

# Care Talk

The voice of excellence in social care

Let's Talk Social Care! Issue 110 | April 2022

## Blue Sky Thinking

Consensus Support go the extra mile  
in recognising excellence in social care

See page 42



### UNLEASHING CREATIVITY THROUGH SELF-MANAGED TEAMS

Brendan Martin

Managing Director, Buurtzorg Britain & Ireland

### THE IMPORTANCE OF JOINING THE GP LEARNING DISABILITY REGISTER

Brendan Chivasa

Campaigner, Mencap

### A NATIONAL VOICE FOR SOCIAL CARE

Dominique Kent

CEO Senior Living Pacific Investments

### WHAT KEEPS ME AWAKE AT NIGHT

Karen Lewis

COO, National Care Group

working  
with you,  
for you

# Stephensons



## Specialist regulatory solicitors for the health and social care sector

Stephensons Solicitors LLP specialise in providing expert legal advice and representation to individuals and businesses in the care sector. Our services include:

- Challenging CQC inspection reports and ratings
- Representations against notices of proposal to cancel, vary/impose conditions, suspend or refuse registration
- Appeals to the first-tier tribunal (care standards)
- Challenging warning notices
- Criminal investigations and prosecutions by the CQC
- Interviews under caution
- Safeguarding investigations
- Representation at inquests
- Representation in Court of Protection proceedings
- Health and safety prosecutions
- Fire safety enforcement
- Food safety and food hygiene investigations and prosecutions
- Investigations by the Disclosure and Barring Service
- Representation in fitness to practise proceedings and advising on referrals to individual regulatory bodies

Call us on 0333 344 4885, email us at [RegulatoryEnquiries@stephensons.co.uk](mailto:RegulatoryEnquiries@stephensons.co.uk) or visit [www.stephensons.co.uk](http://www.stephensons.co.uk)

# Inside Issue 110

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

**IN MY OPINION**  
5  
Professor Martin Green

**TALKING**  
*Blue Sky Thinking*  
6  
The Care Innovation Challenge is back!  
8  
Supporting Adult Social Care Innovation  
10  
Unleashing creativity through self-managed means  
12  
Putting people at the heart of services



14  
Using technology to enhance social care

**TALKING**  
*Social Care*  
15  
Removing barriers, enabling communications  
16  
Trekking for care



17  
Why recognition matters



18  
Prepare to care

**TALKING**  
*Nursing in Social Care*  
20  
The value of preceptorship

**TALKING**  
*Learning Disabilities & Autism*  
22  
The importance of joining the GP Learning Disability Register



23  
The role of innovation in supported living delivery

**TALKING**  
*Children & Young People*  
24  
Hope not handcuffs



**REAL LIVES**  
26  
The soul of End of Life Care  
28  
Supporting autistic adults through the pandemic and beyond



30  
Free to be me  
31  
Royal recognition for teen hero Keah



Subscribe to Care Talk at:  
[subscribe@caretalk.co.uk](mailto:subscribe@caretalk.co.uk)

**CHAT**  
32  
CO-PRODUCTION COUNTS!  
Checking on quality  
34



**WHAT KEEPS ME AWAKE AT NIGHT**  
Karen Lewis  
36  
**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CARE**  
From coffee shop to care village  
37  
**PEOPLE POWER**  
Dylan: a life in sharp focus  
38  
**ASK THE EXPERTS**  
What innovative approaches have you adopted to become an Employer of Choice?

**CARE TALK ON THE ROAD**  
41  
Coming up...

**SOCIAL CARE'S GOT TALENT**  
42  
Consensus go the extra mile in recognising excellence in social care  
44  
Raising the profile of women leaders in social care  
46  
Great British Care Awards 2022 National Finals



**A National Voice**  
50  
Dominique Kent  
**Leading The Way in Social Care**  
52  
Paula Beaney  
**Partners in Care**  
56  
A social care system for the future

**PRODUCTS & SERVICES**  
58  
Autonomy and consent in social care

**BUSINESS BANTER**  
59  
Deals within health and social care – what's driving the surge?

# Care Talk

The voice of excellence in social care

## Contributors

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

**Emily Aklan**  
Children's Rights Campaigner, Founder of Hope instead of Handcuffs

**Paula Beaney**  
Quality Assurance Director, Promedica24

**Brendan Chivasa**  
Campaigner, Mencap

**Desiree Cox**  
National Preceptorship Programme Lead, NHS England and NHS Improvement

**Lorna Durrant**  
Head of Specialist Strategies and Outcomes, Eden Futures

**Paul Featherstone**  
Founder, National Association of Care & Support Workers Association

**Karolina Gerlich**  
CEO, The Care Workers' Charity

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

**Dougal Hawes**  
Managing Director, Smartbox Assistive Technology

**Dr Dave Howe**  
Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Hull

**Peter Humphreys**  
Business Development Manager, Grey Matter Learning

**Sam Hussain**  
Founder and CEO, Log my Care

**Dominique Kent**  
CEO, Senior Living at Pacific Investments

**Sharifa Lakhani**  
CEO, Holmes Care Group

**John Leicester**  
Senior Quality Checker, Consensus

**Karen Lewis**  
COO, National Care Group

**Dr Juliette Malley**  
Principal Investigator, LSE

**Brendan Martin**  
Managing Director, Buurtzorg Britain & Ireland

**Debra Metha**  
Writer and Author

**Eddie Morgan**  
CEO, Consensus

**Matthew Poli**  
Head of Corporate & Commercial, London, BLM

**Vic Rayner**  
CEO, National Care Forum

**Michelle Shaw**  
Head of Care, Local Care Force

**Gary Steen**  
Chief Technology Officer, Tunstall Healthcare

**Dr Valentina Zigante**  
Researcher, LSE

## Contact us

**Advertising:**  
[advertising@caretalk.co.uk](mailto:advertising@caretalk.co.uk)

**General:**  
[info@caretalk.co.uk](mailto:info@caretalk.co.uk)

**Editor:**  
Lisa Carr  
[lisa@caretalk.co.uk](mailto:lisa@caretalk.co.uk)

**Graphic Designer:**  
Tony Johnson  
[tony@tonyjohnsoncreativesign.co.uk](mailto:tony@tonyjohnsoncreativesign.co.uk)

**Tell us your news, views and suggestions!**

[editorial@caretalk.co.uk](mailto:editorial@caretalk.co.uk)

## Follow us!

 [twitter.com/caretalkmag](https://twitter.com/caretalkmag)

 [facebook.com/pages/Care-Talk](https://facebook.com/pages/Care-Talk)

Care Talk is a trading name of Care Comm LLP  
Suite 2, Slapton Hill Farm, Slapton, Towcester,  
Northamptonshire NN12 8QD 07973 403535

Coming up for May 2022:

■ DIGNITY IN DYING ■ DEMENTIA MATTERS ■ SUPPORTING FAMILY CARERS

## Circulation List

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

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

## Welcome to the April issue of Care Talk.

It's been a time of celebration here at Care Talk!

Just recently we celebrated the best of the best in social care at the National Finals of The Great British Care Awards. The event saw over 1,100 guests come together to pay tribute to the category winners from last year's 10 regional events and reveal the overall national champions. Turn to page 46 to **Meet the Winners**.

Earlier this month I was privileged to meet some of the sector's incredible women leaders, as we launched **Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care**, (page 44). Women representing all corners of the sector and all leaders in their field. This new initiative provides a unique platform for support, mentoring and sharing examples of best practice and innovation.

Innovation and **Blue Sky Thinking** is the theme for this month's edition, and as ever we are proud to feature some great contributors representing all areas of social care.

There's Prof Martin Green, CEO at Care England who talks about the struggle that social care has always had with innovation and developing new approaches. In his article **Blue Sky Thinking**, (page 5), Martin explains why innovation must no longer be considered a nicety but a necessity, if we are to truly find ways to do things better.

Then there's Brendan Martin, Managing Director at Buurtzorg Britain & Ireland, who describes how their style of care shies away from a 'time and task' model. Based on the Dutch philosophy this approach to care aims to supports care workers to organise themselves to do what's needed when it's needed, by **Unleashing creativity through self-managed teams** (page 10).

Finally, a great example of **Blue Sky Thinking** is co-producing services. Page 32 features the team of Quality Checkers at Consensus who have co-responsibly for auditing each service every year, designed to ensure that individuals supported have a voice. Check out our regular monthly feature **Co-production Counts!** to find out more.

As ever do keep your news and suggestions coming in!

Happy reading!

Lisa



# Blue sky thinking

**Social care has always struggled with innovation and developing new approaches. Partly this is because the foundation of our services is the relationships established between the people who use services and those who support them. Understandably, sometimes people are frightened of new developments because they fear losing the service altogether. However, there is a real need to think creatively about developing new ways of doing things in the future.**

When we consider innovations, the priority must be to improve the quality of life and outcomes for the people who use services. We must never lose sight of the fundamental purpose of a social care service. That said, there is a myriad of ways to embrace innovation and technology and deliver better outcomes and deliver more efficiencies. If we're going to develop new ways of doing things, every bit of the system needs to change and facilitate, rather than impede innovation.

Over many years we have seen what might be described as a symbiotic relationship of lazy commissioning, which has driven lazy provision. There has not been any space for innovation and creativity in our current system because nobody would commission it. For this blockage to be removed, I believe the Government should set up an innovation fund to develop new ways of doing things and share the risk across the system. One of our challenges is that in the current system if a care provider seeks to develop a new and innovative way of doing things, there is no guarantee that it will be accepted by either commissioners or regulators, and that puts the entire financial and reputational risk of development firmly in the hands of the provider. An innovation fund would also include some opportunities to research the efficacy of new approaches to have clear evidence if we want to roll this out across the entire system. There are currently ways in which this is being funded in the NHS, but despite all the discussions about an integrated system, this is not happening across health and social care.

***“A symbiotic relationship of lazy commissioning has driven lazy provision.”***

We also need some change from the regulator because we need a regulatory system that facilitates innovation rather than stifles it. Regulators are particularly bad at embracing new ways of doing things. Often, if there is no previous track record of how things are done, the regulator will look upon new developments negatively.



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



Partly this is because the regulator is also concerned about their own reputational risk. If they endorse something that subsequently fails, this will impact their reputation and that of the care provider.

If we are going to get good innovation in the sector, we will also need to develop an appetite for risk because there is no approach to innovation that does not involve some risk of it going wrong. We need a way of mitigating risk and a way of ensuring that if innovation does not work in the way we expect it to, this does not destroy the reputation of either the care provider, the commissioner, or the regulator.

The Covid-19 pandemic marked a moment in time, and many things that we had regarded as impossible were delivered because we were managing a global emergency. I sincerely hope we will use the experience of how we delivered some very swift changes to the way things were done because of Covid-19, and we learn how to accelerate innovation and development and not be derailed by endless processes.

The demographics are clear. In the coming years, we will need a lot more health and social care services, and we simply do not have the people or the financial resources to continue to deliver services in the same way that we currently do. Innovation is no longer something that is nice to have, it is imperative that we find ways to do things better and more efficiently.

# The Care Innovation Challenge is back!



**Vic Rayner**  
CEO  
NCF

**The Care Innovation Challenge, a hackathon-style creative weekend of idea generation and prototype trialling, will return in July 2022. With cash prizes for the top spots, expert mentoring and guaranteed media coverage this is an opportunity not to be missed.**

Applications for a place at the weekend opened on 14th March, and creative thinkers, anyone who has a passion for making ideas a reality and people who want to make a positive difference to people's lives are invited to apply at [www.careinnovationhub.org.uk](http://www.careinnovationhub.org.uk)

The Challenge, hosted by the Care Innovation Hub (CIH), was established in 2018 to create a platform for exploration and innovation in the social care sector. The CIH is now run by the National Care Forum (NCF), supported by Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) through their National Co-production Advisory Group (NCAG) to ensure people with lived experience help to create solutions to key challenges faced by the care sector. NCF is dedicated to developing innovation in the social care and support sector and this is a natural home to drive the CIH into the future.

This is a great opportunity for NCF. We are an organisation that has shown leadership in transformation across the care and support sector as Co-Chair of the government Digital Advisory Group, strategic leaders in Digital Social Care and engaged in a range of transformation agendas around data, housing, workforce, and wellbeing.

**The Challenge Weekend is open to everyone** working, studying or living in the Midlands. You can apply as a team or as an individual. Teams must be 2-3 people.

**"I've just had the most amazing experience this weekend. We've all been inspired to believe in our ideas."**

Pearl Jordan, Challenge Participant 2019

## Who can apply?

- Working professionals
- Care Managers and Care Staff
- People with lived experience of care and support
- University students
- Entrepreneurs



"Without the Challenge, it would have been a much, much longer journey. Maybe I'd have ended up burnt out as it's really hard to run a start-up model by yourself. The Challenge made it 100 times easier."

Maaha Suleiman, 2019 Challenge Runner-up and CEO/Founder of [www.carematched.co.uk](http://www.carematched.co.uk)

## What's planned for the Challenge Weekend?

Successful applicants will each be invited to a creative weekend of idea generation and prototype trialling in July 2022.

On arrival, we will match up participants to form a number of small multi-disciplined teams with a range of skill-sets and perspectives. Each team will be asked to consider a challenge facing the care sector; a challenge identified by care providers or people with lived experience of care provision.





The weekend will culminate in teams presenting their solutions to a judging panel of experts in social care.

- 1. Starting with 12 teams, the weekend will end with teams presenting their projects to a judging panel of industry experts**
- 2.5 teams with the highest quality ideas selected to go through to the final will receive £500 funding and mentoring**
- 3. The winning team will receive £1,000 in prize money and further mentoring**

There will be expert advice and guidance available from CIH sponsors and founding supporters which include Royds Withy King, QCS, Person Centred Software, Home Instead, Hilton Nursing Partners, Hallmark Care Homes, Greensleeves Care, Care Management Matters, BRAN Investment, Borough Care and apetito to help participants in developing their ideas.

Five teams will be selected to go through to the final.

Each of these five teams will be offered further mentoring to develop their idea and receive £500 in prize money to help run initial testing and market research.

These teams will be invited to the Challenge Final at the 2022 Care Show in October 2022 to present their developed solution to the final judging panel.

The winning team will receive £1,000 in prize money, media coverage and further mentoring to develop their idea.

