

# CHANGING Lives



National Care  
Group

YOUR POTENTIAL PLUS OUR COMMITMENT CHANGES LIVES

SPRING 2022



“Hello, and a warm welcome to the first edition of the new National Care Group Changing Lives”



This exciting new publication presents the opportunity for us to shout about the people and places we're proud to support, our incredible colleagues, and our progress and achievements as a business.

Complementing our communications with this new bi-annual newsletter, we hope it will act as another window into the various worlds within National Care Group. Whether that's hearing from our services, sharing your pictures and stories, or discussing new initiatives within the business – you'll get extra insights into what we're doing towards achieving our mission of becoming one of the UK's most trusted social care and support providers.

Our mission and vision are about unlocking potential and to do that we are not only thinking about what is best for the people we support, but for the people we work alongside as well.

The new wellbeing strategy launched by the People Team last year is gaining momentum with the introduction of the Wellbeing Wednesday communications and our MenoHub toolkit amongst other supportive initiatives.

The fantastic story on page 17 from our Menopause Advocate Carla Day is reassuring that we are taking all the right steps to be there for both our colleagues and the people we support when they need us the most, opening conversations on topics that can be difficult and impact mental health.

We also want to encourage more people to consider a career in care, something that is a huge priority for us as a business and involves us all. To help kickstart a career in care for the next generation we introduced the new National Care Group Academy and Support Worker Apprenticeship Programme last year which can

pave the way for school leavers to train and develop, learning on the job and gaining care qualifications at the same time. However, nothing could be more inspiring to the next generation of support workers than the outstanding career stories on page 8 by our long service colleagues at Shelton Care Group. An impressive 506 years of service between them, something I am in awe and extremely proud of.

From our fantastic award wins or nominations, and the brilliant stories from the people we support starting in new roles with us, through to the opportunity to put new team members' faces to names, I really hope you enjoy reading the pages which follow.

**James Allen,**  
CEO National Care Group

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## Dates for your diary!

Keep in touch with what is happening across National Care Group this year by putting these key dates in your diary:

### Coming soon

#### National Care Group Annual Manager's Conference & Awards 2022.

Following the success of the live broadcast of the 2021 awards, we aim to again make the award's ceremony available for all National Care Group colleagues to tune into and watch. Stay tuned to our communication channels for more information coming soon!

### July 2022

#### The National Care Group Quality Account.

Each year we publish an account of insights into what National Care Group has achieved in the previous year and what it plans to do going forward. You can read about many of your achievements and positive news stories celebrated in the report too.

### July 2022

#### National Care Group Big Garden Party.

Following the success of our 77 Big Garden Parties on national Frontline Workers Day 2021, we will again be asking services and departments to join us in hosting a garden party on the same day (date coming soon) to celebrate our incredible frontline workers and all they achieve.

### November 2022

#### The Colleague Survey.

Every November we make a survey available to all colleagues asking you to give your feedback and have a voice in the future of National Care Group. Look out for the 2022 edition as your opinion really does count.

### Religious and annual holidays 2022.

If you are doing anything to celebrate or honor the following popular annual holiday events at a National Care Group place of work, the marketing team would love to see your photos and share them on our channels:

**17 & 18 March 2022 – Holi.** The Hindu festival of colors welcomes spring and a new harvest (in India).

**15 – 23 April 2022. Passover.** The 7-day holiday in the Jewish faith honors the freeing of the Israeli slaves.

**Sunday 17 April 2022 Easter.** The oldest celebration of the Christian faith, celebrating the resurrection of Christ.

**2 & 3 May 2022 Eid.** The festival of light is celebrated by Muslims worldwide marking the end of Ramadan.

**Monday 31 October 2022 Halloween.** A beloved autumnal holiday observed in many countries and especially celebrated by colleagues and the people we support at National Care Group!

# Autumn and Winter 2021 /22 in Pictures

Join us on a trip down memory lane, reflecting on a small selection of memorable moments at National Care Group during the past six months.

## September 2021

### Merryden charity fundraising event!

Merryden raised over £800 at their Macmillan Coffee Morning! Family and friends joined them for a raffle, cake sale, and much more at their local rugby club to raise money for charity.

## October 2021

### Monstrously busy Halloween

We celebrated the beloved autumnal holiday of Halloween with lots of hocus pocus across the business. All the creepy decorations, spooky fancy dress, and ghoulish games were quite spooktacular!

## October and November 2021

### National Care Awards

23 National Care Group colleagues are shortlisted at the Great British Care Awards, and five go on to be national finalists! A record number of our colleagues were shortlisted as finalists at their regional Great British Care Award ceremonies and five of them were crowned winners. Going through to the national finals in March are Ellie Baldwin from 8 Acres, Maria Skinner from Endurance Care, Helen Sturgess from Newfield View, Tom Allen from Steps Rotherham, and Julie Cowens from Highlea Care. Keep your fingers crossed for them!

## December 2021

### Sparkling Christmas at National

Care Group. National Care Group truly sparkled this Christmas despite another holiday period with pandemic restrictions in place. Christmas jumper day fuddles, Christmas crafting, choir singing, advent calendar munching and visits from Father Christmas were celebrated across the business.

## January 2022

### We beat those January blues!

There was much to celebrate during January as National Care Group was crowned the Fasted Growing Specialist Care Business in the Alantra Fast 50 report, Lyn Stewart from Favor House won our Wellbeing Wednesday house plant competition. Becky Bendle, a person we support at Chosen Care, achieved a big progress goal of conquering a climbing wall following a 6-year ambition to overcome her fear of heights.

## February 2022

**Love is all around!** Love really was in the air and all around our services on Valentine's Day this year. From Valentine's cards and romantic gifts at Endurance Care Worcestershire, giant balloons and take-aways at Shelton's Rutland House, roses, crafts, and cream teas at Shelton's Day Services, and some sweet poetry and Highlea Care.



September 2021



December 2021



October 2021



December 2021

December 2021



October 2021



October 2021



January 2022



October 2021



October 2021



February 2022



# A Career for Life

## Celebrating over 500 years of service at Shelton Care!

As many at National Care Group know, a job in adult social care can be so much more than just a job, it can be a career, for life.

Each edition we'll be shining a light on some of our long service colleagues who have achieved just that. They have chosen to make the role more than just a job and have made a difference in many people's lives along the way.

In 2022 we are celebrating a huge achievement by our long service colleagues at Shelton Care based in Stoke on Trent. Collectively the 26 colleagues listed opposite have been working at Shelton Care for a grand total of 506 years!

