a new way of working, ensuring that sanitisation stations are routinely used, ensuring all furniture is placed at an appropriate distance to support a comfortable but safer living space and sourcing further outdoor community activities.

"We are currently in the process of updating all our sensory spaces to ensure they follow health and safety guidance as well as making them family friendly, making them ready to be used when families are able to return to our home and visit their loved ones."



We are all in this together

By Christoph Marr, Founder and Managing Director, Marr Procurement



Marr Procurement is honoured to sponsor and be part of this wonderful initiative by the National Care Forum.

We cannot write about our own experience of the pandemic, without first recognising the bravery, hard work and dedication of staff on the frontline

of the care industry, often working round the clock to treat residents and their families, affected by Coronavirus. And having worked in this industry for the last 20 years, I know how hard everyone was working beforehand!

In 2015 I created Marr Procurement, now the UK's leading health and care sector procurement organisation. Since then we have sourced nearly £1bn of goods and services, delivering real savings for over 40 care groups across the UK. We are a values-led organisation which has, each year, provided pro bono support to the health and care sector.

Fast forward to late February 2020 when we were all impacted, in a substantial way, by Covid-19. Following an emergency Board Meeting, we quickly assessed the risks to our business and what support our employees and customers might need.

First, we discussed the impact on our staff; how would we support them financially and emotionally in this time of crisis? We immediately ensured people could work from home, arranged furlough payments where necessary and set up a weekly quiz to ensure everyone remained connected. Every now and then I would send the team a surprise gift to their home, simply to make them laugh.

Secondly, we discussed how best to support our extraordinary clients. We knew some suppliers would profiteer,

(hence the 5,000% inflation we saw on some PPE masks) and so we set up a free procurement advisory service for various small and mid-size charities so they wouldn't fall victim to unscrupulous suppliers.

Over the years we have sourced millions of PPE and we anticipated our income from PPE projects would soar. So, we were faced with a dilemma; should we profiteer, bank the unexpected windfall and enjoy the fact that we were in the right place at the right time, disregarding the impact on our clients? We quickly concluded it would be morally and ethically abhorrent to profiteer at a time when many of our clients were experiencing an unprecedented number of deaths in their care homes, not to mention real financial difficulties.

It didn't take us long to conclude that every penny of profit we made from PPE during the crisis would go to charities across the UK. We have since donated a total of £71,000. At the height of the pandemic we gave away 35,000 face masks and my team drove in their cars to hand deliver this free PPE to our clients.

We are a small business dedicated and committed to the health and care sector and are hugely proud that we have been able to give back during this difficult time. The fact is we are all in this together and it just feels right to behave honourably by supporting each other.

Image Caption: April 2020. At the height of Covid19 the Marr team hand delivered 35,000 face masks. Christoph Marr (left) donating and delivering a much appreciated assignment of masks to Gordon Cochrane, the Healthcare Homes CEO.



THANK YOU

Person Centred Software is a UK-based global technology company that strives to drive outstanding care within the social care sector. Its app-based, icon-driven Mobile Care Monitoring system allows care home staff to digitally record the care of residents as it is given - saving every care worker an hour a day on paperwork and improving staff retention and care outcomes.

Person Centred Software is the market leader in the care sector, with thousands of care homes using its digital care management software and new homes coming on board at the rate of around 60 per month.

Every day, Person Centred Software's

icon-driven app creates more than 3 million care notes; 94 per cent of CQC inspected homes using Mobile Care Monitoring are rated as good or outstanding. Its agile product can be quickly adaptable in times of crisis.

New features were added and enhanced at the offset of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Relatives Gateway platform keeps relatives informed about the health and wellbeing of their loved one when they can't be there. Coronavirus action and staff audit icons supported care homes to record symptoms of residents and staff and show work status and level of infections.

From everyone at



In addition to its Mobile Care Monitoring software, the company is working on a number of wider projects to improve health and social care in the UK.

These include: an NHS partnership to implement the electronic transfer of care home records to hospitals; and collaborations with universities - University College London and Edinburgh - on research to scientifically evidence care outcomes.

To find out how to our digital care management system can benefit your care home, contact us on 01483 357657 or hello@personcentredsoftware.com or visit www.personcentredsoftware.com





By Philippa Shirtcliffe, QCS, Head of Care Quality

It was New Year's Eve. My family and I were looking forward to welcoming 2020 and were excitedly discussing the future when a news item suddenly grabbed my attention. In China, a small cluster of pneumonia cases had been reported by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission. But it wasn't pneumonia. Some 13 days later, China shared the genetic sequence of this mysterious and worrying new disease. But, it wasn't until February, 11th that the World Health Organisation - gave the insidious and deadly disease - that we now know as Covid-19 - its official name.

Fast forward eight months and the statistics taken from the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Centre make for grim reading. In just under a year, Covid-19, which the WHO declared a Pandemic on March, 12th, has infected nearly 60 million people in 191 countries - claiming the lives of 1.4 million people.

But, looking back to March, just before the Pandemic was announced, what was even more troubling was the systematic failure of governments

across the world to act swiftly to contain Covid. Social mixing was allowed to continue. Boris Johnson attended an international rugby match, while the Cheltenham festival, which attracted 250,000 spectators, was allowed to go ahead before Britain finally went into lockdown.

When it did a few days later, the government began its daily briefings. But it's messaging and communication around the Pandemic was poor. The guidance was overly complex, and the messaging confusing and inconsistent. It just didn't speak to frontline care staff. With the CQC also staying silent, there was a feeling that the courageous men and women providing person-centred care, putting themselves and their families at great risk in the process - had been largely forgotten by government.

At QCS, we wanted to make a difference. As early as February, in my role as head of Care Quality, I met with my senior leadership team and my policy writers. Having led Swine Flu preparations for one of the largest providers of health and social care in the UK in 2009, I suggested that we create a specialist Coronavirus Hub, which contained easy-to read, up-to-date guidance for care workers in all settings. Realising the gravity of the situation, Mat Whittingham, our CEO and founder, and his senior leadership team, decided to make the hub free for anybody to access.

We spent our days talking to providers, understanding the challenges they were facing and then anticipating the guidance that they were likely to need. We scoured government websites, simplified policies, made

them accessible by creating guides, checklists and blogs and, most importantly, continued to listen and act on feedback from the tens of thousands of subscribers who were working on the front lines. It was challenging work. Sometimes Infection, Prevention and Control guidance changed several times a day, and in the early days the national advice surrounding contradicted regional best practice. Our job was simply to make sense of the guidance and clearly communicate it to providers.

However, the Pandemic has also increased demand for best practice content. So much so in fact that as the Pandemic progressed QCS's role changed. We still supply our 5,000-plus providers with policies and procedures, but we also produce best practice content guides for partners - such as the NCF - on a raft of different subjects. Forging a collaborative network of key influencers - which also includes voluntary organisations, charities and solicitors - has been crucial to QCS embracing a more dynamic content based approach. Not only do strategic partnerships add extra insight, weight and authority to our content, they ensure that we can provide care staff with all the tools that they need to the do what they do best - care.

First and foremost, our thanks go to the National Care Forum members who shared their experiences of delivering care services in these challenging times.

However, this collation of caring experiences would never have been accomplished without the unbelievable support we have received from the following people and organisations:

Marr Procurement

Person Centred Software

Quality Compliance Systems

This book can be downloaded at www.nationalcareforum.org.uk

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