*“The energy in the room was great, there was a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of excitement. It was a great area to be in with lawyers, entrepreneurs and care workers. Everyone from different backgrounds coming together and really bringing innovation and change into the social care sector.”*

Faizah Akeil, Challenge Finalist 2019

*“I really hope these (ideas) can be replicated across industries because that’s what pushes a lot of innovation and change because that’s what we need.”*

Juliana Chipont, Challenge Participant 2019

# Supporting Adult Social Care Innovation



LSE  
CPEC  
Care Policy and Education Centre



**Dr Juliette Malley**

Principal Investigator  
LSE



**Dr Valentina Zigante**

Researcher  
LSE

**In the last two years everyone has needed to find ways to respond to the new challenges they've faced. Living through the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how important it is to innovate; and that some people and organisations find innovating easier than others. As part of the Supporting Adult Social Care Innovation (SASCI) project, we wanted to understand what capabilities organisations need to successfully develop, scale and spread innovations and how organisations can build them. Here we summarise the learning for social care organisations from our review of studies of adult social care innovations.**

## What is innovation?

We can think of innovation as the implementation in practice of an idea, practice or invention that is new to the organisation or system. To be an innovation as opposed to an improvement, some people argue that the new idea, practice or invention must be a step-change for the individuals, organisation or system. There is, however, a fine line between innovation and improvement; and they require many of the same qualities and skills.

**“Innovation happens when everyone feels empowered to make and lead change.”**

## What role does innovation have in the future of social care?

Innovation is a tool to create value for the person being supported and cared for. It is key to becoming the provider of choice for people who need care and support. Innovation can help us to realise the ambition of transforming social care to create a new and better future. In short, every organisation should be thinking about innovating.

## Who should be interested in innovation?

We know that leadership matters for innovation. Critically, it is great leadership throughout the organisation and at every level that matters. Everyone in the organisation should be interested in innovation, because innovation happens when everyone feels empowered to make and lead change.

## How can the sector get better at developing and nurturing innovations?

First, know that every organisation can do a lot to help itself, by getting the conditions right. We've mentioned leadership, but a culture of learning is also important. This means understanding both whether the new things you try are working, and how and why they are making a difference. Are some skills critical, or was it strong existing relationships that made all the difference? This knowledge is important to nurture and spread innovations.

Second, recognise that innovations need constant work and are always changing; people, partnerships, and even the goals for the innovation may need to shift over time in response to changing values, evidence, politics and the economics. The metaphor of a journey is sometimes used to describe innovation. This is a useful reminder that we can never be fully in control of the destination, but we can manoeuvre a route towards it.

Third, know that you can achieve more if you collaborate. Other people and organisations can bring knowledge, skills and resources that you lack. If you know your organisation's strengths and weaknesses well, you can identify people and organisations that are likely to be good partners for innovation. Working with other organisations is also a way of building a movement for change and can help to generate demand for new services or a suitable regulatory environment.



*“The evidence will help us identify sticking points for innovation to social care.”*

### **How is the SASCI project going to help?**

These tips make innovation sound simple, but we know it is anything but simple! We aim to gather further evidence to support organisations to innovate.

The evidence will allow us tell stories about innovation through the eyes of different types of organisations and people. It will also help us to identify sticking points for innovation that are specific to the social care context. These might be skills that are difficult to find or build within social care organisations, or they could relate to regulations that make innovation a challenge. Together this evidence will provide insights for practice and an agenda for supporting innovation in the sector.

We're interested in hearing what would help you on your innovation journey, so if you have any thoughts contact us at [sasci@lse.ac.uk](mailto:sasci@lse.ac.uk).

The support of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is gratefully acknowledged (ES/T001364/1).

# Unleashing creativity through self-managed means



BUURTZORG  
Britian & Ireland

**Brendan Martin**

Managing Director  
Buurtzorg Britain & Ireland

**Since my mum died 11 years ago I have devoted most of my time and energy to trying to improve the care system on which she had become increasingly reliant.**

She had honoured me with power of attorney, so I knew that, with her care package costing about £6,000 a month, she was running out of money. Yet her care workers were low paid and badly supported.

## *“Buurtzorg – it’s Dutch for neighbourhood care.”*

One day I shared with one of her carers, a wonderful young woman called Yasmin, my frustration about trying to get through to her agency’s office. Was there another number I could try?

Yasmin laughing out loud, said: “No, they never pick up for us either!”

When I asked her what she did when there’s a problem, Yasmin picked up her mobile phone and said, “*We call each other.*”

That’s leadership, and it was a lightbulb moment for me. For many years I’d earned my living by supporting public service organisations to improve their performance by trusting and enabling their ‘frontline’ professionals to work with greater freedom and responsibility.

This had taken me all over the world, meeting some wonderful people, and supporting change in their organisations. People like the road repair worker in Indianapolis who told me: “*I no longer have to park my brain at the door when I come to work in the morning.*”

But, like many people, I hadn’t thought much about home care until I was experiencing it for myself. Yasmin got me thinking. What if my mum’s care was provided by a small neighbourhood team who had the authority to flex around the changing needs of their clients?

Rather than standardise care visits by ‘time and task’, why not support care workers to organise it themselves, so they could do what’s needed when it’s needed, using ipads and phones for recording and communicating?

Of course, there would have to be clear standards of care and resource use, but a few guidelines and a transparent information system could do that. The compassion, commitment and cooperation of the care workers would do the rest.

But it’s one thing to imagine this, and another to actually do it. So I did some research and discovered that an amazing social enterprise called Buurtzorg – it’s Dutch for ‘neighbourhood care’ – had made a great success of working that way.

Founded in 2007, Buurtzorg had grown to be the biggest provider of home care in the Netherlands, with 15,000 staff in self-managed neighbourhood teams supported by a small team of coaches and a highly agile back office and IT system.

The company has scored top marks from inspectors and won Dutch Employer of the Year five times. Yet it has also cut costs so much that just last month it awarded all of its staff a pay rise well above the national rate.

I was so impressed by what I read about Buurtzorg that I went to visit them. Finding we were very much on the same page, with the support of its founder Jos de Blok I founded Buurtzorg Britain & Ireland to help care providers learn from his success.

That’s not a question of copying everything Buurtzorg does but of consistently applying its underlying philosophy: to support people to live with as much meaning, autonomy and warm social interaction as possible, and support care professionals to do what’s needed to help them.

I’ll be 70 this year. By the time I need care at home I want people like Yasmin to be paid and supported as well as their commitment and skill deserves. If you want that too, let’s talk!

**brendan@buurtzorg.org.uk**  
**@BrendanFMartin**



# Social Care **TOP 30**

RECOGNISING INFLUENTIAL LEADERS IN SOCIAL CARE

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

# Who's top of the social care charts?

NOMINATE NOW  
FOR 2022 AWARDS!



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

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

People who have made a significant difference in our sector

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

Key influencers and decision makers in the sector

## HOW TO NOMINATE

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

## SHORTLISTED SOCIAL CARE TOP 30 – READERS VOTE!

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

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

**DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO FITS THIS DESCRIPTION?**

Send your nominations to [joe@caretalk.co.uk](mailto:joe@caretalk.co.uk)

[www.caretalk.co.uk/sct30](http://www.caretalk.co.uk/sct30)



# Putting people at the heart of services



Tunstall

**Gary Steen**Chief Technology Officer  
Tunstall Healthcare

**Innovating our health and social care services through technology is crucial if we are to develop care pathways which engage vulnerable people and enable them to become active participants in their own health and care.**

Gary Steen, chief technology officer at Tunstall Healthcare, discusses the role of innovation within social care and how it can support engagement with service users.

## Citizen-led approaches

Our ageing population means we have no choice but to look at the ways we can deliver care differently in order to cope with increasing demand. Placing citizens at the heart of innovation in health and social care is crucial if we are to engage with them effectively, and create services fit for the future.

It's vital that we develop a truly joined up, integrated approach where we listen to citizens, understand their everyday needs and work together to bridge gaps in our services and reduce pressure on health and care.

Understanding the solutions that are required and adapting as things change- not to be driven by contracts but by providing solutions- will ensure innovation continues to flourish. We need to go back to a stage before solution building, understanding the problems faced on a daily basis by service users, so we are better placed to co-design straight-forward and effective solutions.

**"Technology driven collaboration enables greater engagement with vulnerable people."**



## The latest approaches

Digital innovation can improve citizen experience, support better quality and greater reliability of service provision, and provide enhanced services which are tailored to meet specific needs.

New technology and approaches can benefit end users and drive engagement. For example, there has been an increase in remote patient monitoring (RPM) which enables services to be shaped around the user, rather than being place-based. People are often more engaged in their own health and wellbeing if they are given the tools to do so. In addition RPM means they can remain independent and in the place of their choosing for longer.

During the pandemic we've seen technology like RPM support a reduction in the need to travel to appointments with clinicians or carers, real time data provision, and a reduction in hospitalisation which have improved outcomes for users, reduced costs, and enabled more effective care provision through greater engagement with service users.



### Engaging with service users through innovation

When we achieve successful and integrated services for citizens, the benefits flow through the system to primary, secondary, community, social and health care services. If we get our approach right, citizens stay in the place of their choice for longer, delaying entry into residential care and reducing the need for more complex interventions.

Innovative technologies should be clear and easy to use, and have engagement with service users at the forefront of their design. The key to innovation enabling greater engagement with vulnerable people is to use technology to drive collaboration between all stakeholders, such as patients, clinicians, care home operators, and local councils.

***"Placing citizens at the heart of innovation is crucial if we are to engage effectively."***

More intelligent and predictive solutions can support care providers in informing care planning, and enable service users to be more involved with their care plans from the start. This in turn engages them further with their own care and delivers a greater understanding about the key role they play in supporting their own health and wellbeing.

### Looking ahead

Service providers must look to the future of social care through innovation, using services such as telecare and telehealth to help design services around the person, providing preventative, proactive support in the community. This will achieve a system that engages service users and enables them to live independently for longer, and feel empowered to self manage and stay well.



Other challenges remain, such as the UK's move from analogue to digital communications network. This will require significant investment from the public sector; however, this also brings a once in a generation opportunity to modernise, improve and shift thinking from a reactive, to a proactive delivery model.

Integration and investment in technology is key to reconfiguring and integrating our services. It's essential that service providers and end users are involved in the digital transformation if we're to innovate, embrace technology successfully, and deliver new approaches which create tangible benefits for citizens.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.tunstall.co.uk](http://www.tunstall.co.uk)

# Using technology to enhance social care



UNIVERSITY  
OF HULL

**Dr Dave Howe**

Faculty of Health Sciences  
University of Hull

**The challenges of providing high-quality, sustainable social care are well-known to those who work in the sector and are regularly debated in the media. An ageing population, workforce shortages and financial pressures have been present for years, and have recently been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (the impact of which will continue for years to come).**

Technology has the potential to help social care providers rise to these challenges. Some technologies can directly enhance the quality of experience for service users through entertainment and stimulation, whilst others may improve sustainability and productivity by saving staff time and improving administrative efficiency. As many have discovered over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, technology can also provide a crucial means of remote communication between service users, family members and staff. For these purposes (and numerous others), investing in new technologies is likely to be critical for many social care providers in the years ahead.

The Social Care Innovation Programme (SCIP) is a project part funded by the European Regional Development Fund and Northern Powerhouse, led by East Riding of Yorkshire Council and supported by the University of Hull. SCIP aims to identify and fund the implementation of technological solutions which can improve the quality, productivity, and sustainability of social care services.

The project team works with small and medium sized social care providers – such as care homes, domiciliary care providers or day centres - to establish areas in which technology could improve their services, before collaboratively identifying specific technologies which can be applied for via a fully-funded grant. Those care providers who are successful in receiving a technology grant then work with the University of Hull's research team to evaluate the impact of the technology on the care service. By doing so, the project aims to build and publish an evidence base that demonstrates the way in which different technologies can impact on the delivery of social care services.

***"SCIP intends to supply technology grants to 74 social care providers."***

In all, the SCIP team intends to supply technology grants to a total of 74 social care providers by the end of the project in June 2023. Of those that have already received grants, some have opted for technology which provides entertainment and stimulation for their service users, such as 'magic tables', interactive touchscreens or sensory room technology. Others have invested in organisational tools which will allow them to save time and resources, such as digital audit tools or e-rostering and timesheet systems, replacing systems which were previously paper-based.

For some care providers, their most pressing technological needs have been more fundamental; they have stated a desire to switch from paper-based to digital systems, but have been prevented from doing so by issues such as poor WiFi coverage or a lack of hardware. To this end, some providers have used their SCIP grants to fund WiFi boosting technology, or secure essential hardware such as laptops and tablets. Some residential homes have invested in technology that enhances their physical infrastructure, such as electronic call bell systems or replacement of heavy manual doors with ones which open automatically.

This range of different projects has shown already that technological innovation in social care does not necessarily need to be about ground-breaking new devices that aim to completely revolutionise the sector; investment in more fundamental technologies can also make a huge difference to many care providers and those they provide care for. As SCIP progresses, we hope to learn even more about the ways in which different types of technology can drive improvements in social care services.

For more information about SCIP, please visit our website at <https://www.hull.ac.uk/work-with-us/research/case-studies/social-care-innovation-programme>



# Removing barriers, enabling communications



Smartbox

CareTech  
foundation

**Dougal Hawes**

Managing Director  
Smartbox Assistive Technology

**Smartbox leads the way in creating assistive technology that enables disabled people to have a voice and live more independently. Our software and devices for alternative communication support a wide range of conditions and literacy levels, supporting children and adults across the world to communicate with symbols and text, control their environment, access social media, browse the internet and much more.**

As a company our goal is to remove barriers and enable disabled people to communicate their wants and needs, stay connected to friends and family and to fully participate in society. In 2020 we became part of the CareTech group of companies, which opened up opportunities to explore how our technology can better support people in the social care sector.

We were aware that there are many people in special education and social care settings that didn't have access to the technology they needed, and we wanted to see how we could make a difference. How could we make this technology accessible to them?

This is how the 100 Voices project started. In partnership with CareTech PLC, we took our technology to 100 disabled children and adults in CareTech services.

This project enabled us to showcase the true potential of the individuals involved and gather valuable feedback. What it really demonstrates is that person centred care can do much more than it currently does. CareTech PLC is a pioneer in recognising assistive technology holds the key to this, and that it can enable individuals to achieve the things they want to. For people like Nkeesha (pictured), using eye gaze technology means her cerebral palsy doesn't prevent her from being able to interact with her device and quickly compose messages.

