



A look back at our year
October 2022 - September 2023

care UK 

From the CEO



In 2023, we were delighted to see our homes back, playing an active role in their local communities, welcoming friends and families, hosting lively events and supporting residents to get out and about.

I am always proud of how active a role Care UK homes play in their local communities. This was more evident than ever in 2023 as homes opened their doors to neighbours, families and friends for a range of activities including dementia cafés, informative events and fun celebration days. More homes than ever participated in this year's Care Home Open Week and there were some fantastic celebrations around events such as the King's Coronation and the festive season. There was also no shortage of trips far and wide as residents took part in local community activities, travelled around the UK and beyond and fulfilled all manner of wishes through our Wishing Tree initiative.

As ever, providing the highest quality of care is our number one priority, and we are delighted to have maintained some of the highest regulatory compliance ratings in the sector, with 91% of our care homes rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. For the fourth year in a row, we continue to operate more 'Outstanding' rated homes than any other UK provider. What's more, in 2023 Care UK was awarded the prestigious Residential Care Provider of the Year in the Large Group category at the Health Investor

Awards for the second year in a row. These awards honour organisations that set new quality standards in social care and clinical services, and winning this title for the second year running is continued recognition of the high-quality service our teams provide. Most importantly, colleague, resident and relative satisfaction all reached their highest ever levels in 2023; and our review ratings on Google and Carehome.co.uk have never been higher with a 75% increase in positive feedback.

Over the last year, we have trialled new technologies and launched training schemes with the aim of continually improving the quality of care we deliver to residents. The success of one programme in particular, which piloted the use of technology to identify and treat reversible hearing loss, was recently recognised with a national award from The Nursing Times.

Dementia care continues to be a big focus for our teams as well, and we're proud to pioneer the evidence-based programme Care Fit for VIPs. This is the only recognised benchmark in the UK for excellence in person-centred dementia care, and it

is a rigorous framework that a number of our homes are dedicated to delivering. We also launched a video guide in 2023 to support individuals and their families throughout their dementia journey, and we'll build on this in 2024 with new resources and events aimed at prompting conversations, understanding and support.

After several years spent focused on recovering from the pandemic, Covid-19 is having less of an impact on our homes thanks to our ongoing vigilance and infection prevention control protocols. We are pleased to be looking forward with a much more positive outlook. The safety and wellbeing of residents, colleagues and relatives remains our priority, however, and we continue to encourage everyone who spends time in our homes to take advantage of the latest vaccinations. We opened three new care homes in the year, and we have plans to open 16 more over the next four years, while we continue to invest in our existing services.

2023 has not been without its challenges with inflationary pressures causing spiralling costs for food and energy. We remain committed to doing

everything we can to manage our costs effectively through smarter procurement.

As I am sure you will agree, it is the exceptional people that work in our homes that make them such a special place to live and to visit. For this reason, we're dedicated to investing in our teams – whether that be through training and career development opportunities or additional funding to provide competitive pay and reward packages. Everything we have achieved over the last year has been down to the commitment and professionalism of our colleagues, and I remain incredibly proud of the work they do to support residents to live fulfilling lives.



Andrew Knight, CEO

Care UK in numbers

Our organisation as of December 2023



12,471

The number of colleagues working in our teams across the UK.



586

The number of our colleagues who are gaining skills through apprenticeships.



93%

The overall satisfaction score given by residents.



154

The number of care homes Care UK runs across the United Kingdom.



91%

The percentage of our care homes that are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'*.

* Regulators are the CQC in England and the Care Inspectorate in Scotland and Wales



97%

Of our colleagues feel proud of the work they do.



53

Our Net Promoter Score which is a measure of loyalty to an organisation and, at this level, considered excellent.



16

The number of new homes which are due to open in the next four years.



80%

The percentage of relatives who are **very satisfied** with their care home service.



17

The number of our homes rated 'Outstanding'.



Trusted to care

We're passionate about supporting residents to live fulfilling lives

At Care UK, we're committed to delivering the highest standard of care to keep residents safe, healthy and happy, while going above and beyond to support individuals to live a meaningful life. Our teams are trained to deliver person-centred care that puts the individual at the heart of the care they receive.