We had the privilege of visiting Shelton to meet some of the team and get photos. From the moment we walked through the doors we were overwhelmed with a sense of friendship and family over and above just a regular corporate head office environment. Whilst there we also got the opportunity to speak to three of these brilliant colleagues who say they have 'grown-up together' at Shelton. Here's what they had to say about their impressive careers.



**Kay Trow, Registered Manager, Caudon Place. 30 years of service.** (with Jayne Turner)  
Kay joined Shelton Care as a support worker in 1992, supporting people with learning disabilities at Richmond Mews. Kay said she "really learned how to care" in this role, joining

the business without any qualifications and learning on the job while studying part-time at Newcastle and then Leek colleges.

Richmond Mews was a converted sport and social club and at the time Kay joined, it was leading the way in terms of relieving the NHS following the closure of hospital institutions. Giving people their own bedrooms and a sense of independence for the first time in many years. Something Kay was very proud to be part of.

In 1997 Kay was promoted to senior support worker and was moved into a role at the newly opened Regent Road service, quickly progressing to company auditor just one year later.

Following the acquisition of Caudon Place in 2000, Kay moved over to a senior support worker role to support the new manager. Caudon Place was a new type of service for Shelton, home to young people with complex behavioural needs. Kay embraced the challenge and was promoted to deputy manager just two years in, and shortly after that was appointed to the registered manager position.

Kay has been at Caudon Place ever since where she's always maintained 'good' CQC ratings and is loved by all the people she supports, the members of her team, and local professionals. She has many memorable moments and is never prouder than when one of the people she supports moves on and thrives in their community.

Kay is recognised by everyone at Shelton Care for being a person who never says no to anything, with an infectious positive attitude that has a big impact on others. She said "I'm really happy being a registered manager and have no desire to climb the ladder any further. I just want to dedicate my time before I retire to empowering and developing as many of my team as I can".

Kay's message to anyone just starting out their career in social care is "There are so many training opportunities and potential to grow a brilliant career, to get paid for doing some fantastic things like attend weddings and go on days out to places like Alton Towers with beautiful people. But it takes a special person and you've got to want to make it happen."

### Jayne Turner, Quality Coordinator. 30 years of service.

Jayne followed a similar career path, joining Richmond Mews as a support worker shortly after Kay at 19 years old. She'd left school wanting to go into nursery nursing but as if by fate, the college course was full, and she was offered social care as an alternative. A situation Jayne has never once regretted.

Jayne also progressed into a senior support worker role, moving over to work at the newly opened Regent Road service a few years later. When Kay moved over to Caudon Place in 2000, Jayne became her successor in the role of Quality Coordinator. A role that Jayne grew and evolved over the years, quickly taking on responsibility for staff training and development alongside audits. Jayne remains as Shelton Care's Quality Coordinator today. A role that involves her visiting services daily and gives her the opportunity to interact with the people they support plus engage with the teams, both

of which she loves. Jayne is well known for being a huge advocate of all Shelton colleagues, concerning herself and acting upon their wellbeing, highlighting any concerns along the way.

Something Jayne is very proud of is her bond with a person she supports who arrived at Richmond Mews at the same time as she did, at the same age. She's loved supporting him over the years and watching him develop his life skills and confidence. He's followed her around services and feels very much like a brother to her.

Jayne said "Shelton Care is the best place to work. All our managers have achieved their roles through progression as there is such a lot of opportunity to grow here. They are supported by a big family of colleagues. We have such a strong network that people who leave the business always come back!".



### Katie Fallows, Regional Operations Manager. 21 years of service.

Katie joined Shelton as a support worker on a six-month maternity cover at Regent Road, with Kay and Jayne as her seniors. Her background was in the pub and hospitality industry which she left to try her hand at something different. 21 years on, she's still there, leading the business as Regional Operations Manager.

Constantly seeking new challenges, Katie progressed from support worker to senior and then unit coordinator. After seven years and securing herself a new role at the company's Regent College, she was persuaded to stay at Shelton Care by the owner himself who needed someone to help him run the business as he approached retirement. Katie took on the new challenge of Care Services Coordinator which saw her, amongst other things, traveling around the country, supporting people to move on or moving people into Shelton.

During this time, she helped to project manage the redevelopment of the environmental and support structure at Richmond Mews, enabling the service to move with the needs of the individuals and with the development of the social care industry.

Katie also led the expansion of the business through the creation of Rutland House and Oak House; two very successful services that were purpose-designed to meet the needs of individuals with complex behavioural needs.

In 2018 Katie also managed Shelton changing from private ownership to becoming part of National Care Group. With Shelton being so successful and making up a quarter of National Care Group's total business at the time, Katie was empowered to continue to manage Shelton without change. It wasn't until NCG began to invest in building improvements and implementation of systems that Katie began to realise how the takeover was absolutely the right thing, feeling the benefits of being part of a larger group. This continued particularly through the pandemic when NCG's rollout of ever-changing regulations, policies, and PPE became invaluable.

Katie, who caught the 'Shelton Care bug' really early on which gave her the drive to complete her learning disability nurse qualification said when asked about the highlight of her career, "There isn't one specific highlight of my career, as I get to see so many incredible transformations for the people we support all the time. So many people's lives have been changed by our team of amazing colleagues over the years, and not one of them means more to me than any others. Still now 20 years later, I still get the same feeling of emotion and elation when I see people thriving or hear about their progress in meetings."

Katie quoted her daughter reflecting on her career; "There has never been a single day when Shelton hasn't been a part of our lives. Weddings, holidays, graduations, Mum you are constantly on the phone, or dropping something off at a service, or giving someone a lift."

## 500 years of service

### Caudon Place

Kay Trow, Registered Manager, 30 years  
Kelly Charles, Service Manager, 21 years  
Jodie Edwards, Service Manager, 18 years  
Vicky Wootton, Service Manager, 16 years  
Dale Morrey, Senior Support Worker, 15 years  
James Sheldon, Senior Support Worker, 15 years

### Richmond Mews

Hazel Proud More, Senior Support Worker, 28 years  
Susan Wilshaw, Service Manager, 28 years  
Jennifer Haynes, Senior Support Worker, 21 years  
Rebecca Jensen, Support Worker, 20 years  
Emma Meigh, Support Worker, 18 years  
Paul Oliver, Senior Support Worker, 18 years  
Natalie Woodcock, Registered Manager, 18 years  
Jaqueline Seadon, Senior Support Worker, 17 years  
Dawn Beech, Senior Support Worker, 16 years  
Michelle Benayache, Service Manager, 16 years

### Oak House

Justine Jones, Registered Manager, 20 years

### Rutland House

Lisa Bickerton, Service Manager, 18 years  
Rebecca Sheldon, Support Worker, 17 years

### Shelton Care Day Services

Donna Walklet, Registered Manager, 18 years  
Nicola Silvester, Service Manager, 17 years  
Claire McGlade, Senior Support Worker, 16 years

### Shelton Care Head office

Jayne Turner, Quality Coordinator, 30 years  
Katie Fallows, Regional Operations Manager, 21 years  
Louise Burton, Finance Manager, 17 years  
Janet Taylor, Finance Assistant, 17 years



Three generations of care at Shelton Care - Kay Trow with her grand daughter and daughter

# Meet the team

## Let us introduce you to National Care Group's Commercial Team

Each edition we plan to introduce you to one of the National Care Group teams. It could be one of the support teams, area offices, or services.