**“Smartbox assistive technology enables disabled people to have a voice and live more independently.”**

That's what person centred really looks like; one size fits one. Getting a communication aid is not like receiving a new phone or tablet. Everyone has a unique solution; the only way you can make it work is to consider individual needs and circumstances, which in turn enables them to become more independent through communication.

Smartbox user Lucia shared what this means to her in her own words: "I can write 100 words an hour. For me, this is absolutely great! Writing is the way I communicate. It's what feels natural to me. For some people using alternative communication, the voice part is really important. For me, it's being able to type my messages for people to read on my screen." Such a powerful testimonial from someone who has never had a voice! When you read feedback like this or see a child tell their parents they love them for the first time, that's hope and potential all rolled into one, which is why we will never stop innovating.



Smartbox is also committed to working with young people. Most recently, we supported CareTech Foundation in hosting 20 young people through the partnership with EY Foundation's Smart Futures programme. These 16-19 year olds were asked to come up with a business strategy for our Symoji project and they blew us away! My colleagues and I have also mentored them over 10-months, an equally rewarding experience for all of us.

The future is bright for Smartbox. With ground-breaking projects like 100 Voices we are creating an infrastructure we'd like to build on. We want to help transform the social care industry. It is a big and exciting challenge, but we know the value of the impact cannot be ignored. Reduction in frustration, the clarity of saying what you are thinking, the relief for a carer knowing they are delivering exactly what that person needs.

As Managing Director I can confidently say that we are proud to be part of the CareTech group of companies, partnering with organisations that are adopting technologies for alternative communication and independence into their services and placing them at the heart of social care.

# Trekking for care



**Karolina Gerlich**  
CEO  
The Care Workers Charity

**Last year we teamed up with Global Adventures to bring together some of our amazing supporters who trekked a 25km route along Hadrian's Wall raising almost 25,000 for care workers in crisis.**



Under a blanket of darkness, a group of dedicated and mentally prepared people arrived at Walltown Quarry Carpark in Northumberland to meet the Global Adventure Challenges team.

Introductions and arm welcomes (to combat the icy rain) and a safety briefing saw the adventurers ready to set off. Climbing aboard 2 coaches they readied themselves for the first stretch. Arriving at Brocolita Roman Fort at 7.30am they began on the first 10k of the day heading across the moors as the rain and wind lashed down onto them.

***"The teams made it to the end of the trek with an overwhelming feeling of achievement."***

With damp and uneven terrain underfoot, the adventurers followed fearlessly onwards to Housesteads Roman fort where they were met with an unexpected dry spell to enjoy a quick snack and a hot drink before setting off on the next 10km to Cawfields.

This 10k proved more difficult with terrain gaining height and losing a few foot placements but the mighty adventurers braved on through rain and wind climbing and descending hills along the way while enjoying the beauty around them.

The weather proved bountiful eventually as the most beautiful rainbow shone overhead and we were saddened to find out there is no pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, so our teams settled for a well-earned chocolate bar and another hot drink at Cawfields while taking in the beautiful surroundings (and meeting a lone duck).

The teams made it to the end of the trek with an overwhelming feeling of achievement and toasted with a well-earned glass of prosecco before changing wet and soggy shoes and heading off home to rest.

The money raised from events like this has helped us give out 173,270 already in 2022 to carers in crisis and we need your support as much as ever to continue our work.



To help us reach even more social care workers in crisis, please drop us an email at [info@thecwc.org.uk](mailto:info@thecwc.org.uk) to discuss partnering with us and/or donate through the link below:

<https://thecareworkerscharity.enhuse.com/profile>



# Why recognition matters



Holmes Care Group

**Sharifa Lakhani**  
CEO  
Holmes Care Group

**Sharifa Lakhani, CEO of Holmes Care Group explores the merits of competitions recognising the efforts of care workers, examining the impact of the national Going the Extra Mile competition across homes in England and Scotland.**

The last two years have been difficult for anyone working in social care. We have faced multiple challenges throughout the pandemic – from a nationwide PPE shortage and the slow setup of testing infrastructure during the initial stages to new variants and ever-changing public health advice. All of this has added to the pressures of caring for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Across Holmes Care, our team went above and beyond to keep each home running smoothly. Many stepped into new roles during the initial response to the pandemic and stepped up to lead others. This meant turning their hands to being a chef for a fortnight or stepping up to manage a home's entire team, when colleagues displaying symptoms of COVID-19 were forced to self-isolate for everyone's safety.

I have no doubt there are hundreds of stories like this across our sector. Compassion, kindness and bravery epitomises social care workers. But, rarely are these stories heard and this is where we, as care providers, can go one step further to ensure our colleagues know we value their work.

At Holmes Care, we ran the national 'Going the Extra Mile' competition in partnership with Impact Healthcare REIT to recognise the tireless hard work of our teams. We encouraged each home's manager to highlight the contributions of their staff, nominating individuals for a £1000 prize fund for their care home. Five winners emerged from four of our homes.

**"Residents 'travelled' to London for afternoon tea with the Queen."**

Sarah Keeton, a Senior Carer, and Linda Williamson, Deputy Manager, both stepped in to run their respective homes, when shielding advice meant Managers at Baytree Court and Heatherfield Nursing Home needed to self-isolate. Faced with evolving public health advice, they worked with health and clinical commissioning groups to make sure care, food and hygiene teams were implementing the latest guidelines.

**"We ran the 'Going the Extra Mile' competition to recognise the tireless hard work of our teams."**

All while managing their responsibilities as carers or organising video calls for residents with their loved ones.

At Beechwood Care Home, our Activities Coordinator, Helen Miller launched her own make-believe 'airline and bus tour company' in the home at a time when bus stations and airports were closed. Thanks to her, residents 'travelled' to London and Dublin for afternoon tea with the Queen and a pint of Guinness on St Patrick's Day.

Care Assistants, June Shields and Jacqueline Knox made sure our residents at Larkfield View had all the food they needed, when restrictions meant kitchen staff needed to self-isolate at home. They turned their hands to preparing a 90-bed home's full menu safely and even a cake was served up for one lucky resident's birthday.

We know our colleagues go beyond the call of duty to support others. They help people live with the dignity, respect, and support they have a right to, and did so with even more enthusiasm at a time residents were kept isolated from their loved ones. We wanted to celebrate them for this – not only to boost morale but also to foster a supportive environment where they could talk about their achievements and what they value about each other.

Put to good use already, the £1,000 prize money for each home will be spent on welfare and wellbeing initiatives. Baytree Court refreshed their staff room with fresh paint and new armchairs. Beechwood will arrange for benches to be installed outside the home, where any colleague in need of fresh air can take a break, and a bike rack will encourage staff members to cycle to work.

Anyone who works in social care is no stranger to overcoming challenges. We face plenty of them, often as a result of long-standing issues such as staffing or underfunding. Something as simple as a friendly competition can create the supportive environment our colleagues deserve, even while it might seem as though the rest of the world does not appreciate them enough. It is our duty as care providers to make sure each colleague knows how much they are valued.



# Prepare to care



**Michelle Shaw**  
Head of Care  
Local Care Force

**During the pandemic, Local Care Force recognised that the care sector was being decimated with workers isolating or leaving care permanently. In response to this, we launched the 'Local Care Academy' and devised a 'Prepare to Care' training course, offering an introduction into the care industry and a new career path. We're delighted that we are now celebrating our first official graduate Heather Tandy.**

**"Prepare to Care offers an introduction into the care industry."**

We quickly realised we had an untapped workforce of people who despite not having relevant experience, had the right attitude and passion for caring. All of whom could be supported by our team of nurses and qualified care trainers.

With our program of training, support and mentorship we weren't only able to do our part in plugging the gaps with passionate carers, we were also able to support people in a new rewarding fulfilling career.

Heather Tandy, aged 53, had worked as a Customer Care Advisor for three decades - all of her adult working life - when she was unexpectedly made redundant at the height of COVID. She knew she wanted a total change in her career, but soon realised that every job she saw required experience that she didn't have. Then she came across our advert for Local Care Force's 'Prepare To Care' project.

Once she had met all the legal requirements and checks. Heather took part in zoom training, in person practical training and online course modules.





"It was the training and support offered that made me feel like this was the right choice for me," Heather told us.

"The training was wonderful, I learnt so much and as I completed the programme, it all started to click into place."

Next up was to venture out into the real world of care.

Our Prepare To Care candidates also receive invaluable support from the care homes they are placed with.

For Heather, her greatest challenge was having the confidence to put her new skills into practice, and with the help of Local Care Force and her colleagues she feels she has been able to do this.

She told us, "The support I was given during those first shifts was invaluable and I felt my confidence grow every single day. There's so much to learn, but it's so rewarding. The best thing about working in care is, hearing people's life stories and knowing that I can make a real difference."

***"To anyone else looking to take the leap into a career in care, just go for it!"***

"To anyone else looking to take the leap into a career in care, just go for it. You can make a difference to someone's life. You can make someone's day, there's such a wonderful comradery with colleagues and a bond with the residents you're caring for. In your little, tiny way, you can absolutely make someone's day better and that is so fulfilling."

For more information visit [www.localcareforce.co.uk](http://www.localcareforce.co.uk)

# The value of preceptorship



**NHS**

**Desiree Cox**

National Preceptorship  
Programme Lead  
NHS England and NHS Improvement

**The most challenging, and exciting, time for nurses is the first few months post-registration as they transition into their professional role as autonomous practitioners. It is a time for consolidating the learning from pre-registration education, developing competence, and embracing opportunities to grow in confidence.**

High quality preceptorship programmes are pivotal in supporting the new registrant, helping them to navigate around their new organisation, guiding them in their development and supporting them through the challenges. The role of the preceptor is essential as a critical friend and advocate who can listen, answer questions and support them. A trained and engaged preceptor facilitates introductions, signposts opportunities, supports development and helps in establishing effective networks. This support from day one can make a vast difference to how a new registrant settles into an organisation and influences their decision to stay or leave an organisation. However not every new registrant is receiving a good quality preceptorship experience, or the critical support needed in the first few months. The retention of nurses in social care settings represents an even greater challenge, with turnover in 2019/20 standing at 41.3% compared to 9.4% in the NHS for registered nurses, according to workforce analysis reported in the Nursing Times (October 2021).

The Nursing and Midwifery Council Principles of Preceptorship (NMC, 2020) for nursing highlighted the importance of preceptorship and identified five key areas in the provision of quality preceptorship programmes. Whilst preceptorship programmes exist, it is the quality of the experience that makes a real difference. This includes engagement from all staff, a structured learning programme, confident, trained preceptors to provide guidance and support and a positive culture in which the new registrant feels confident to ask questions and seek advice.

There are some excellent examples of good practice around the country. In London, the Capital Nurse Preceptorship Framework launched in 2018, developed in collaborations with stakeholders, provides a set of best practice guidelines for organisations across London to implement preceptorship. A quality mark is awarded to organisations meeting certain criteria to promote their preceptorship programme for new registrants. Evaluation of the programme shows improved experience for preceptees and a positive impact on recruitment and retention of nurses in the first two years post-registration.

Building on the success of the London programme, NHS England and NHS Improvement's National Retention Programme is supporting a new project to design and deliver a national preceptorship framework. The framework will include a set of core standards for all healthcare settings providing a consistent approach to supporting new registrants in nursing post qualification. Research and scoping has been carried out with health and social care organisations around the country to identify examples of best practice and to share learning experiences.

Design of the framework is currently underway with a project delivery group of professionals representing different geographical regions, as well as a range of health and social care settings. Incorporating core standards, role definitions and documentation templates, the framework will be flexible for use in all settings and adoptable by other professional groups. There will be a quality mark for organisations who are able to demonstrate they meet the gold standard in providing preceptorship.

***"There will be a quality mark for organisations who demonstrate they meet the gold standard in preceptorship."***

Led by NHS London, this exciting project is under the leadership of Dr Jane Wray (Senior Clinical Nurse Advisor) and Desiree Cox (Programme Lead) and supported by the National Workforce Skills Development Unit. It involves extensive collaboration with stakeholders around the country including representatives from health and social care organisations, professional bodies and those involved in delivering and receiving preceptorship. The new national preceptorship framework will be in place for this summer for implementation and roll-out to organisations later this year with stakeholder engagement events planned for June.

More information can be found at National Preceptorship Framework and follow our live feeds **@desireecox07, @livinginhope, @raleen** and live feeds at **#NationalPreceptorship**



WOMEN ACHIEVING GREATNESS  
IN SOCIAL CARE

AWARDS AND NETWORKING PROGRAMME  
2022

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

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

Ann Taylor,  
Chair, Kent Integrated Care Alliance



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

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

**CareTalk**  
The voice of excellence in social care

**KICA**  
KENT INTEGRATED CARE ALLIANCE



# The importance of joining the GP Learning Disability Register



Brendan Chivasa

Campaigner  
Mencap

**Lots of people with a learning disability face problems getting the healthcare they have a right to. I have a learning disability and I am lucky that my experience has normally been good. My GP is always very supportive - they talk to me, ask me questions, and make it easier for me to understand.**

Sometimes I have had problems. For example, sometimes in GP appointments the doctor has spoken to my support worker rather than me, and it makes me annoyed because they think I can't explain how I feel on my own. I have told my GP they should talk to me and now they always listen to me. They give me extra time to understand, and they make the reasonable adjustments I need.

But not everyone gets a good experience because some doctors don't make adjustments. Some of my friends have had that experience. They don't listen and don't give them extra time. I think it's wrong and unfair.



One way to make sure you get the right support is to join the GP Learning Disability Register. This is a list of all people with a learning disability that the GP surgery looks after. The register helps the GP surgery to know which patients need extra support because of their learning disability, and you can ask your GP about making sure you are on the GP Learning Disability Register.

This extra support can also include annual health checks which help people with a learning disability with their health. I like my annual health check because they give me a chance to express what I'm feeling at the moment. I can ask questions about anything health wise that I'm thinking or worried about. They check you are okay and they measure things like your height and weight, if you're eating healthily, and how you are doing. Anyone with a learning disability aged 14 and over can have an annual health check and I think they're really important.

*"I like my annual health check because they give me a chance to express what I'm feeling."*

I am really passionate about people with a learning disability getting the support they need at the doctors and in hospital, and I have got involved in lots of campaigning. Going back to 2018, I started to get involved in Mencap's Treat Me Well campaign. The campaign is all about changing how the NHS treats people with a learning disability.