The very best care

Our approach to care supports residents to live fulfilling lives by providing them with care and support tailored to their needs

and wishes. Our inspection outcomes from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England and the Care Inspectorates in Wales and Scotland demonstrate that we provide a very high standard of care. In 2023, we maintained market-leading regulatory ratings, a reflection of our teams always striving to treat residents and their families with dignity and respect, delivering personalised care and providing a clean, safe, and welcoming environment.

We're always looking to improve the care and support we provide through trials of new equipment and the use of new technologies. This helps us to offer a holistic approach to care, where all aspects of a resident's lifestyle are considered.

Rachel Harvey, Care, Quality and Governance Director

Dementia care

Our ethos of fulfilling lives means we support each resident to live life in the way they choose, whatever their capabilities and whether or not they are living with a diagnosis of dementia. Our dedicated care teams receive regular training and we are proud to work with dementia care experts to shape our approach in this field. We're passionate about providing resources and advice for families and carers about how to navigate their loved one's dementia journey. In 2023, we produced a video guide called, 'One step at a time', to support family carers and people living with dementia to understand how they can live well.





Keeping residents safe

Safety is of the utmost importance to our care home teams, and Phil Clarke, our Head of Health and Safety, has implemented several changes over the past year to improve safety training and the support given to our teams. Our health and safety training courses have been rewritten to focus on key areas and develop through reflective learning, giving managers the opportunity to make tangible improvements in their homes. Our internal safety inspection process has also been refined so we can spend more time supporting our homes.



We know that residents, families, and friends enjoy taking part in activities and events in Care UK homes, and our Health and Safety team is focused on giving homes the skills they need to have fun safely. In 2023, we received silver status in the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents awards scheme, showing that we go above and beyond when it comes to the health and safety of residents and colleagues.



Living with covid

We are dedicated to ensuring the safety of everyone living, visiting and working in our homes, and we know that cleanliness remains a key priority for residents and their families. Infection prevention and control champions are responsible for upholding stringent cleaning routines, and we are proud to continue supporting vaccination campaigns and encouraging all colleagues, residents and visitors to participate to help maintain safety in care homes.



Vision and values

We're guided by our vision to support residents to lead fulfilling lives

Fulfilling lives is our core purpose at Care UK, and we're driven by a belief that every one of us makes a difference. The values that underpin everything we do are: **caring**, **passionate** and **teamwork**. This vision and these values inspire and guide us as a team and as individuals, informing our approach to every aspect of our care.

In practice, we see our vision and values being underpinned by the amazing work our colleagues and teams do. Four home managers were recently recognised at our Care UK Stars Awards event for their outstanding leadership and the values-based cultures they've built within their homes. Here they share their thoughts on what it means to live our values on a daily basis.



Fulfilling lives

We believe that all residents should be able to live their lives the way they choose. From our activities and events programmes, which we're constantly developing in partnership with residents, to spending time on a one-to-one basis with individuals, we celebrate what makes people unique and support them to live fulfilling lives.

To me it's about making Lonsdale Mews feel like a home from home and a community. We bring in the local community whenever we can to engage with residents. Earlier this year for the King's Coronation, everyone came together for a street party. The team even decorated the garden with knitted Coronation bunting and decorations handmade by residents during crafts sessions. In the winter, we held a Christmas fair where members of the local community, residents and relatives put stalls on. What used to be our visiting pod during the pandemic has been turned into a shop at the request of residents, and at our Christmas fair we sold items they had made, with all the proceeds going to Dementia UK.

We put a lot of hard work into opening Lonsdale Mews three years ago, and to see the home progress from being a building site to what it is now, is so nice to see.

Toby Sturgess, Home Manager at Lonsdale Mews



Caring

It takes dedication and commitment to deliver a high standard of care, and over the past year, as a team at Invicta Court, we've been able to achieve amazing things. As soon as someone walks into the home, they can feel how special we are. Everyone works well together, and every member of the team goes the extra mile for residents, from maintenance building displays to our lifestyle and catering teams, you can see it across the whole home. Working together with the same purpose to provide the best experience for residents in our care is a true reflection of who we are here.

We have a really caring team, but I believe it's also important that we care for them by giving them opportunities to grow and progress in their career. We also take time to build relationships in the team.