We're beginning with an introduction to the Commercial Team! Led by Commercial Director, Mike Ranson, the recently formed team is responsible for driving the national growth strategy of the business. They work closely with Regional Operations

Managers to ensure National Care Group provides innovative and person-centered accommodation and support solutions as we strive towards our vision of becoming the best and most trusted care and support provider in the UK.



**Mike Ranson**  
Position: Commercial Director  
Base: Daventry  
Years in social care: 30

**Tell us about what you do:** My Role is to ensure National Care Group achieves its potential, by understanding what our customers and commissioners need and ensuring National Care Group is in the right position to respond with investment and solutions that will change peoples lives.

**Most memorable moment in your career to date:**

Most memorable moment is a tough question, so many good things to recall. However, the one that stays with me was hearing that a young man who I had met when he was 16 and was moving into a residential service I had developed and who had then moved to a Supported Living service that I had also developed, was moving to his own home without support at age 23. Perfect outcome!

**Who would you like to see host the National Care Group Annual Conference & Awards 2022?:**

I think Jo Whiley was a great host as what we do means something to her on a personal level. I'd love to see someone equally engaged in the sector who can speak from experience as well as inspire us with their own achievements. Perhaps someone who has support themselves!

**your potential plus  
our commitment  
changes lives**



**Belinda Robinson**  
Position: Head of National Development  
Base: Daventry  
Years in social care: 34 (*I know, I don't look old enough!*)

**Tell us about what you do:** My role is to develop and project manage new opportunities for growth nationally across the organisation, and to support improvement projects for existing services and the acquisition process. I also support Mike with maintaining business intelligence, strategic relationships and the ongoing financial viability of our services (through inflationary uplifts etc.).

**Most memorable moment in your career to date:** In the 90s, Gary came to live in the London home I managed, having lived all his life in a long-stay hospital. He had a reputation for being destructive, self-injuring, and climbing on the roof of the hospital! He was deaf, didn't use verbal communication, and had little balance or coordination. We were keen to offer Gary the opportunity to climb properly and with the help of his physiotherapist, arranged a climbing holiday in Cornwall. First, we abseiled down a cliff, me putting on a brave face having never tried anything like it before. Gary strapped to the instructor looking totally at home. Then the climb back up with myself and the physio on either side of Gary, and the instructor supporting in the middle. Gary was so relaxed and even paused to rescue a coke can squeezed into a crevice. When we got to the top for a rest, I knew Gary had enjoyed it and wanted to go again as he refused to take his helmet off! I still remember that day like it was yesterday!

**Who would you like to see host the National Care Group Annual Conference & Awards 2022?:** Jo Whiley as I wasn't working at National Care Group last year, otherwise Sally Phillips



**Samantha Marshall**  
Position: Head of Referrals  
Region: South West  
Years in social care: 28

**Tell us about what you do:** My role includes supporting external communication and connections with commissioners and customers, responding to enquiries and driving the referral and assessment process forward to ensure a responsive effective, and smooth customer journey. Improving partnerships and the quality of response are a key focus for me.

**Most memorable moment in your career to date:** I have been privileged to be a part of the process that supports a person out of an inappropriate service which doesn't meet their needs into a more compatible option and where you can see the change in them and their confidence and abilities almost straight away is always very memorable.

**Who would you like to see host the National Care Group Annual Conference & Awards 2022?:** The comedian Rosie Jones, because she has some very insightful observational comedy about being a person with a disability today.



**Andrea Whitney**  
Position: Head of Referrals  
Region: North  
Years in social care: 25

**Tell us about what you do:** I support National Care Group services in the north to improve and increase access through the implementation of enhanced referral and assessment processes. I also work with my commercial team colleagues to raise the profile of the company.

**Most memorable moment in your career to date:** In a previous role I took part in a dance flash mob in Leeds city centre to support World Mental Health Day. Being part of something so powerful and uplifting was memorable and made me stop and think about how important our roles in unlocking the potential of the people we support really are.

**Who would you like to see host the National Care Group Annual Conference & Awards 2022?:** The comedian Rosie Jones, she's brilliant!



**Holly Goodson**  
Position: Head of Referrals  
Base: South East  
Years in social care: 18

**Tell us about what you do:** My role is to drive referrals and support the operational teams to do an excellent assessment, enabling them to go on and develop tailored support packages for people who need it. This helps fulfil National Care Group's mission of empowering people to live full, rewarding and happy lives.

**Most memorable moment in your career to date:**

gaining my first 'excellent' CQC rating for my residential home, I couldn't stop smiling. The second most memorable moment is starting to work for National Care Group last year.

**Who would you like to see host the National Care Group Annual Conference & Awards 2022?:** Temple Grandin, a prominent author and speaker on both autism and animal behaviour.



**Mateusz Waskowski**  
Position: Head of Referrals  
Base: Central  
Years in social care: 20

**Tell us about what you do:** As my head of referral colleagues have said, we support people in the first stage of their journey with National Care Group and then support the operational teams in a smooth and safe facilitation.

**Most memorable moment in your career to date:** There have been too many to pick one, however, all are related to the progression and success of a person we support, or a team member, in achieving their goals and beyond.

**Who would you like to see host the National Care Group Annual Conference & Awards 2022?:** Jo Whiley again, or someone else who is an ambassador for people with disabilities or has personal experience.



# NEW OPENINGS

In January National Care Group was proudly crowned the Fastest Growing Specialist Care Business for 2021 in Alantra's annual Fast 50 report.

Here we bring our development activity to life and explain how it won us this recognition, improved the quality of our existing services, and helped us to provide opportunities to more people looking to achieve their potential.

Since 2019 and in partnership with local authorities, we've opened 19 new residential and supported living schemes across the country supporting individuals with complex learning disabilities and mental health conditions. Alongside these new openings we've invested in quality improvements of both Residential, Supported Living, and Day Support services to ensure they are sustainable and provide 'capable environments' able to meet current and future needs in their local areas. We have also continued with our strategy of acquiring and integrating good quality local providers into our organisation.