For me it was very important to be involved in campaigning, and people all across the country come together to discuss what we are doing in our own local areas. Harrow Mencap have focused on making sure there are more learning disability nurses to support people, because there was only one nurse for three different areas in North London. We spoke to our local MP about getting more learning disability nurses and finally, after all our campaigning, now there are two learning disability nurses which is so important. We even won an award for our work.

While there is still a lot that needs to change to make sure people with a learning disability get the healthcare support they need, joining the GP Learning Disability Register is one important step to getting better support.

You can find advice on how to get support from the doctor at your GP surgery by visiting Mencap's site. Mencap has created four guides focused on the support available, how to join the GP Learning Disability Register, annual health checks and reasonable adjustments.

Find out more here: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/gp-surgery>.

# The role of innovation in supported living delivery



**Lorna Durrant**

Head of Specialist Strategies  
and Outcomes  
Eden Futures

**It's easy to think about technology or a never-before-seen project when someone mentions innovation, but it's more than that at Eden Futures.**

Yes, we have technological systems in place that support the ways we work but it's how we use them to ensure people get the best support possible. For example, the Specialist Support Team analyse distress communication data to proactively support teams to prevent someone experiencing a crisis.

**"The Specialist Support Team analyse data to prevent someone experiencing a crisis."**

## Practical innovation

We work in partnership with developers during the design and construction of new services, so environments are safer and more accessible for vulnerable people, by including assistive technology. It's imperative that buildings don't increase dependency or risks, utilising things like underfloor heating, anti-ligature fittings or integrated blinds can prevent this.

## Innovative ways of working

We employ 1200 staff and provide care and support for 650 people across 170 sites. Innovation is equally important when applied to how we work. The constant application of new ideas and methods ensures positive outcomes for everyone.

We look at who people are, what they have to offer and if they have right values to work with us, not just what qualifications they have. We're a learning organisation and invest in our staff through a culture of continuing professional development. This is more than formal training and qualifications. It's leadership development, coaching and mentoring, opportunities to explore new concepts and to challenge the status quo. Eden Futures has been Investors in People accredited since 2006 with GOLD status since 2019.

We design and deliver leadership programmes developed in line with Skills for Care leadership standards to support skills development for leaders at all levels of the organisation. This includes aspiring leaders from the support worker cohort. Lifetime Training assists with sector specific qualifications and apprenticeships with structured training programmes to attract and retain people to the sector.

We're proud to have been approved by the BildACT as a Maybo affiliate organisation. We've continued to work closely with Maybo to create a L&D programme in PBS to further develop skills and knowledge of our leaders, and for them to become licensed trainers. This will create meaningful opportunities for 'in the moment' learning for our teams.

## Expert innovation

Listening to the voices of those we support through our Expert Partner programme is true co-production. Our experts help us understand what exceptional services should look like by challenging our thoughts. They participate in and lead interviews for all levels and functions in the organisation. They help us develop and review L&D sessions, sharing their own experiences of trauma and restrictive practices and give Toolbox Talks such as professional boundaries, responding to situations that challenge us, and validation.

N says: *"Being an Expert Partner has helped me and saved my life from going round in circles in hospital, it's given me a focus and something to do and use my experiences to help future things."*

S presented to 600 people at The Learning Disabilities and Autism Open Forum event. Co-presenting with our CEO, he offered a unique insight by sharing his thoughts about his experiences of sitting on the CQC Expert Advisory Panel for Closed Cultures. The project looks at how the CQC checks for, and tackles, closed cultures in services during inspections. It's produced new guidance on closed cultures to better identify and respond to services that might be at risk.

In truth I don't see what we do and how we do it as different or innovative, it's just what we do. Our focus is always about people getting the right support from the right people and having the same opportunities in life as everyone else. Isn't that what supported living is?

[www.edenfutures.org](http://www.edenfutures.org)



# Hope not handcuffs



**Emily Aklan**  
Children's Rights Campaigner  
Founder  
Hope Instead of Handcuffs

**In my many years of working with vulnerable young people, one thing which never fails to shock me is the negative attitudes targeted towards children in care. The archaic view of looked after children as "little thugs", responsible for their problems, is more widespread than we might like to admit.**

The reality couldn't be more different. Young people in or on the edge of the care system have often faced multiple disadvantages and trauma which most of us could never imagine. In addition, they often do not have the security of a family support network in the same way as other children.

But, however untrue they might be, negative attitudes such as these seep through into how the care system operates. We can see it in issues like teenagers being moved to semi-independent accommodation like hostels, often alone and sharing the premises with grown adults; or the way some of those who work with vulnerable children, like certain private transport providers, still rely on physical restraint and handcuffs to force compliance instead of using supportive de-escalation techniques.

We know from the data how damaging these early experiences can be on a child's future, and that care leavers face greater risk of poor life outcomes when compared to their peers. For example, as a recent report undertaken by the Hope instead of Handcuffs campaign showed, care leavers make up 25% of the homeless and 24% of the prison population. They are also more likely to suffer with poor mental health and more likely to be classified as Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET), in the years after they leave school.

**"Negative attitudes such as these seep through into how the care system operates."**

These statistics demonstrate exactly how looked after children are slipping through the cracks in the system. There is a clear disparity between how the general public view, and therefore treat, children within the care system compared to those outside it. Looked after children are considered to be more responsible for their behaviour and actions than their peers. This leads to many people considering these young people

as being 'deserving' of poor treatment or written off as lost causes. These negative views are engrained in the public consciousness, and undoubtedly contribute to a society where, for many years now, the care system is not afforded the money or resources it so desperately needs.

It is because these sentiments have been allowed to grow and fester by complacent government attitudes, that the change must come from the top down. Moving forward, children's social care needs to take a holistic approach, centered on compassion and dignity. Looked after children need better access to tailored mental health services, mentoring schemes and support to transition from care to independent adult life.

But underlying all of this, the government must put the effort into radically overhauling current perspectives. No child is responsible for finding themselves in the care system. We must change the minds of those who think this and make them realise that every child in the care system is just as deserving of empathy and kindness as their own. Until we do, we are failing some of our society's most vulnerable.

**"Children's social care needs to take a holistic approach, centered on compassion and dignity."**

[www.serenitywelfare.org/page/hope-instead-of-handcuffs.html](http://www.serenitywelfare.org/page/hope-instead-of-handcuffs.html)



T H E   2 0 2 2



The National  
Children &  
Young People  
Awards

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL CARE

**The ICC, Birmingham  
Thursday, 6th October 2022**

**Small things  
make a BIG difference**

Categories

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

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

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

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

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

THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AWARD ★ THE LEAVING CARE AWARD

THE PARTNERSHIP WORKING AWARD ★ THE CHILDREN'S CHAMPION AWARD

THE YOUNG CARER AWARD ★ THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Help us pay tribute to the unsung heroes of our sector



NOMINATE  
NOW FOR  
2022 AWARDS!  
[www.cypawards  
.co.uk/  
nominate](http://www.cypawards.co.uk nominate)

**www.cypawards.co.uk**

# The soul of End of Life Care



**Debbie Day**



**The famous science fiction writer Isaac Asimov died before he had a chance to meet an extraordinary woman called**

**Debbie Day. Had their paths crossed, he might not have written the following:**

**"Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It's the transition that's troublesome."**

Veteran winner of the Great British Care Awards, Debbie is Head of Wellbeing and End of Life Lead at Canford Healthcare's Cedars Care Home, Southend and has won several awards for exemplary palliative care, proving time and time again that the crossing from life to death can and should be quite the opposite of troublesome.

For Cedars it is a whole home approach, started by Debbie and based on The Gold Standard where everyone has an End of Life Story about their special moments which, as Debbie explained, requires a lot of thought and planning:

*"For example, we had a gentleman who used to go to Italy with his wife and he absolutely loved it and used to speak often of the little cafe they would go to and have a glass of red wine and a cigar. So, that was his story and at the end I sat with him and recounted it like I was walking with him, describing the cobbled street going down to the cafe, even using music really faintly, and where possible, smells that relate to the images. And then describing how his wife is sat there in the dress he always liked, so pleased to see him..."*

Debbie always talks with them about love and care and safety and then, as they take their last breaths, she tells them how it's all okay...it's all okay. There have been some beautiful ends and she wants them to feel love when they go.

**"There have been some beautiful ends and she wants them to feel love when they go."**

And does she believe they feel this?

*"Yes, definitely. I remember we had this gentleman and he really was End of Life and it sounded like he was taking his last breath and I was talking to him...sending him through and then all of a sudden he took a deep breath and lived another year and half! He said to me one day, I want you there again - I could hear you and I felt so calm and so safe."*

**"Astonishingly, Debbie was an HGV driver at Purfleet Docks."**

I'm conducting this interview, but listening to Debbie I'm already feeling the sting of emotion for those I know who have passed without this loving attention and deep respect.

Debbie is, in effect, a Soul Midwife which is as perfect a definition of her role as I can imagine and yet, as so often the case, she arrived here not through a nursing or palliative background... Astonishingly, Debbie was an HGV driver at Purfleet Docks loading and unloading thousands of vehicles including lorries, tractors, police cars etc. When that contract ended after a couple of years, she joined the local care home as a domestic and discovered a strong empathy for the residents on the dementia floor:

*"I just feel things and tend to understand people. It's simple - I believe these people are adults and that they are living with something and you shouldn't treat them like babies. So, there was a lady who used to hit people every time someone walked past her and would really whack them. Naturally, people tended to avoid her. I was warned and finally one day she did hit me when I was hoovering and I remember turning round and saying "why did you do that?" And she replied gratefully, "Oh, you see me!" She would hit people because no one saw her. And that was the only reason she was doing it. I just seemed to have a natural knack to know what they were feeling and what their problems were."*

And so, Debbie knew then that she wanted to be in this world. After becoming an activities co-ordinator in another home, she ended up at a brand new care home, Cedars, and has now been there for 10 years.

It's fair to say that as a nation we're pretty tight-lipped about death, side-stepping necessary conversations for others as well as for ourselves. But why when, along with taxes, it's the only other certainty in our lives? I'm thinking it's the fear of reaching the ultimate end - that final full stop to our stories.



**"As a nation we're pretty tight-lipped about death."**

Though from Debbie's experiences, she's no longer so sure about that full stop:

*"I'm not religious but now I do believe there is another place we go to. I see it in the room - all of a sudden they look up and smile and sometimes I can feel someone is in the room. It's very strange, you can sometimes smell something or feel it. The room can feel heavier, feel a bit cold - we've had buzzers go off for no reason at all. There was a gentleman I spent all day with and he said when I die how do you want me to let you know that I'm okay. What message would you like? I said well something nice and she said nah, I'm gonna throw something off the shelf. And then about two weeks later, I had a couple of files just fly off the shelf. And then it happened again: I was in the garden and a little robin was constantly following me around because he used to do the garden. So I think he sent that too, just to make me happy. He also said that when it's my time, I'll have all of them there. And I thought, how lovely is that gonna be - it'll be packed!"*

I'm barely holding back tears at this point and want to know what keeps her motivated to engage so fully with something the vast majority of us would run from...

*"They do - the residents. You meet some fantastic people and to learn of the lives they've lived - it's lovely to think we're part of each other's lives. In ten years I have so many memories of people and I remember them all. It's more than a job - it has to be. It is a passion. I love my job - it's a special place. It's such an honour - it's truly amazing."*

Soul Midwife Debbie IS truly amazing.

And so, considering a few of my own potential End of Life stories, I feel a huge and unexpected wave of gratitude. I'm beginning to think it's an intimate exercise we'd all benefit from these days.

**STOP PRESS:** Unsurprisingly Cedars has just received Platinum Accreditation.



**Debra Mehta**

# Supporting autistic adults through the pandemic and beyond



**Everyone at the National Autistic Society is incredibly proud how our support workers and school staff went above and beyond to help autistic people get through the pandemic. We're delighted that Wendy Brisland, Abbie Williams and the team at our Glamorgan House day centre in Neath, south Wales, were recognised for their brilliant work in this area at the recent Great British Care Awards in Wales, and named as finalists in in The Frontline Leaders Award. Huge well done to the team.**

***"The ending of legal restrictions is a big change which some autistic people have been concerned about."***

## Impact of coronavirus

While the pandemic has affected everyone's lives, the crisis has had a disproportionate impact on autistic people and their families.

Autistic people, who can experience intense anxiety and extreme unease around unexpected change, often rely on routine to manage what can be an overwhelming world. So, the disruption, pace of change and uncertainty of the pandemic has been incredibly tough, particularly the early stages.

## Stepping up to the challenge

Colleagues working across our schools and adult services took extraordinary steps during this difficult period to limit the impact that unexpected changes had on the people we support. And the team at National Autistic Society Cymru's Glamorgan House who support autistic people and provide opportunities to socialise and learn new skills, came up with some particularly creative ideas.

For instance, with local restaurants and takeaways forced to close, they decided to create their own so the people they support could keep up their routines. The team even made their own replica McDonald's drive-thru, wore handmade uniforms and managed to source some packaging from McDonald's stores to create an authentic experience.

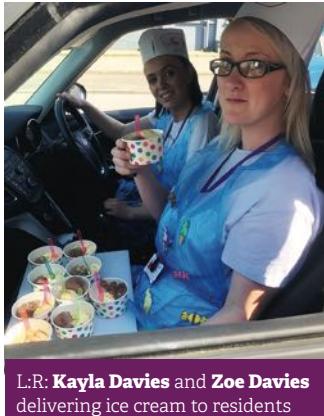


L-R: Wendy Brisland, Louise Penny and Abbie Williams at Glamorgan House's VE Day celebrations



L-R: **Kayla Davies, Wendy Brisland, Abbie Williams** and **Louise Penny** at their makeshift McDonald's drive-thru

It wasn't only McDonald's either. The team chose a different theme each week, creating an ice-cream parlour, a pick 'n mix sweet stand, a hotdog stall and a replica Papa John's/ Domino's pizza place. They also put on a Great British Bake Off-style event to mark VE Day, and even created a makeshift pub for a resident who likes to pop out for a pint once a week.



L-R: **Kayla Davies** and **Zoe Davies** delivering ice cream to residents

Glamorgan House is a place where autistic people can come for support, to socialise and learn new skills. People can choose from a range of vocational opportunities, all designed to help them experience community-based activities.