## Let us introduce you to three of our most recent openings.



### Liverpool

In September 2021 we launched a brand-new Supported Living service Liverpool that will help nurture the independence of up to seven individuals with additional needs. Chief Financial Officer, David Rowe-Bewick and the Affinity Supporting People team were joined by local authority partners and tenants to cut the ribbon at the new property – close to the much-loved heritage site Sefton Park.

The leafy suburban property benefitted from a complete renovation across three floors with modern and accessible communal areas and was achieved through investment by Henley Secure income fund and with the support of Liverpool City Council Commissioning Team.

**Marie Hilton**, regional operations manager for the North West, said: *"It has been a real pleasure working with our local partners to bring this exciting new development online. The property has been completely refurbished to a very high standard and provides a beautiful, homely environment for seven people with a learning disability"*.



### Devizes, Wiltshire

In May 2021 we completed the repositioning and refurbishment of a 5-person shared residential environment to provide 3 supported living flats, offering a range of accessible, single and shared tenancies to meet local demand.

Developed in partnership with the local commissioning team and with support from our housing partner, the provision enables people with learning disabilities to manage their own environment and gain more control over the decisions that impact their lives.

This successful partnership working with Wiltshire County Council has led to a further new service being developed in the locality. Catering for people with learning disabilities and complex needs, this new residential service is expected to open in May 2022.

**Samantha Marshall** Head of Referrals for the South West said *"We are delighted to have been able to collaborate with local commissioning teams to bring this essential new service to fruition"*.

### Weston Super Mare, Somerset

Continuing the growth and improvements made over the last two years, in February of this year we have opened a new residential service supporting individuals with complex learning disabilities in Weston Super Mare, Somerset. Managed by the registered manager, Kate Harvey, Walliscote Road will provide a service for up to 8 individuals with a learning disability, an important addition to the range of services within the north Somerset area.

**Mike Ranson**, Commercial Director said *"The support we received from local commissioners for this scheme has enabled us to work collaboratively with them to develop a service that will meet an identified local need. We look forward to seeing the new scheme go from strength to strength"*

# Unlocking the Potential of Our New Colleagues!

In 2021 we implemented an exciting new initiative, empowering some of the people we support at National Care Group services to be employed on a part-time basis in official roles. Supporting them to unlock their full potential with a rewarding and valued role whilst learning some new skills.

Let's meet the newest recruits.



**Luke Rowe, Administration Assistant, Chosen Care Gloucester**

Luke has recently been successful in securing the position of Chosen Care Gloucester's new Admin Assistant following an interview with registered manager Kathy Howitt. As part of his induction, he completed various National Care Group training modules including health and safety, data protection, fire awareness, and many more.

Luke said, "I will use a laptop to print all monthly paperwork for the 12 supported living services and four outreach services at Chosen Care, alongside filling documents and archive documents - I'm so excited about my role. Having a paid job has helped me to progress with the knowledge and skills I have gained over my time as an admin volunteer. I can now put all my skills into my job. I have formal responsibilities; I have been listened to and supported."

My senior Amanda, and Kelly my keyworker, have praised me and supported and believed in me to gain this position. Thank you to Kathy for completing my assessment and for believing in me to achieve this position."



**Alex and Matthew, Administration Assistants, Accrington office**

Alex and Matthew were appointed into the roles of Administration Assistants at our head office in Accrington in October 2021. Excited to be joining the team, we caught up with them in their first week.

Alex said: "I really enjoy my new job and am working hard. I have had lots of jobs to do so far but I like printing names badges for everyone the best. I have to change the files over before printing the badge and this is good for my computer skills".

Matthew said "I am really enjoying my new job. I have learned lots of things. I like printing out the name badges and I enjoy spending time in the office generally, seeing everyone working."



**Tom West, National Care Group Photographer**

Tom, based in our Kent region, has recently been appointed into the role of National Care Group's official photographer. Tom brings his experience of being an established sports photographer to the role, with an impressive portfolio of success.

Tom will be working closely with the Marketing Team to enhance their image library with new photography. His first job is to capture some of the people we support for the front cover of a new company thank you card.

Tom has been briefed and can't wait to start his first project!

**Amy Watkiss, Hospitality Assistant, Regent College**

Amy is a former learner at Regent College and whilst studying completed various customer-facing work placements in charity shops, local parks, and cafes, and worked as a hospitality assistant at transition events organised by the college.

Following these work placements Amy applied for the position of Hospitality Assistant and was successful. She started work in her new, employed role in September 2018.

Amy has listed below some of the jobs she really enjoys doing as a Hospitality Assistant:

- Collecting the plates from the trolley and taking them to the kitchen for washing
- Loading the dishwasher - pressing the button to switch it on to wash the dishes, and then putting all the clean pots away when the machine has finished
- Serving the dinners to the learners and staff, and especially to Wendy
- Taking the money from the till to Cheryl
- and Amy's favourite job is wiping the tables, so they are nice and clean



**Ellie Cleasby, Makaton Champion**

Ellie is an expert Makaton practitioner and is employed by National Care Group to create training videos for our colleagues and the people we support on important company updates.

Makaton is an important form of sign language that uses symbols, signs, and speech to support communication.

Ellie said "I love helping people at National Care Group to understand sign language. It makes me really happy that I have helped to make policies accessible and that staff enjoy my videos. I am really excited to be going to Norfolk to work in service for a few days to deliver Makaton training to the staff team too."

You can view some of Ellie's existing videos on the National Care Group YouTube channel with more planned for the future.