As well as benefiting the people at Glamorgan House, the team also arranged for people supported by our services in the Neath Port Talbot area to collect food or have it delivered. The whole project was also brilliant for staff morale and everybody's mental health at a time when the whole world was on pause.

## Looking forward

I'm delighted for the team and know it meant a lot to hear the Great British Care Awards judges praising their innovative efforts to ensure continuity of care and maintain routines.

While this story is very much related to brilliant efforts in the lockdowns, it's important to remember that coronavirus is unfortunately still here. The ending of legal restrictions is another big change which some autistic people have been very concerned about, particularly those who have other conditions which make them clinically vulnerable.

**"The team made their own replica McDonald's drive-thru."**

It's important that everyone understands this and respects that some autistic people may want to maintain social distancing, continue to wear a mask or ask that someone supporting them wears one. Without this understanding, some autistic people could really struggle to maintain their routines and do the things they love.

For more information about autism or to find out more about the National Autistic Society's services in Wales, visit [autism.org.uk](http://autism.org.uk)

**Nick Haake** Wales Services Manager at the National Autistic Society

# Free to be me

**Michael was born in 1939 - sometimes he can be quiet and shy but when relaxed, has a cheeky sense of humour and is softly spoken.**

***"Michael was in a comfortable relationship that allowed him to present both his gender preferences."***

As a young man growing up in the 1950s and 60s, Michael always felt he was different from other people. He knew that he liked women, but also that he was attracted to men as well.

Michael dated women and men throughout his life but learnt that as much as he enjoyed female company, he was often interested in their clothing and makeup. Picking out an outfit for a woman was exciting to him, but he felt like he was 'living his dream through someone else'.

After some time, Michael started to dress in feminine clothing in private. He soon found himself being more comfortable wearing dresses, wigs and perfume. He admired women for their scent, demeanour and characteristics. This is when Michelle was 'born'.

Michael unfortunately had to keep this side of his life a secret, as in the 1950s it was a crime. If found out, a person could be taken for 'treatment' to change one's sexual orientation or desires.

In 1972, Michael was referred to a doctor for advice, who diagnosed him with Schizophrenia – a mental health condition that may cause 'confused thinking'. This is a diagnosis that Michael and the people around him still question to this day.

From 1980 to 2018, Michael lived in a flat with his partner – in a comfortable relationship that allowed him to present both his gender preferences.

Michael enjoyed this period of his life, but after his health began to decline in 2018, he moved into Okeley Care Home.

When Michael arrived, he came with only male clothing and there was no indication of Michelle being a part of his life.

He was often quiet and enjoyed time to himself. He was encouraged to take part in activities with the other residents but would often decline and opt for an afternoon watching television.

In November 2020, Michael was moved to a different suite at the home, where he would benefit from a change in schedule and more dedicated support. Within just one week, Michael showed more signs of being happier there; smiling and interacting with others more during mealtimes.

On this suite, the team were supported by a Senior Carer and the Home Manager to have a conversation with Michael and ask some questions about Michelle.

Michael expressed his desire to wear feminine clothes. He said he felt beautiful, loved and free. The team responded positively and said it is something they would completely support him to do, which made him quite emotional, as no one, aside from his partner, had ever acknowledged and supported this side of him before.

After this conversation, Michael was supported with some online shopping so he could pick out some items that he liked. This included women's clothes, shoes, jewellery, undergarments and accessories. The joy and excitement in his face made the team feel young and it was delightful to see him looking so happy!

Michael was excited to try these clothes on and once again, become Michelle. Dressed in his new attire, Michelle walked around the home with confidence and ready to be a part of the community at Okeley.

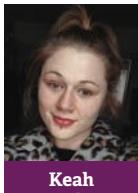
Michelle was beaming with joy and began accepting help with her personal care, which included shaving her legs, getting her hair washed and styled, and asking the team to make her feel 'pretty'.

The other people living at Okeley also support Michael and Michelle as part of their family, welcoming them to activities and social sessions.



***"Michael expressed his desire to wear feminine clothes."***

# Royal recognition for teen hero Keah



**In the face of adversity, Keah, a 19-year-old Care and Support Assistant, is truly phenomenal.**

When she isn't looking after her mum at home, she's either studying at college to become a nurse, working part time at Sanctuary Supported Living's Shaftesbury Court in Trowbridge, or helping other young carers in her area.

***"I accepted that it was normal to have this much responsibility and just got on with it."***

Keah had always helped care for her dad who had long-term illness, but in 2019 her mum was admitted to hospital with a brainstem bleed, before she contracted a serious case of pneumonia. In tragic circumstances, whilst Keah's mum was in the Intensive Care Unit, Keah's dad sadly passed away. Since then, from the age of just 17 Keah has been a full-time carer.

She said: "At first, I didn't really consider myself to be a young carer. I accepted that it was normal to have this much responsibility and just got on with it. But when I weigh it all up - there is a lot going on. I help mum with her personal care, and jobs around the house like cooking and cleaning. However, nothing has stopped me from pursuing my dreams. I'm studying for a Level 3 NVQ in Health and Social Care at college, and I have a part time job that I love."

Keah applied for a Bank Care and Support Assistant position at Shaftesbury Court in 2021 so she could use her knowledge and practical skills to help others with support needs to live fulfilling lives.

Shaftesbury Court is a residential care home where adults aged 18 to 65, who have a range of learning disabilities and physical disabilities are supported around their own home to live as independently as possible.

Keah added: "Helping my mum recover from her stroke gave me the courage to apply for a job in adult social care, and I'm proud to be making a difference in peoples' lives every day. I make people smile, and that makes me smile. And although my responsibilities at work are like my responsibilities at home, it's nice to get out of the house, and to see my colleagues. We're a great team at Shaftesbury Court."

Local Service Manager of Shaftesbury Court, Tina Skuse, said: "We're extremely proud of Keah. She is generous, caring, and compassionate – all those qualities that you need to excel in social care. Her perseverance and strong social conscience is inspiring to all of us. She is an absolute asset to the team."

Resident Wayne added: "Keah is really fun to be around. We love celebrating the holidays through the year, and Keah goes the extra mile to make it special for us."

Keah also volunteers on her local Young Carers council. She said: "I'm very keen to help other young carers, as there are so many out there. And lots of them are younger than me! I raise awareness about the issues that young carers face and what my life is like being a carer, so that others know they're not alone."

Each year, BBC Radio 1 celebrates Teen Heroes – young people who make the world a better place – and Keah was surprised live on air by Breakfast presenter, Greg James with the award, after being nominated by her auntie. Since winning the award, she has enjoyed a visit to Kensington Palace to meet HRH Prince William, The Duke of Cambridge, as well as receiving personal messages from former One Direction member, Niall Horan and members of the Holby City cast.



To find out more about Sanctuary Supported Living's accommodation, care and support services for people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and autism, visit [www.sanctuary-supported-living.co.uk](http://www.sanctuary-supported-living.co.uk).



# CO-PRODUCTION COUNTS!

## Checking on quality



John  
Leicester

**The four-strong team of Quality Checkers are highly valued employees within Consensus who regularly visit each one of 96 services across the UK. They all live within one of those services, so are experts in the issues faced by people with autism, learning disabilities and other complex conditions, as they have a disability themselves.**

The aim for the team, working alongside their own PAs, is to audit every single service every year. This process is designed to ensure that individuals supported by Consensus have a voice, share their views and talk to someone about how they are feeling about the service provided and where any improvements could be made.

John Leicester, Senior Quality Checker, reflects on the accomplishments of the Quality Checkers Team throughout what has been a difficult couple of years for all of us:

Kelly and I cover the Midlands and North area, Jamie and Louis our services in the South. When we weren't able to make visits and have face-to-face conversations for our audits, we used technology to communicate and stay in touch with the individuals and staff members through 'Teams' meetings.

During the first lockdown we wanted to remain in contact with as many individuals we support as possible. We quickly became "film stars", making videos to support individuals across Consensus during the lockdown and help them to understand the pandemic and what this meant for them.

**"Consensus Voices supports individuals from different services to get involved and to share ideas."**

We filmed a shopping trip to show how to keep safe during the lockdown, a hand hygiene video explaining the importance of personal protective equipment and why their support team needed to be wearing this, and produced easy read information on what the Covid vaccine was and shared experiences about receiving it.

We came up with a whole lot of other ideas for wellbeing activities and competitions to keep everyone connected - we organised quizzes, karaoke and armchair bingo amongst other group activities. We thought about

amongst other group activities. We thought about how we could get people to work together on projects including: Singing a Rainbow song using Makaton, getting out into their gardens for a Consensus in Bloom competition, sharing Consensus Got Talent videos, best Christmas cake and the Service with the Best Festive Decorations competitions, and a 2021 Consensus Calendar showcasing the creativity and artwork of individuals living within many of the services.



These proved so popular that there was a second 'Consensus in Bloom' competition last summer and another lot of Christmas competitions. The individuals we support are proud of their homes and enjoy opportunities of making their environments better and more personalised. Another Consensus Calendar was printed again for 2022 and sent to all our services – they can give copies to supported individuals, and family or friends can ask for Calendars too.

In the Spring of last year, we were very excited to launch our 'Consensus Voices' Forum for supported individuals from different services to get involved and to share ideas. There have been three Forums so far - the Quality Checkers organise these and put together the agendas. We've discussed keeping safe when out and about, health awareness, internet safety, relationships, and what independence means to us. Those views and ideas are shared with the Consensus Executive team.

We're pleased now to be back in the services carrying out our regular audits, speaking with the individuals and managers and support workers, and making sure the highest standards of care and support are received by all those using one of those services. We'll continue to introduce new and exciting initiatives to keep Consensus services communicating together and working together as one big team.

John's line manager is Jackie Preston, Best Practice & Operational Support Manager, who says: *"All the Quality Checkers are passionate about their roles and are a fundamental part of Consensus' operations. They complement the management team and feedback to us on important issues and the impact this has on people with learning disabilities, to ensure that informed decisions and changes are made. I'm so proud of John and his colleagues and of all that they do."*



## Care Consultancy Ltd

### Our Services

#### ■ Crisis Management

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

#### ■ Quality Assurance

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

#### ■ Mock Inspections

To assist services in preparing for regulatory inspection and ensure standards are maintained to a high standard.

#### ■ Training & Development

Supporting both providers and staff in working to the highest standard whilst keeping up with regulatory changes.

#### ■ Due Diligence

Working with various stakeholders, including banks, receivers and investors, in establishing the current operational status of care services.

#### ■ Expert Witness/Investigations

Supporting services, and staff, in preparing for court and tribunal proceedings.

### A little about us

BKR Care Consultancy was founded in 2011 and has since grown to become a leading Care Consultancy firm in the UK.

For Further  
Information

☎ +44 (0)116 241 2142

🌐 [www.bkrcc.co.uk](http://www.bkrcc.co.uk) 📩 [info@bkrcc.co.uk](mailto:info@bkrcc.co.uk)  
📍 The Old Surgery, 48 Bushloe End, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 2BA

The Care Industry  
Experts.

## WHAT KEEPS ME



## AWAKE AT NIGHT

# Karen Lewis

COO, National Care Group

**Covid-19 has overwhelmingly dominated the care and support sector for the past two years, but as we look to the future, the knock-on effects of the pandemic, and subsequent challenges need to be addressed. In order to protect the vibrancy and future of the sector, and the people we support, the government, care regulators and specialist service providers must collaborate on a strategy for recovery.**

Colleague fatigue following their tremendous commitment during the pandemic is one of the biggest issues immediately facing our sector. How we can reinvigorate our teams who have worked so hard is something that keeps me up at night. We need to empower them through supporting their needs and valuing them and the services they provide.

Moving forward we need to stabilise the sector, by investing in competitive wages that reflect the life altering services our colleagues offer and enhancing the reputation of adult social care. I hope we can elevate the work of our colleagues and ensure they are as highly regarded as the NHS is, through the involvement of the government and its prioritisation of funding.

Equally, reintroducing the people we support to a society that has dramatically changed since the pandemic is a hurdle that keeps me awake at night. As we try to navigate this situation that neither our colleagues nor the people we support have faced before, our main goal is to ensure we are adaptable and provide person-centred care and support. We've strengthened our positive behaviour teams, provided additional training and persevered so that the people we support can unlock their full potential, but without suitable investment, organisations will struggle to remain financially viable and simultaneously provide high quality care and support.

***"Reintroducing the people we support to a society that has dramatically changed since the pandemic keeps me awake at night."***

The recruitment challenge is also adding immense pressure at every level of the sector. Retaining and developing talent is imperative to the success of services, as care needs to be provided by highly skilled colleagues. Subsequently, we need to develop future leaders that can act as role models to other care professionals.

***"I worry that in focusing on recruitment, current colleagues could become overlooked."***

The key to attracting people to care is by highlighting the career progression that is available. In showing people it's a viable career path, not the low skilled job that it's often thought of, it will appeal to aspiring nurses and support workers, in the same way that a career in the NHS is, deservedly, admired.

However, I worry that in focusing on recruitment, current colleagues could become overlooked. Retention is just as important as recruitment, and care has always been a challenging job that can and does leave an impact on people's mental health. I'm concerned that as a nation, we do not safeguard our care sector's mental health enough, especially after the past two years, and this could lead to many professionals leaving their roles.

I hope that we can rebuild resilience, in the same way we are with the people we support. At National Care Group, we have taken great leaps forward in nurturing our colleagues' mental health; training more than 125 mental health first aiders, as well as partnering with a confidential helpline and app that is free for use by all, but there's always more support that can be given.

Looking to the future, my main hope is that we continue to strive to maximise the potential of the individuals we support and ensure they lead fulfilling lives. While our colleagues exemplify our values every day, there is intervention that needs to happen in order to support them in being successful far into the future, and I hope we can collaborate with the right organisations and governing bodies to make this a reality.



**Karen Lewis**  
COO  
National Care Group





## IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CARE

# From Coffee Shop to Care Village

**Throughout the year we profile a care professional who has come into the sector after a career change and who demonstrates that it really is never too late to care! This month we meet Josephine Mollison, who left coffee shop management in search of a more fulfilling career.**

Josephine's journey with Belong, a dementia care specialist based in the North West, started nine years ago, when she joined the organisation's Crewe care village as a support worker. Previously, she was the manager of a coffee shop and while she enjoyed the interaction with people it afforded her, she felt that she hadn't found real job satisfaction.