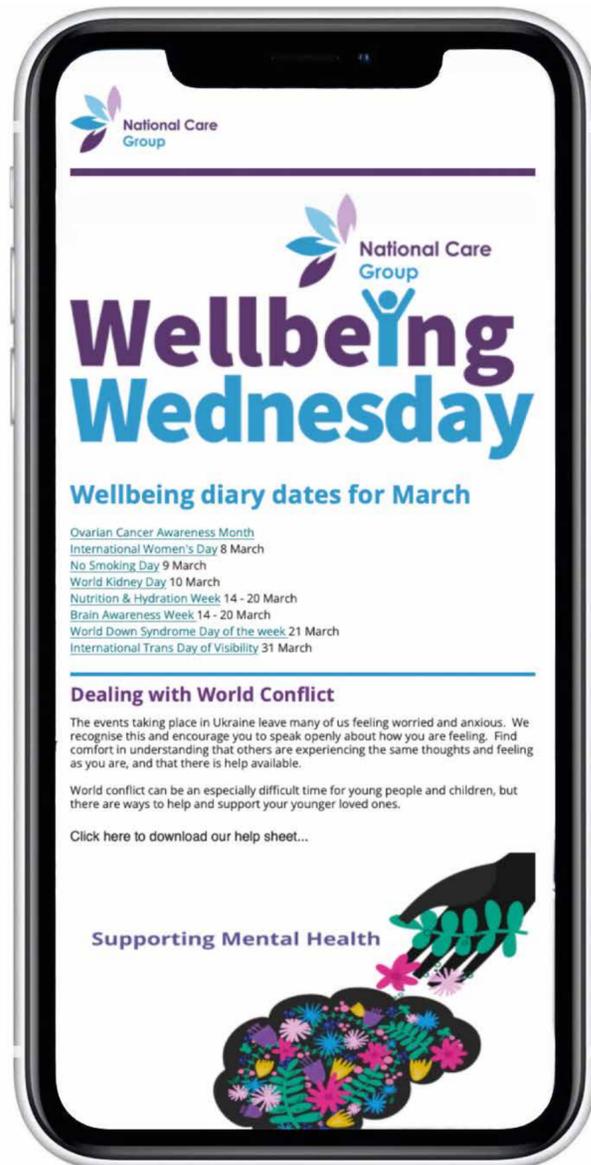




National Care Group  
**Wellbeing Wednesday**

Hi, I'm Heather Nozedar from the People Team, HR Advisor, and National Care Group's wellbeing champion. On the first Wednesday of every month, colleagues receive an email communication from me called Wellbeing Wednesday, which reaches out with practical tips and advice on how to improve wellbeing and support the wellbeing of those around us.

**Your Wellbeing Wednesday news**



**Beating the January Blues!**

We feature regular competitions as part of our Wellbeing Wednesday communications, they're a great excuse to have a bit of fun and brighten a colleague's day! In January we asked colleagues to tell us how they were beating the January Blues on Blue Monday, the supposedly saddest day of the year. Our lucky winner selected at random was Lyn Stewart from Favor House! Here's Lyn with her prize!



**Talking Menopause with the people we support!**

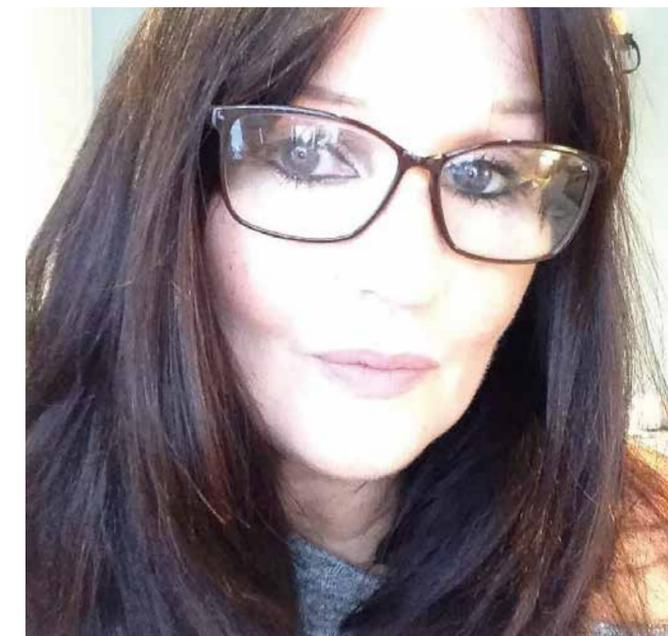
One of the wellbeing initiatives we launched last year was our new MenoHub, a toolkit of resources on our training platform for colleagues to access for advice and support on the menopause. As part of the MenoHub's resources, we welcomed a new Menopause Advocate, Carla Day. Carla is the registered manager at one of our South Wales services and offers telephone and email support when colleagues need an understanding voice at the end of a line.

Carla was recently invited to talk to two ladies we support at a nearby service, GA and JB, who were concerned they may have some symptoms of the menopause and needed advice. They welcomed some time with Carla and planned for her arrival by preparing a homemade afternoon tea and a list of interesting questions.

Carla set the scene by assuring them no question was too silly, or too personal and began by showing them a picture of a sweaty woman to break the ice and create a few giggles. Carla talked them through the importance of emotional wellbeing during the confusing years of the menopause, and how perimenopause can have equally awful symptoms. Conversation then flowed freely with Carla reassuring them both she would always be on hand should they have any further questions.

*GA - "Carla was easy to talk too and very knowledgeable about the menopause. I found the afternoon very interesting and enjoyable"*

*JB - "Lovely afternoon, very interesting and I learned a lot. I was really pleased Carla came to afternoon tea"*



**Carla Day**

I would like to offer a safe, confidential space for any colleagues that need it. I'm only a call away.

**07947 504492**  
 menohotline@nationalcaregroup.com





## A Place for Me

### Finding a home at National Care Group

National Care Group is the proud co-sponsor of a brand-new book showcasing the inspiring stories of 50 individuals in supported living. A Place for Me tells the stories, in both words and pictures, of their journeys through mental illness, autism, and learning disabilities as they seek to find a place to call their home.

Sponsorship of the book was a joint venture with one of our social housing partners Civitas and highlights individuals that have successfully transitioned into community housing, with many having spent decades in and out of residential care homes and psychiatric facilities.

An impressive total of 19 people we support from across 10 National Care Group services feature in the book, including Hope from Clark House and Shelley from Welwyn Road.

33-year-old Hope was sectioned and detained in a locked psychiatric ward in 2012 for five years, having already spent three years prior moving across three different social homes, experiencing sexual abuse from the staff, and intimidating behaviours.

Hope said: *“I didn’t see my dad or sisters for nearly five years in the psychiatric ward. I would just look at four walls and think, what am I fighting for? There was nothing, just that feeling of being sad, vulnerable, and lonely.”*

Fast forward to 2017 when Hope successfully transitioned into Clark House at Essential Care and Support, where she happily lives with us to this day.

Living in her ground-floor flat, Hope retains support worker care 24 hours a day but can live independently surrounded by her hobbies and passions, including her artwork.

Meanwhile, 33-year-old Shelly defied all expectations in her life, thanks to her own burning desire for independence, as well as that of her family. Diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Shelly was born in unfortunate



Hope | Clark House

circumstances, when a trainee midwife failed to recognise that Shelly was in a breach position. Starved of oxygen, Shelly was eventually delivered successfully but requires support with movement to this day. Despite her diagnosis, Shelly’s mother, Bridget, was determined to treat Shelly the same as her sisters, a notion Shelly reiterates.

She said: *“Even though I’ve got a disability I want to make the most of what I’ve got because at the end of the day, I’m just like you.”*

Following her mother’s passing there was a chance Shelly, then aged 25, could have been displaced from her family home in Sheffield, but it was her mother’s wish, along with Shelly’s, for her to remain close to them.

Today, Shelly lives in her own home with her two sisters and father just minutes away. She is supported by our Newfield View service and attends a day centre four days a week. Living independently, she can carry out everyday activities and her hobbies, including watching her favourite tv shows and going bowling with her family and friends.

Photography courtesy of Polly Braden, Sally Williams | A Place for Me



Shelly | Welwyn Road

Our Chief Executive James Allen said: “A Place For Me gives a voice to those with lived experience, and their families, as well as the opportunity to tell their stories. It is a tale of hope, optimism and what can and should be achieved if all stakeholders have the ambition, determination, and resolution to work together.

“Like other providers, National Care Group is already working collaboratively in many settings across the country to support individuals with a range of needs, with the book serving as an important illustration of what has already been delivered, and what can be delivered in the future, working in partnership social housing providers such as Civitas. I would like to thank all involved in creating and sharing these inspiring stories, and the learnings we can take from it.”

A Place For Me was written by a journalist called Sally Williams, who spoke of her experiences writing the book and the message it portrays. She said: “As the writer on this project, I was welcomed in, and it was incredible to see what people could do, not what they can’t do. It surprised me the scope of the potential in these individuals and how interesting their stories were. They confounded our prejudices and expectations on so many levels.

“The message of the book is that a place isn’t just about bricks and mortar, it’s a feeling you get of being loved and accepted, and that’s true for everyone both in this book and outside of it.”

A huge thank you to all of our colleagues who supported the featured individuals to tell their stories. For a list of everyone at National Care Group featured, plus to view the book itself, please visit the National Care Group website or intranet news pages.



# Our brilliant people, doing brilliant things



Every month National Care Group colleagues can nominate one another for an Outstanding Achievement Award, recognising and shining a light on their hard work and achievements.

The nominations are reviewed and scored against the company values of Passion, Respect, Empowerment, and Collaboration by the Executive Team; a challenge we always find really tough due to the high standard of incredible stories we receive.

The highest scoring colleague wins the title for that month, a certificate, a prize, and the chance of winning the overall award at the annual National Care Group Awards ceremony.

Here's a review of 2021/22's winners so far. I hope you're as inspired as us by their brilliant stories and dedication to unlocking the full potential of the lives of the people we support and their fellow colleagues.

**Karen Lewis, Chief Operations Officer**



**Margret Godwin, Support Worker, Steps Rotherham**  
Nominated by Annette Hand for always being professional, hard-working, and an inspiration to her colleagues. Margret celebrated a career of 45 years in care in 2021 – a remarkable achievement!



**The West House Team, Essential Care and Support**  
The West House Team was nominated by Charlotte Lumley for going above and beyond their roles in dedication to a very complex individual they support, demonstrating all the company values in their approach.



**The Cherry Tree Gardens Team, Atlantic Way Care**  
Nominated by Hayley Lynch for their dedication to an individual they support called B, also receiving a commendation from their local NHS team for the “the best person-centered and collaborative care planning I have ever seen.”



**The Wilton House Team, Steps Rotherham**  
Nominated by Annette Hand for delivering passionate and person-centered care and support to an individual at Wilton House going through end-of-life care. They were also commended by the family who couldn't praise their actions enough during a very difficult time



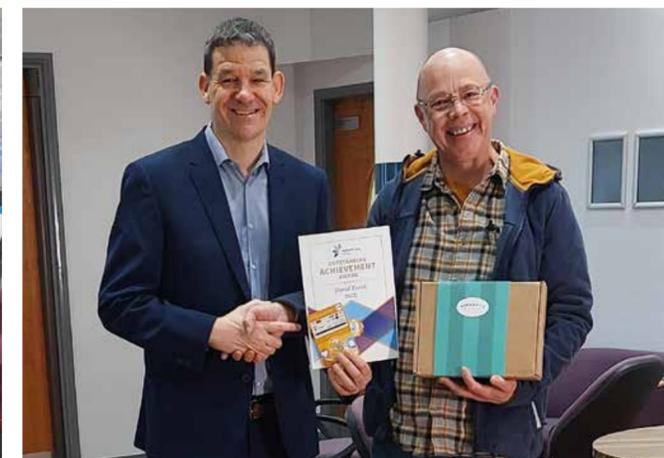
**Chiq Whitehouse, National & Regional Trainer.**  
Nominated by Nicola Airey for the fast and effective delivery of the new Mental Health First Aider training programme, training over 100 colleagues since January 2021.



**Coral Upton, Support Worker, Ashbrook NNS**  
Nominated by Kath Cox for her hard work and passion in everything she does, including a 100% attendance record through the height of the pandemic.



**Tom Allen, Support Worker, Steps Rotherham**  
Tom was nominated by Rachel Oram for his brave and selfless actions when he moved into one of the houses at Steps during an outbreak of Covid. Tom went on to win Covid Hero at the Yorkshire regional Great British Care Awards and received an invitation to the House of Lords to attend a Covid Heroes ceremonial event!



**David Ferrol, Support Worker, Highlea Care**  
David astonished registered manager Julie Cowens with his endeavours to delight the people he supports at Ash House in December 2021. When the snow report got it wrong, he drove over 40 miles to fetch snow in insulated containers just so they could build the snowman they had so been looking forward to creating.



# HIGHLEA CARE CAUGHT ON CAMERA

The team from Highlea Care in Shildon, County Durham, have been working with the Durham Care Academy to create a series of new recruitment films which showcase the varied and rewarding role of a support worker.

Filming took two full days to complete and included footage at their head office building, a few of their services, and featured a day trip activity.

Registered Manager Julie Cowens, their Regional Operations Manager Charlotte Lumley, and our Quality Director Mike Cleasby kicked the filming off by telling their career progression stories. Julie, for example, began her career as a support worker and moved up the career ladder all the way to Registered Manager.

The camera crew also spoke to support workers Chris, Stephanie, and David. They talked about the variety of their role, the training they do, and what they love about being a support worker.

The crew also spent some time with some of the people we support including Reece who proudly told them about his passions for gardening and cooking, and Tom who works four days a week at the local riding stables.

The films, which will be edited and ready by April, will be used by the National Care Group recruitment team to inspire new colleagues to join the company. Keep your eyes on the National Care Group Facebook and LinkedIn pages for their release!