For most people, changing direction to embark on a new career is a daunting prospect and Josephine wanted to use her professional life to help other people. She was keen to hit the ground running and to her surprise, was successful when she applied for a support worker position – despite not having experience or relevant qualifications.

As part of the robust induction programme for her role, Josephine trained for 'The Care Certificate'. The on-the-job training certifies new starters in the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected for the high standards of the job, whilst also building confidence looking after older people, including those with dementia.

Much to her pleasure, Josephine's career progression came quickly. In just a few months, she advanced to senior support worker, before heading up care teams in a lead role. Josephine credits her quick learning and development in those early days to excellent mentorship from Belong's dementia trainer and the village's support manager.

Now, she is proud to call herself the support manager at Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme. As the registered manager with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Josephine is responsible for ensuring the highest standards of nursing and dementia care for residents of each of the village's households. Her leadership style views this as

being about meeting emotional needs and helping people to lead a fulfilled life, as much as it is about clinical support.



She also makes sure that support workers receive the right training to meet these requirements and are up-to-date with best practice, as well as other administration.

On what she enjoys most about her role, Josephine says: "It's achieving the best outcomes for residents and helping them to live in the way that they want to live. What I love most about Belong is that care is about individuals rather than providing a general care environment. I also enjoy that people come to me for thoughts and advice on how to approach particular situations and overcome challenges. My approach is to provide support and guidance rather than tell them what to do."



**"Josephine credits her quick learning and development in those early days to excellent mentorship."**

Care very much runs in Josephine's family, with her mum also working as a care host, and she can now 'talk shop' with her auntie, who also heads up care as the support manager in another Belong village. She is pleased to have taken inspiration from her family and have followed in their footsteps.

Over the past nine years, Josephine has also developed particular expertise in dementia care, which led to her being named Dementia Champion at the organisation's annual internal awards, in last year's Belong Champion Awards.

Commenting on Josephine's contribution to the Belong Newcastle-under-Lyme team, general manager Peter Norman said: "I've seen her progress steadily in her career at Belong as a result of her commitment and caring nature. She has come to embody Belong's values, and this continues to inspire those around her and manifest itself in improved outcomes for customers."

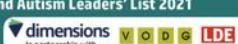


## PEOPLE POWER

# Dylan: a life in sharp focus

**Each month we feature an inspirational individual or team who are taking a lead in their lives and helping make society better for everyone. This month we feature Dylan Lombard, winner in the Winner in the Sports, arts and entertainment category in the Dimensions Learning Disability and Autism Leaders' List.**

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



### Introducing... **Dylan Lombard**



**Dylan Lombard**

18-year old Dylan helps people understand how he experiences the world through prize-winning photography and dance, raising awareness and promoting a message of kindness.

Dancing makes Dylan feel like he is floating whilst his photography shows the world as he experiences it and which others often don't see – often a solitary figure framed by a larger landscape. Sometimes the figure expresses his loneliness, sometimes his wish to be alone. In the past Dylan has found communicating with others difficult. He hasn't had many friendships and he found it hard to understand why social situations could be challenging. Dylan also has a syndrome which means he looks different from others. With his autism this has compounded how other people react to him.

### **Putting lockdown in the frame**

Dylan completed various photography training courses both before and during lockdown, not letting the cancellation of his college course derail him. Indeed, lockdown proved a perfect opportunity for Dylan's art. He took outstanding photos capturing the stillness of lockdown and the lone figures walking through the streets, exhibiting and selling them online. Greater Govanhill exhibited them.

*"What you're doing for Children In Need is vital. I'm proud of you mate."*

### **Great exposure**

Dylan is becoming more and more visible. International artist Grayson Perry is a fan! His photography is for sale in a bakery in Glasgow's West End and he's contributed to local blogs and even in the Sunday Post and BBC Radio Scotland.

### **A high performer**

Dylan is a member of Youth Scotland Dance, Horizons and Independence. He's performed in Scotland and even in Spain, working with choreographers from around the world. And following a performance on the One Show for Children in Need, superstar Robbie Williams clearly agreed, telling Dylan, "What you're doing for Children In Need is vital. I'm proud of you mate, and thank you very much for picking my song. That makes me very happy."

### **A mentor and role model**

Dylan is now sharing that can-do attitude. He's a mentor in violence prevention, teaching pupils how to respond to difficult situations using different strategies and scenarios.

He works with 'Bridging the Gap,' helping people transition to high school through a mix of counselling and public speaking. He was asked to talk at his old primary school during Autism awareness month, and has also delivered assemblies all through high school to different year groups explaining about disability. He was voted vice-captain in his final year of high school, campaigning for a disability charter for the school. And to date, he's even raised over £10,000 for Jeans for Genes, for their research into syndromes like his.

The world needs more people like Dylan. We hope his story has inspired you. What can-can you do?



**"I am proud and it means so much to me. I would like to say that with the right support and awareness we can achieve our dreams. Be kind."**

#LDALeadersList



dimensions-uk.org/leaderslist2021

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

Visit [dimensions-uk.org/leaderslist2021](https://dimensions-uk.org/leaderslist2021) to meet all the Leaders.

Follow @DimensionsUK and #LDALeadersList to stay up to date.



## ASK THE EXPERTS



# What innovative approaches have you adopted to become an 'Employer of Choice'?

**Despite the government announcement that immigration rules are to be temporarily relaxed for overseas care workers, the sector remains in crisis. Social care is experiencing record vacancy and turnover rates, and as such care providers are having to find increasingly new and innovative ways to recruit and retain staff. In light of this we are asking a group of Great British Care Award winning employers "What innovative approaches have you adopted to recruit and retain staff in an increasingly competitive market, to become an 'Employer of Choice'?"**

**"A good work-life balance should not be seen as a privilege, but as a right for all."**



**Mary-Anne Fiorini**  
Director of People  
Quo Vadis Trust

"At QVT we recognise that our people are our most valuable asset and we treat them as such. Our diverse fully trained frontline team all enjoy a range of benefits, which includes competitive benchmarked salaries; a generous holiday allowance, a day off for birthdays; enhanced sick pay; life insurance; access to training and qualifications; real opportunities for career progression; and a healthcare cash plan which includes an employee assistance programme and treats via Perkbox. We are passionate about inclusion and strive to ensure that the whole team is involved with strategic decisions. We have annual staff surveys and act on the feedback provided, as well as feedback from exit interviews. We consider all flexible working requests and accommodate as many as we can, as we believe that having a good work-life balance should not be seen as a privilege, but as a right for all."



**Gemma Howells**  
Head of People & Culture  
M&D Care



**"Our employees are a diverse, inclusive and talented team of individuals with varying skills."**

"The pandemic has shone a much needed spotlight on the care sector and the workers that make it great. During the most challenging and unprecedented of times support workers have demonstrated outstanding dedication and an exceptional capacity to innovate. As a passionate social care provider M&D Care wanted to use this spotlight as an opportunity to raise awareness of working in the sector and attract those with no experience and whom may not have considered a career in care before. As well as getting involved in national career campaigns, M&D Care created its own dedicated value based new to care campaign, focusing on a diverse range of industries including the armed forces, hairdressing, retail and hospitality trades. The campaign was hugely successful and we believe our workforce has been enriched because of it. Our employees are a diverse, inclusive and talented team of individuals with varying skills, who share the same goal to make a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable people within our communities."



**Maria Mills**  
Chief Executive  
Active Prospects



**"We employ people we support and ensure co-production is real."**

*"Our recruitment team aim to screen candidates over the phone within 24 hours of receiving an application, and if they have the right skills and values, they visit their new service and meet the people we support. We assess connection and interaction with both people and staff teams for 'best fit'. We employ people we support and ensure co-production is real; creating opportunities and valuing lived experience equally in all we do. This brings our culture, values, and mission to life without a divide of 'them' and 'us', giving equality of voice. Staff engagement is crucial. We shape our organisation together, prioritising what matters, with a focus on wellbeing and empowerment. Finally we place huge emphasis on recognising staff and the people we support. Staff and people are valued for their roles and contributions through sector-leading pay and conditions, and regular awards and celebrations."*

**"We are introducing additional support such as help to fund driving lessons."**



consensus •••  
Supporting opportunity, choice and success

**Anja Carter**  
HR Director  
Consensus

*"We aim to attract – and keep – the best people by offering a package of benefits that's one of the best in the care sector, alongside our competitive salaries. Recent initiatives include a Refer a Friend bonus scheme, access to great retail discounts (maybe to counter some of those recent cost of living rises!), as well as wellbeing resources, and ways to reward and recognise our colleagues. Financial wellbeing has also been a focus for us in these unprecedented times – we now offer Life Assurance as a standard benefit and are introducing additional support such as help to fund driving lessons. Consensus takes a values-based approach to recruitment, so when we find the right people then we strive to make their onboarding process from job offer to start date and induction as short as possible, meaning our new joiners quickly settle into their roles and start making their career with Consensus."*



**James Rycroft**  
Managing Director  
Vida Healthcare



**"We were named the UK's leading care employer at the Great British Care Awards."**

*"To combat the difficulties that the sector is continuing to experience around recruitment and retention, at Vida Healthcare we've put a number of initiatives in place to ensure we remain an employer of choice. We've increased the wages of frontline care staff, including nurses whose hourly rate has increased from £18.50 to £22.50, and staff receive 20% overtime. We've also invested in our care settings with the recent construction of our latest care home, Vida Court, and refurbishment of two of our specialist houses. Our training platform Vida Academy provides training opportunities to encourage staff and future employees to consider social care as a career. We use our 'team talk' apps to educate staff and keep them connected with family members. We also run annual Christmas awards and recognise a social care hero monthly to ensure staff feel valued. Thanks in part to these initiatives we were recently named the UK's leading care employer at the national final of the Great British Care Awards."*

Great British  
Care Awards

TOP SECRET



# A MISSION FOR EXCELLENCE

IN SOCIAL CARE

NOMINATE  
NOW!

[WWW.CARE-AWARDS.  
CO.UK/NOMINATE](http://WWW.CARE-AWARDS.CO.UK/NOMINATE)  
NOMINATIONS CLOSE:  
26TH AUGUST  
2022

...INCOMING MESSAGE...

...THE 2022 REGIONALS...

...3RD NOVEMBER...EAST MIDLANDS...EMCC, NOTTINGHAM... 4TH NOVEMBER...EAST OF ENGLAND...STADIUM MK, MILTON KEYNES...  
...5TH NOVEMBER...WEST MIDLANDS...ICC, BIRMINGHAM... 10TH NOVEMBER...NORTH EAST...GOSFORTH PARK, NEWCASTLE...

...11TH NOVEMBER...YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE...THE ROYAL ARMOURIES, LEEDS...  
...12TH NOVEMBER...NORTH WEST...KIMPTON CLOCKTOWER, MANCHESTER... 16TH NOVEMBER...WALES...CARDIFF MARRIOTT HOTEL...

...17TH NOVEMBER...SOUTH WEST...ASHTON GATE STADIUM, BRISTOL ...18TH NOVEMBER...SOUTH EAST...HILTON HOTEL, BRIGHTON...  
...19TH NOVEMBER...LONDON...HILTON BANKSIDE, LONDON...  
...MESSAGE WILL SELF DESTRUCT IN 10 SECONDS...

[WWW.care-awards.co.uk](http://WWW.care-awards.co.uk)

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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

# Coming up...

## **Social Care Top 30 Launch**

**5th April 2022** National Liberal Club, London

## **National Learning Disabilities & Autism Conference**

**8th July 2022** The ICC, Birmingham

## **National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards**

**8th July 2022** The ICC, Birmingham

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

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

## **The Children & Young People Awards**

**6th October 2022** The ICC, Birmingham

## **Great British Care Awards Regionals**

**East Midlands - 3rd November 2022**

EMCC, Nottingham

**East of England - 4th November 2022**

Stadium MK, Milton Keynes

**West Midlands - 5th November 2022**

The ICC, Birmingham

**North East - 10th November 2022**

Gosforth Park, Newcastle

**Yorkshire & Humberside - 11th November 2022**

The Royal Armouries, Leeds

**North West - 12th November 2022**

Kimpton Clocktower, Manchester

**Wales - 16th November 2022**

Marriott Hotel, Cardiff

**South West - 17th November 2022**

Ashton Gate Stadium, Bristol

**South East - 18th November 2022**

Hilton Hotel, Brighton

**London - 19th November 2022**

Hilton Bankside, London

## **Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards**

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

## **Great British Care Awards National Finals**

**17th March 2023** The ICC, Birmingham

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

# Consensus Support go the extra mile in recognising excellence in social care



**consensus...**  
Supporting opportunity, choice and success

**Eddie Morgan**  
CEO  
Consensus Support

**Consensus Support CEO Eddie Morgan explains why it's important to recognise colleagues who go 'over and above' to ensure excellence in health and social care.**

As a leading provider of support and accommodation for people with learning disabilities, we are proud to be the headline sponsor of the National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards 2022.

Through this year's sponsorship, we feel extremely privileged to be able to help honour those, across health and social care, who have worked in exceptional ways to ensure independence and quality of life for the people they support. These awards are highlights in the care sector calendar and I know how much this recognition means to colleagues and teams who have been nominated, shortlisted and gone on to become finalists and champions in the past. People who work in adult social care are the most valuable asset for any organisation in this sector, making a real difference to the lives of the individuals they support every single day of the year. Across the UK, my Consensus Support colleagues provide person-centred support in a range of settings to over 650 adults with learning disability, autism and complex needs, including Prader-Willi Syndrome. Whether in our residential, supported living or centre-based services, we encourage every individual to have a life of opportunity, choice and success.



individuals we support: choice and respect, ambition and imagination, reliability and professionalism, honesty and integrity, responsibility and accountability, inclusive and supportive. They underpin our purpose, define what we do and how we do it, inspiring us to achieve high

## Going the extra mile

When I visit our services, it's clear to see the ways that these colleagues go over and above in their roles to ensure Consensus Support maintains our values and mission. Those values are what unite and guide us to deliver the best for the

standards and driving us to exceed them. The people who work for us come from all sorts of backgrounds. They bring with them a rich array of experience and skills to offer; they may be starting out in their career, or changing direction, or looking for opportunities to climb the career ladder. We also recruit people for their attitude and personality, and they all have one thing in common; they share our values and commitment to delivering the highest quality care and support.