Tom



Chris and Reece



David Ferrol



Reece



Julie Cowens

# Training Talk

Hi, I'm Nicola from the Learning & Development team. Many National Care Group colleagues will have met me, or a member of my team, as we have the brilliant job of traveling around the company to deliver the training modules.

I'm delighted to be able to talk to you about what the team has been rolling out over the past few months and give you a preview of what's coming up soon!

*Nicola Airey*



## Covid Response; Reserve Support Team Training

We've really enjoyed rolling out the Rapid Response programme to our support service volunteers. A huge thank you must go to Chiq Whitehouse and Callisto Rugadza from the team for developing the course around their existing workload between Christmas and New Year so we could begin delivery from early January.

The aim of the reserve team is to ensure our services can maintain safe resourcing levels to mitigate any impact of new Covid-19 variants. To date, we have trained 29 volunteers, and most are ready to be able to step in and help registered managers if needed.

## The New Team Leader Core Skills Course

This new course was developed to maximise the potential of our current and aspiring team leaders around the business. The content includes training on leadership skills, effective supervision, mental health awareness, managing difficult conversations, and 'Pack types' (finding out what type of dog you are and your role in the pack!).

To date, we have trained 31 team leaders. Kirsty Stickley from the team has been busy delivering the training. Here is one of her most recent groups from Integra!



## Mental Health First Aider Training

Launched in January 2021 as part of the National Care Group Wellbeing Strategy, the Mental Health First Aider training equips our line managers with the skills and knowledge to provide valuable support to their teams. With 122 managers now trained as first aiders, we have some more courses coming up should any further line managers wish to complete the training.

Get in touch with the team to sign up for the following two-day courses:

- 23-24 February 2022
- 29-30 March 2022
- 10-11 May 2022

## New Supervision and Appraisal Process

In January we launched the DARE Quarterly Colleague Review Framework replacing the old Supervision and Appraisal Process. The purpose was to promote regular feedback between managers and their team members on specific topics of reflection, wellbeing, achievements, support, development and objectives, as well as encourage professional development to enable everyone to reach their full potential.

Training sessions were rolled out during February with all line managers being invited to attend to promote understanding of how best to support our colleagues with the new framework.

We would love your feedback on what you think of the new DARE quarterly review process, or if you would like any further information, please email my colleagues at:

[talktous@nationalcaregroup.com](mailto:talktous@nationalcaregroup.com)



## Introducing Access LMS



## Learning & Development Team Drop-in Sessions

We switched of the power on eLFY and put our new Access Learning Management System (LMS) live on **Monday 28 February 2022.**

National Care Group colleagues should have received an email direct from Access LMS with their new log-in details on the day.

We are holding a series of online training sessions hosted via Zoom which started on Wednesday 2 March. Each session is bespoke so you only see and learn about the content applicable to your role.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with me at [nicola@nationalcaregroup.com](mailto:nicola@nationalcaregroup.com)

Thank you for reading and look forward to hearing from you.  
Nicola Airey, Learning & Development Manager



**your potential plus  
our commitment  
changes lives**

# MADE WITH Care

THE VALUES OF A CAREER IN CARE



As a leading national care provider we gave our take on a domestic campaign aimed at encouraging more people into a career in care.

National Care Group, which looks after the needs of vulnerable adults in the UK, stated that a government focus on skills was 'undoubtedly a good move', but that 'more work needs to be done' to address low pay and diversification in the industry. The comments come after 'Made with Care', a nationwide ad campaign, was launched by the UK government late 2021, aimed at fulfilling the 105,000 vacancies that remain vacant in the social care sector, exacerbating an already stretched healthcare industry.

Mike Ranson, commercial director at National Care Group said: "This is all about giving someone that comes into the sector, and those already in it, value. "A care worker puts in an incredible effort, sometimes switching from a variety of mindsets and roles, from caregiver to psychologist or financial planner to cook, and so much more. It's hard work so I applaud any focus that is put into identifying skills and recognising value in the social care sector.

*"But what I, and many others in my position, would really like to see is the core issues of pay and the type of people coming into the sector being addressed.*

*For many, the big question is 'from support worker to what - where do I go?' they can't see past the day-to-day caregiving and the progression that may lay ahead. It's a mentally and physically demanding job and, of course, if there's a pay imbalance against other public sector roles, then undoubtedly there's going to be difficulties attracting a loyal, quality workforce.*

*"Then you have to also consider the impact of Brexit and diversification in the sector. Having colleagues from a variety of backgrounds, cultures and experiences really enriches those we support and their lives. So, you have to question if we've lost something unique, which we had previously when the UK was in the EU."*

As a 30-year veteran in the health and social sector, Mike serves as the ideal example of the type of messaging the government is aiming to portray in 'Made with Care'.

Having entered the industry as a care assistant in a private residential home, he now operates as commercial director of National Care Group, which helps change the lives of vulnerable adults across the UK.

For Mike, focus needs to be on retention of skilled individuals in the industry, as well as an expansion of the messaging, for 'Made with Care' to be a success.

He said: "When I came into the industry, it was vastly populated by women, mainly

stemming from a perception that the work was largely domestic. However, there are more men in the sector now, it's a healthy balance and the work is so varied.

*"From board level to support worker, we are all dependent on each other. That's what this campaign needs to recognise - the value of people working in this sector. If you have an appetite for life and you are motivated, you can not only do really well career-wise, but you can change lives - you can have massive impact on an individual's wellbeing and help them achieve what they previously thought was not possible.*

*"I can't claim to have seen every ad, but there certainly needs to be an expansion of the messaging - all ages and backgrounds can make a difference and that's what we need to see."*

In discussing the proposed £500m to support the training and development for carers over the next three years, Mike added that the sector is yet to see fully 'how the money will filter through' but that 'expectations were as high as they ever were', with an ever-increasing skills gap in the industry.

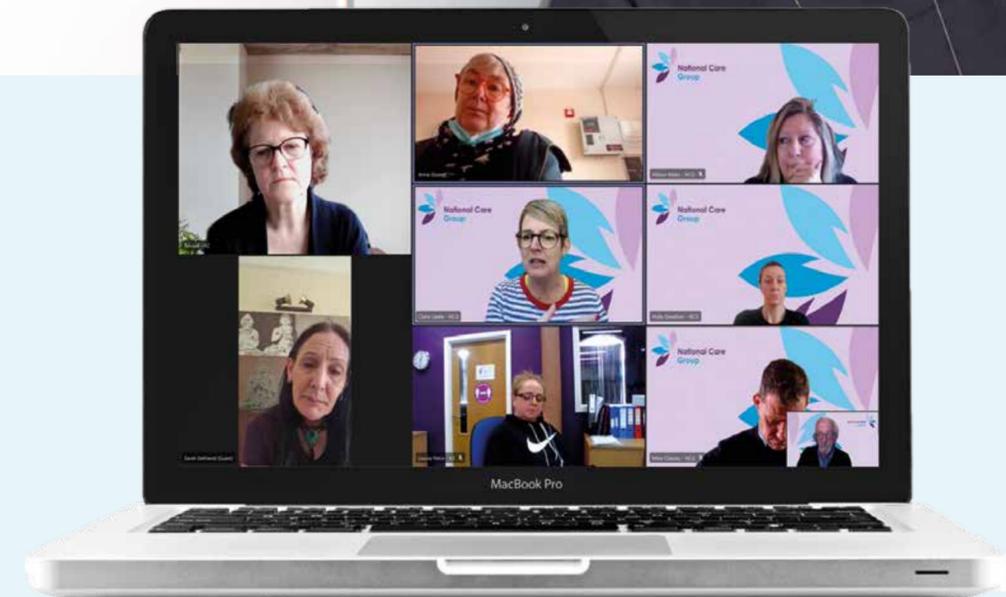
He said: "If this government can deliver a level of respect to what those in the sector do, then that is half the battle won. The rest will be on delivering on pay promises that has long gestated within this industry."

**Mike Ranson** | Commercial Director

## NATIONAL CARE GROUP COLLEAGUE FORUM

# YOU SAID WE DID

EMPOWERING OUR COLLEAGUES VOICES TO BE HEARD



## February 2022 saw the launch of the National Care Group Colleague Forum.

We listened to your feedback in last year's Colleague Survey and agree that there is still room to improve our internal communications.

Last year we increased the use of digital communications via social media and email and this year we aim to improve our reach to as many colleagues as possible. Based on your feedback and comments from the annual Colleague Survey, we are pleased to announce the formation of a Colleague Forum.

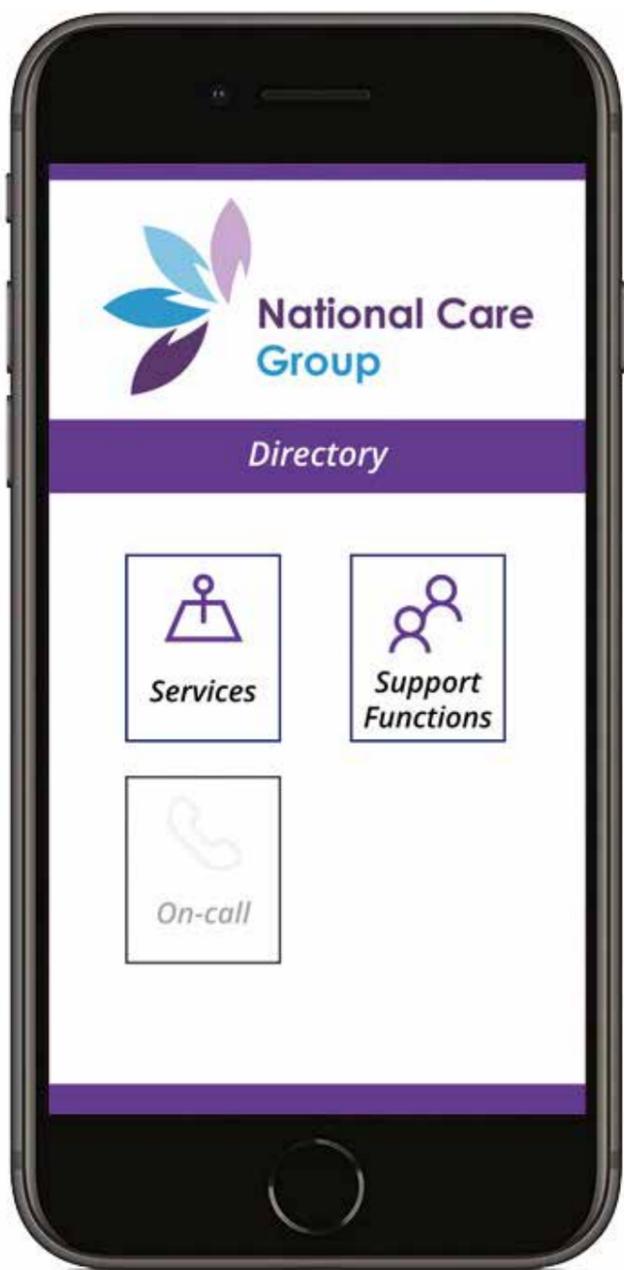
The Colleague Forum is a new communication channel to empower our colleagues' voices to be heard.

The first meetings of the Colleague Forum took place at the end of February 2022. With volunteer Colleague representatives from across our business meeting to discuss the purpose of the forum, the range of topics for discussion and the frequency of forum meetings

The forum will be a channel where communication flows up to Management representatives as well as down to Colleague representatives. Topics for discussion will be suggested by both Colleague and Management representatives and could include:

- Hot topics - which have been collected from your teams/region as well as questions for Management reps;
- Colleague ideas/suggestions to be put forward for consideration and development;
- Updates on any ongoing changes and things discussed during previous meetings;
- Management may also take the opportunity to present hot topics for discussion such as asking for feedback or taking a temperature check on particular topics;

A list of forum representatives will be published shortly and we encourage you make contact with your local representative with suggestions for any topics you would like to be included.



## THE BEST WAY TO STAY IN TOUCH

Those marvellous people in our IT Team have been working hard to create a really quick and easy way for you to find your colleagues and all our local services. It's quick and easy to download the app to your mobile phone and access all the contact details you need to stay in touch.

The instructions below will guide you on how to access the service directory, that includes a list of all the services, and their registered managers, as well as support functions with individual contact details.

The application is accessible for anyone with a work email address and is available via Teams, Web and on your mobile.

### Adding to your mobile device

Download the app for android or Apple phones by searching for power apps in the App Store. When installed sign in using your work email credentials. Once logged in you will be able to see the service directory.



Mike Cleasby, Quality Director | Sky diving for charity



## KEEP SHARING YOUR STORIES FOR NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

We love it when you send us your stories of the events and the inspirational activities that you and the people we support have been enjoying. Send your photo's with a short write up to our news desk and we will do our best to feature in our news and social media channels

[media@nationalcaregroup.com](mailto:media@nationalcaregroup.com)



## Let's stay connected

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Join us for Tea and a Chat



**your potential plus our commitment changes lives**

Passion | Empowerment | Respect | Collaboration