Everyone at Consensus Support puts the individuals we support at the heart of what we do, always seeking to ensure the best outcomes for them. That's never been more evident than in the amazing ways we responded to the challenges of working through the pandemic over the past two years. Those unprecedented pressures were coupled with the issue of recruitment and retention becoming a key focus for all adult social care organisations in the UK – it's been well documented how much the whole care sector is suffering in this respect, to the point where some service providers may fear they will be facing threats of closure due to lack of staff to support people in their care.

***"We share a special affiliation with the aims and ethos of the Awards."***

## Health and social care at its very best

We're passionate about enabling the individuals we support to live a meaningful, fulfilling life - involving them fully and using person-centred planning to help them to achieve their goals. So whether someone is living in one of our services, or simply needs a little extra support within their local community or with daily routines, we provide the support they need.

We have an outstanding track record and so we share a special affiliation with the aims and ethos of the National Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards. In addition to our overall sponsorship, I am delighted Consensus Support is also sponsoring the Award for Outstanding Contribution category, which distinguishes someone who the judges recognise has truly made a lasting difference to the lives of people with a learning disability and/or autism. These awards showcase health and social care at its very best. I am grateful that Consensus Support has this opportunity to be a leading part of them and provide recognition for the great work, tremendous commitment and dedication of people in our sector.

**To nominate for the awards visit**  
**[www.nationalddawards.co.uk/nominate](http://www.nationalddawards.co.uk/nominate)**

consensus...

# PROVIDING TAILORED SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATION

For people with learning disabilities,  
autism and complex needs



# PROUD TO BE THE HEADLINE SPONSOR



Through person centred planning and active support, we help every individual we support to have a life of opportunity, choice and success



Find out more about Consensus.

0808 223 5320

[www.consensussupport.com](http://www.consensussupport.com)

[referrals@consensussupport.com](mailto:referrals@consensussupport.com)

Follow us: [Facebook.com/ConsensusLD](https://www.facebook.com/ConsensusLD)

# Raising the profile of women leaders in social care



**On 9th March at London's Ivy Market Grill, women leaders representing all areas of social care came together for the launch of an exciting new collaboration, Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care (WAGS).**

This VIP lunch, hosted by Care Talk and supported by the Kent Integrated Care Alliance, presented a unique opportunity to meet women leaders from across the social care arena and shape the future of WAGS.

Guests included Deborah Sturdy, Chief Nurse, Adult Social Care, Nadra Ahmed, Chair at the National Care Association and Melanie Weatherley, Chair at the Care Associations Alliance.

The value of women coming together cannot be underestimated.



Through campaigns and a programme of networking and social events WAGS aims to create a movement to inspire women leaders of tomorrow and provide a platform for support, empowerment and real change for the sector.

This unique initiative will culminate in a Gala Awards which will celebrate the achievements of women in social care.

#SocialCareWomen



Gala Awards: 24th November, St Pancras Renaissance Hotel, London

To nominate visit [www.thewags.co.uk/nominate](http://www.thewags.co.uk/nominate)

# Great British Care Awards 2022 National Finals

**18th March saw over 1,100 people come together for a festival of excellence in social care, at the Great British Care Awards National Finals. After impressing the short listing panel with their nominations, wowing the judges at the interviews the finalists were amongst the best of the best in social care.**



## Meet the winners!

**The Care Employer Award**  
**Vida Healthcare**



**The Care Home Worker Award**  
**Zofia Goddard**  
Millennium Care



**The Home Care Worker Award**  
**Liz Hunter**  
Bluebird Care Tyneside



**The Care Home Newcomer Award**  
**Stephen Arrowsmith**  
Sanctuary Supported Living



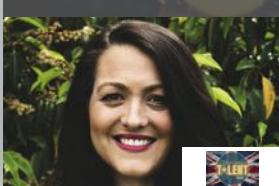
**The Home Care Newcomer Award**  
**Ellie Tew**  
Astar Homecare Services



**The Care Home Registered Manager Award**  
**Kinga Kowaliczek**  
Greenways Court Care Home, HC-One

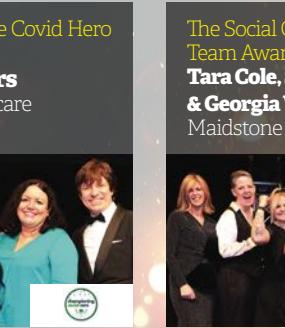
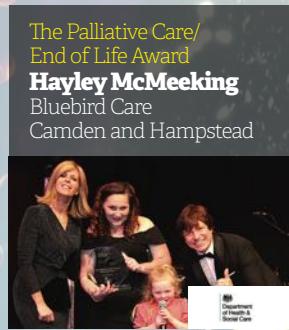
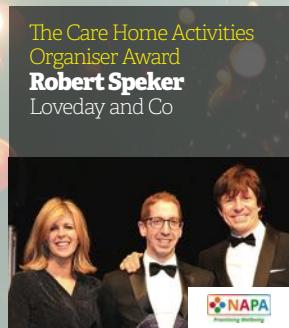


**The Home Care Registered Manager Award**  
**Jessica Graziano**  
Bloom and Care



**The Care Home Cook/Chef Award**  
**Lee Joyner**  
Berkley Care Group





Nominations for the 2022 Regional Awards are now open!  
[www.care-awards.co.uk/nominate](http://www.care-awards.co.uk/nominate)

Let's celebrate social care and help it get the recognition it deserves! [www.care-awards.co.uk](http://www.care-awards.co.uk)

HEADLINE SPONSOR



The National  
Learning Disabilities  
& Autism Awards  
**2022**

Celebrating  
The  
**ROCKERS**  
**&**  
**ROTLTERS**  
of  
Social Care

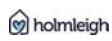
8th July 2022, The ICC, Birmingham

NOMINATE NOW!

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

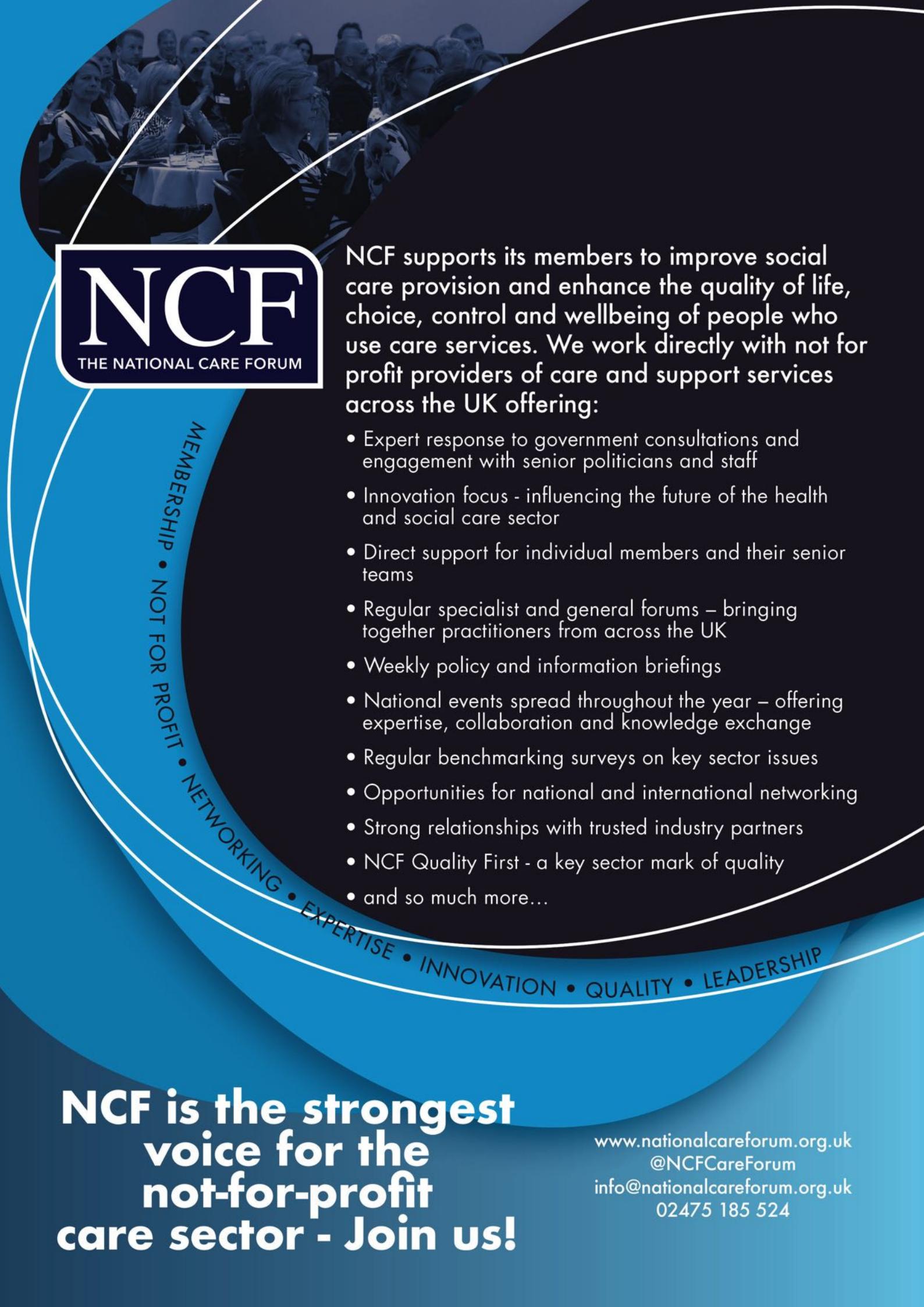
CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS: 13TH MAY 2022

SPONSORED BY





THE NATIONAL CARE FORUM



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

- Expert response to government consultations and engagement with senior politicians and staff
- Innovation focus - influencing the future of the health and social care sector
- Direct support for individual members and their senior teams
- Regular specialist and general forums – bringing together practitioners from across the UK
- Weekly policy and information briefings
- National events spread throughout the year – offering expertise, collaboration and knowledge exchange
- Regular benchmarking surveys on key sector issues
- Opportunities for national and international networking
- Strong relationships with trusted industry partners
- NCF Quality First - a key sector mark of quality
- and so much more...

**NCF is the strongest  
voice for the  
not-for-profit  
care sector - Join us!**

[www.nationalcareforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalcareforum.org.uk)  
[@NCFCareForum](https://twitter.com/NCFCareForum)  
[info@nationalcareforum.org.uk](mailto:info@nationalcareforum.org.uk)  
02475 185 524



## A NATIONAL VOICE

# Dominique Kent

CEO, Senior Living at Pacific Investments

**Dominique Kent, CEO Senior Living at Pacific Investments, reflects on what leadership means in social care as a Top 10 finalist in the Social Care Top 30.**

***"We won't survive unless we nurture those that are committed and want to be there."***

For me, it's simple. Great leadership will be the difference between an organisation's success or failure. This has probably been tested like never before in most businesses in the last two years. I know it was in my business. Strong leadership is critical to ensuring the people you serve internally and externally receive what you set out to deliver to them. Underpinning a successful business will be its values and they should represent the 'heartbeat' of the organisation at all levels and irrespective of role. They should be real and representative. They are effectively 'the rules.' When I ran The Good Care Group, I always met every new starter and my introduction would be simple 'you were recruited because we saw in you what is important to us, our values, live by our values, make decisions in their context and you won't go far wrong.'

Equally, for me recognising and acknowledging contribution runs alongside values. Every single person's contribution is as important, no matter the level of the role. Value contribution, notice what people do (the little things as well as the big things), be someone they can reach, always respond when they write or call and have a conversation with them when they ask you for a chat. The loyalty you create will mean people go the extra mile when the business needs them to. Covid hit, and that's exactly what my team did. They did before, but they went way above and beyond any expectation I had ever set.

I make this sound easy, conceptually it is but practically it takes commitment, tenacity, authenticity and time. It starts with culture; set out to create a high performing ethos that has team wellbeing at its heart and make it every leader's accountability to make it happen. Results always follow! By wellbeing what I mean is:

- Set clear expectations - we all need to know what success looks like
- Hold people to account and tell them how they are doing
- Care! Take time to get to know your team, make sure you know what is important to them in and out of work
- Be ok with emotion (this should be easy given what we do, but often its not given the attention it should be)

As a CEO, I take my responsibility to my team seriously. Anyone that knows me, knows I have unrelenting standards and that I expect a lot, always driven by my mission to deliver the very best to the people we care for (my customers and my team). I never ask anyone to do something I wouldn't be willing to do myself. Doing something well is what drives me, and I look for that in others.

Creating accountability at all levels and empowering people to make decisions is what contributes to ensuring the culture is truly lived. The creation of accountability also means people learn. Allow them to enjoy success when they achieve it and learn from their mistakes when they make them. This enables individuals to grow and flourish. I take the greatest of pleasure in watching this happen and seeing individuals that want to develop make their way through the organisation to reach their potential.

***"The loyalty you create will mean people go the extra mile."***

We have a dearth of leaders in social care – we won't survive unless we nurture those that are committed and want to be there, whether that's becoming an expert at the level they are at or whether it's realising their dream to develop into a more senior leader. So for me, what is the value of leadership in social care? It's simple, its invaluable...

Dominique Kent is the Chief Executive Senior Living at Pacific Investments, Chair of the Home Care Association, Non-Executive Director Group Board at L&Q (London and Quadrant Housing Trust), Chair of the L&QL Board, Non-Executive Director of The Live-In Care Hub and Advisor at Thalamos (mental health)



**Dominique Kent**  
CEO  
Senior Living  
at Pacific Investments



**Paula Beaney**

Quality Assurance Director  
Promedica24

PROMEDICA24



## LEADING THE WAY IN SOCIAL CARE

# Paula Beaney

Quality Assurance Director, Promedia24

**The changing policy backdrop and increasing pressures on the social care system highlight the need for effective leadership. Even when putting the added pressures of the Covid-19 pandemic aside, each day we wake up ready to ensure the people we support receive the best possible care, and that our teams are fully supported in their roles to carry out their duties.**

***"We find and hold on to the right people through our values-led recruitment."***

As a leader within social care, the onus is on us to inspire, motivate and empower our workforce to perform to the best of their abilities. It stands to reason then that the true mark of a good leader is the ability to bring out the best in people. We must draw out people's strengths and skills and instil confidence in our teams to ensure every individual has the opportunity to develop in their roles. A good leader will draw on a wide range of people's experiences, encourage people to voice differences in opinion, and ensure everyone has the support and structure in place to learn and grow in their careers.

Particularly in the current climate, where guidance changes by the minute, we must remain calm, controlled and transparent. If not, how can we possibly expect others to? A good leader will nurture an engaged, positive and collaborative workforce that strives to meet the highest standards of care. Happy employees don't tend to look elsewhere for employment, and at a time when staff shortages are prevalent, the ability to keep staff engaged and happy is extremely valuable.

Within my own role at Promedia24, I create and uphold an open, positive and inclusive organisational culture in which my team members have the means to explore their full potential. My colleagues trust my judgement as a leader with over 35 years' experience in health and social care. I endeavour to share what I've learnt with my team and encourage them to take responsibility and ownership of the vital work they do.

When I received the award for Quality Assurance Leader award, the first thing that came to mind was my colleagues at Promedia24. From the Registered Managers and Care Managers, the wider operations teams, support staff and our Franchise Partners, their expertise, willingness and dedication to the wellbeing of the people we support inspires me every day.

Central to our ethos at Promedia24 is a workforce that respects, trusts and values one another. We consistently provide exceptional care thanks to the teams' collective efforts to continuously improve and embody our core values of being caring and responsive, having a positive approach and continually striving for excellence. An organisation is nothing without its people, and we make sure we find and hold on to the right people through our values-led recruitment.

Social care enables and transforms lives. Well-led services enable people to do the things they want to do, receiving the right support which improves their wellbeing and quality of life. I can see no better opportunity to make a difference in life than working in health and social care, and we as leaders must help our teams to see the value in the work we do. We have a duty to set the tone for how others should conduct themselves, and this remains important at every level, whether you work directly with people needing support or not.

***"My colleagues trust my judgement as a leader."***

I applaud all leaders in social care, who have continued to uphold the highest standards of care during the most challenging of circumstances. And to all the care teams keeping people safe across the country, your commitment to the wellbeing of those you support is an inspiration to us all.

# Calling all senior leaders of excellence to social care!

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

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

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

## AWARDS CATEGORIES:

**the lifetime achievement award**

**the executive award**

**learning disabilities & autism award**

**the workforce development leader award**

**the quality assurance leader award**

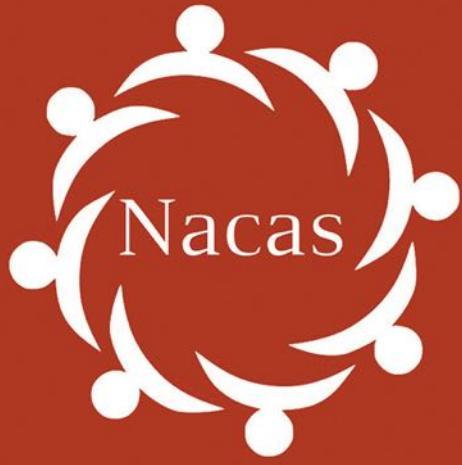
**the care home leader award**

**executive children and young people leader award**

**Finalists join top leaders and decision makers in social care!**

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

Nominate online at: [www.caretalk.co.uk/scl](http://www.caretalk.co.uk/scl)  
**Closing date for nominations 31st July 2022**



## Professionalising Care Work Through Deeds Not Words

[www.nacas.org.uk](http://www.nacas.org.uk)

Join Your Professional Association



# A social care system for the future



**Peter Humphreys**  
Business Development Manager  
Grey Matter Learning

**The COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest challenge our modern-day social care system has ever faced. But as the light at the end of the COVID tunnel appears, we are looking to the future and asking ourselves, what can be done to ensure the sector thrives in post-COVID-19 era?**

**"Our Online Learning System Click enables providers to take control."**

## Place the workforce centre stage!

Throughout the last two years the workforce has been placed at the heart of society, and their roles been thrust into the spotlight more than ever before. Before the arrival of COVID-19, the social care sector reported more than 120,000 empty vacancies and the demand for workers has since grown beyond anything we have seen before. The professional development of the current workforce has never been more important in supporting those who access services to live the way they want. Our Online Learning System Click enables providers to take control of courses and manage inductions of staff by assessing what they know and tailoring learning to fill knowledge gaps. By doing this, providers can provide a fast and robust process for inducting staff. Training and development are two of the essential pillars on which the modern-day social care system relies, and with the help of our eLearning services, providers can deliver a seamless and effective solution to their training demands.

## Embedding digital change

Over the last two years, digital technologies have provided flexible, accessible, and cost-effective solutions for the social care system. Technical skills, equipment, and technology all play an essential part in a modern-day social care system. New digital learning methods have paved the way for a world of accessible opportunities and have allowed providers a greater degree of flexibility

for their employees, fitting in better around their shift patterns, and/ or work/ life balance. The benefits of eLearning stretch far beyond the flexibility and cost benefits - they also have a massive impact on retention rates, increasing them between 25 – 65%. A new digital era has begun, and the social care sector must follow suit to remain viable in the current climate. Since 2006, Grey Matter Learning have promoted and advocated for a blended learning approach to training in social care. They now have a bank of over 100 courses that offer a blended learning approach.

## Training and development

Moving forward, the training and development of care workers should remain a top priority. Training will ensure regulations and standards are met continuously. Individuals and employers should consider utilising digital training – not only will this provide cost-effective and flexible training solutions, but it will go a long way in boosting productivity, efficiency, and retention in the workplace. Supporting the professional development of the current workforce will allow workers to acquire specialist skills, and progress into senior managerial positions.

As a digital learning provider, Grey Matter Learning's approach to training and development is ahead of the curve. Our operations are robust and built for longevity and sustainability. Our digital business model enabled our operations to run smoothly at the height of the pandemic. Our bespoke platform gave us a huge advantage and allowed us to weather the COVID-19 storm - whilst supporting the social care workforce to deliver high-quality, person-centred care. But we won't be resting on our laurels, we will continue to seek out new ways to excellence and innovate to ensure we thrive in the new social care system. Our Skills for Care Leadership Programmes give leaders the opportunity to develop skills and learn new skills to support with the challenges faced daily by leadership teams within the Health and Social Care sector.

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

**"We will continue to seek out new ways to innovate to ensure we thrive in the new social care system."**

# Calling all suppliers of excellence to social care!

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

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

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

## AWARDS CATEGORIES:

**legal services**  
public/transitional

**recruitment**

**property  
agents**

infection control  
products

consultancies

**banking  
& investment**

**workforce  
development**

**technology**

**pr & marketing**

**Finalists join top leaders and decision makers in social care!**

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

Nominate online at: [www.caretalk.co.uk/scl](http://www.caretalk.co.uk/scl)  
**Closing date for nominations 31st July 2022**

# Autonomy and consent in social care



**Sam Hussain**  
Founder and CEO  
Log My Care

**Autonomy and consent have long been issues in social care. Sam Hussain, Founder and CEO of the care management platform Log my Care, delves into best practice for consent and how technology can help give people the autonomy they need in care.**

***"Having a signed record of this consent or withholding of consent can be invaluable."***

Too often in care settings we hear the question "Why did no one tell me?" No care provider wants the people they support to feel unheard or uninformed, that's why autonomy in care is so important to ensure service users are fully involved in their own care.

## Why autonomy and consent matters to service users and their families

It matters because it's their care and they should be at the centre of it. In many care situations, service users and their loved ones may already feel like they're losing control simply because of the circumstances that led them to seek support. That's why involving them in decision-making around their care is critical to helping them retain as much autonomy as they can.

Consenting to care means that services users are at the heart of the plans put in place to support them. Care providers should give their clients all the information they need to make confident and competent decisions.

A record of signed consent informs families and friends that their loved one is receiving the high-quality care they deserve. Moving a relative to a care home can be a difficult time for families, but knowing that their family member still has autonomy and is fully informed about the care they are receiving, can help with that transition.

## Why consent matters to care providers

Obtaining consent is best practice for care delivery. It keeps services users and their families involved, minimises the risk to the care provider and improves quality of care. Establishing consent shows service users that they are at the heart of care delivery and that they are respected as individuals.

## Reduce risk

As with most things in life, there's an element of risk with every care measure or treatment. When giving consent, a service user accepts those risks. On the other hand, when withholding consent, they agree to the risks of not getting the care or treatment suggested.

For care providers, having a signed record of this consent or withholding of consent can be invaluable, should those risks become reality. Not getting consent right can lead to complaints, criminal liability, liability for damages, disciplinary action and more. However, consent obtained correctly can protect those providing care.

## Improve care quality and be person-centred

Delivering high-quality, person-centred care means involving clients in decision-making processes whenever possible. They know their own preferences and needs better than anyone else. This is an opportunity to initiate discussions with service users and their loved ones about the care that might benefit them, and help develop care plans that really suit them.

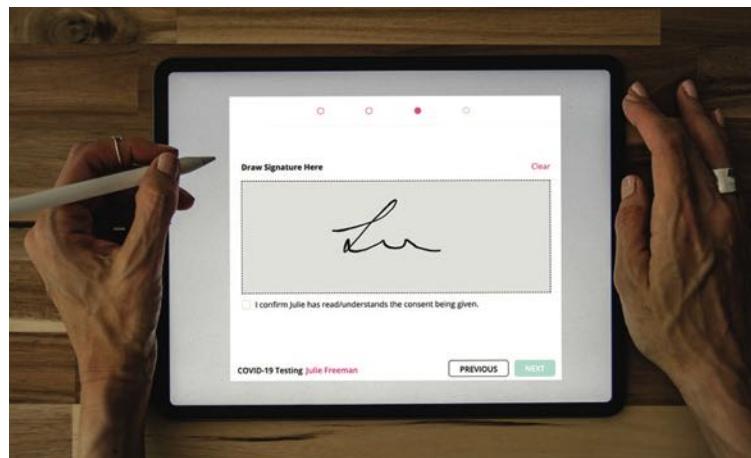
## Legal requirement

As well as being beneficial for care providers, their staff and service users, having a record of consent is a legal requirement that regulatory bodies, like the Care Quality Commission (CQC) or the Care Inspectorate, check diligently, and will affect how they evaluate a care service as a whole.

## How Log my Care can support you to manage consent

Log my Care's consent management feature allows care providers to easily manage their clients' individual consent records electronically. Service users or their Legal Power of Attorney can digitally sign consent and lack of capacity forms directly on the platform and reminders can be scheduled to review these records with the client at a later, pre-defined time.

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



# Deals within health and social care – what's driving the surge?



**Matthew Poli**  
Head of Corporate & Commercial,  
London  
BLM

**Matthew Poli, Partner and Head of BLM's corporate and commercial team in London, analyses the surge in deal activity in the healthcare sector in 2021, specifically the large volume of deals being completed in residential care-related services.**

## *“Why has there been such a large proportion of deals taking place in care-related services?”*

The pandemic impacted millions of people across the globe, and it was those working in the social care sector who had to deal with some of the most difficult challenges. Whether it was emotionally supporting residents who were separated from loved ones for months on end, or managing widespread staff shortages, the full impact of COVID-19 on the industry is still yet to be completely understood two years on.

Despite these difficulties, there have been some noticeable upward trends in the health and social care market over the last year. Analysis from my law firm, BLM, conducted in partnership with Experian Market iQ, delved into the quantity and value of transactions in the UK Health & Social Care sector.

Our Deals Diagnosis discovered the value of deals in the UK hit record levels and stood at £6.01bn in 2021, with 26 per cent of total deal activity in residential care-related services. This included the £10.9m acquisition of residential care provider CPI Care Ltd, by Civitas Social Housing plc. Compare this £6.01bn with deal valuations in 2019 (£2.26bn) and 2020 (£1.22bn), and you see the scale and volume of activity – 2021 outweighed the cumulative value of the last two years by over £2.35bn.

### **Low interest rates and debt costs fuel demand**

So, why has there been such a large proportion of deals taking place in care-related services? One driving factor has been a desire from investors to take advantage of low interest rates and the availability of private capital. Companies that had large war chests wanted to deploy them, with holding cash seen as extremely inefficient

given the interest rates of last year. On the flip side, companies without cash had access to debt finance at historically cheap levels, which meant an even bigger appetite for investment into healthcare.

Investing into healthcare has generally been seen as a safe haven. Care home deals are particularly attractive due to the business being underpinned by a physical bricks and mortar asset. As we started to emerge from the other side of the pandemic towards the end of 2021 – restrictions easing amidst a successful vaccine roll-out – there was also an eye for growth, making residential care-related services even more lucrative. However, last year's deal frenzy was not one-sided – many residential care businesses were also looking for a way out.

### **Costs and bureaucracy driving exits**

Although some investors were looking to cash in on care homes, COVID-19 accelerated a desire from smaller operators to exit their businesses. The increase in regulatory burdens and costs on smaller enterprises caused many to consolidate to benefit from economies of scale. By selling to a large corporation and becoming part of a wider network of care homes, it could relieve staffing issues and spread the cost – and risk – of managing the regulatory side of things. People who owned care home businesses may well have been looking to exit to simply enjoy retirement, given a chaotic and stressful period during the pandemic.

The combination of big investors looking to cash in on homes and healthcare operators looking to exit therefore created the conditions to support a huge wave in deal activity. Now that the worst of the pandemic is (seemingly) over, is this demand for care sustainable, and will it continue to rise? As part of an ageing population where state funding remains inadequate to provide the high-level of care residents need and deserve, there will undoubtedly be an increased drive in the private sector to fill in the gaps. The pandemic has placed huge pressures on the business operations of social care operators, disrupting the industry in ways that as I said before, are still yet to be fully understood. Perhaps this will continue to drive activity with more aggregator purchasers in the future.

**“COVID-19 accelerated a desire from smaller operators to exit their businesses.”**

# Care Talk Business

Sharing business excellence in social care

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



As a partner of established **Care Talk** magazine, **The Great British Care Awards**, **The Learning Disabilities & Autism Awards** and **The Children & Young People Awards**, we have access to customers that reach the WHOLE of the social care sector, giving you maximum exposure to key industry decision makers.

## Our Audience Reach

Average monthly Twitter impressions

**300K+**

Average monthly visitor numbers

**105K+**

Social media followers

**30K+**

Great introductory rates for advertisers!  
contact: **advertising@caretalk.co.uk** for details

**[www.caretalk-business.co.uk](http://www.caretalk-business.co.uk)**