We have a social committee for colleagues, and we've been camping, climbed Snowdon and fundraised for charity together. I have an amazing team, and I enjoy being able to empower them to improve and develop to become a better version of themselves, which will then have an impact on residents' lives.

Sara Cunha Barbosa, Home Manager at Invicta Court



Passionate

I care very deeply about the residents who live at Winchcombe Place and I believe they deserve the highest standards, which we need to deliver. To do

that, as Home Manager, I have to lead by example and be open and honest with colleagues. I believe if you're not passionate about what you're doing, you can't expect your team to be.

I've always had an open-door policy, and I believe it's important to be somebody who colleagues and residents can come to, not just someone who sits in an office. My highest priority is the residents at Winchcombe Place, but supporting and teaching colleagues is also very important to me. Our team is

truly committed to our ethos of fulfilling lives, which is centred around providing person-centred care that puts residents at the heart of everything we do. Most of all, I want to make sure we get the basics right. If we do that, then everything else will follow.

Shirley Summerbell, Home Manager at Winchcombe Place



Teamwork

I always say that I am only as good as my team. It's not my hard work; it's their hard work reflected on me. At Liberham Lodge, we have 90 team members

working in various departments, so effective communication is a huge part of how we provide high-quality care. When we communicate well, we ensure that everyone is aware of what's happening in each area of the home, and who needs support.

Our focus on teamwork also makes us more adaptable and open to learning opportunities. With our whole-home approach, colleagues support other departments, fostering a culture of mutual learning – our home admissions advisor supports the care team

during mealtimes, and senior colleagues work in the kitchen to assist the catering team, too. The team adapts to the needs of Liberham Lodge's residents, and no task is considered too big or too small. In our team, everyone takes pride in our collective achievements. Working together creates a sense of unity and accomplishment that makes the entire team proud.

Jagpal Singh, Home Manager at Liberham Lodge



The highest quality care

Our approach to award-winning care

We structure our care around six pillars, which helps us stay focused on finding improvements on the things that count while supporting residents to keep safe, healthy, active and independent.

First class care and nursing

We provided care and clinical excellence in 2023 by building on our current training, skills and technology. Over the year, we invested in best practice end-of-life care, having 24 homes complete the rigorous Gold Standards Framework accreditation process. This demonstrates that we work proactively with local GPs, primary care teams and specialists to provide seamless care to residents in their last months, weeks and days. A further 36 homes will commence the accreditation process this year, undertaking the workshops which support teams to enhance their knowledge and understanding of end-of-life care. The Gold Standards Framework accreditation means a home offers the highest standard of care to people at the end of their life, including working with local healthcare teams, tailoring care to residents' wishes and supporting families through the difficult process.

We also worked closely with the Queen's Nursing Institute in 2023 on our award-winning Hear Well project to treat reversible hearing loss. Turn to page 16 (Staying one step ahead) to learn more.

Dining with dignity

Our hospitality teams further developed the dining experience over 2023 to meet residents' needs and preferences, including continuing to develop meals and snacks for residents who have trouble swallowing. Read more on page 19.

Living well with dementia

At Care UK, we are committed to delivering quality dementia care. We are pioneering the evidence-based programme Care Fit for VIPs, developed by Professor Dawn Brooker and the Association of Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester. This programme ensures our homes provide the very best dementia care according to the only recognised benchmark for person-centred dementia care.

Field Lodge in St Ives was the first of our care homes to achieve the Care Fit for VIPs accreditation in 2023 - the highest recognised standard for dementia care. We now have seven homes internally accredited and over 130 who have self assessed through this framework.

As part of our dementia care offering, we also provide Namaste care for those with later-stage dementia. Across Care UK, we have trained nearly 1,000 Namaste care practitioners, and our homes are consistently recording Namaste care sessions every day, which means we have delivered more than 10,000 sessions for people living with advanced dementia.

Meaningful lifestyles

Every resident has a unique story to share, and 2023 saw us launch a campaign to shine a light on residents' endless pearls of wisdom. As part of our Wisdom Booths campaign, homes across the country held advice sessions with younger people, including



school groups, scouts, and parents with new babies, so they could offer advice on life, love and work while reminiscing about their younger years.

Storytelling was also at the heart of our Bedtime Stories campaign. The residents at Cavell Court in Norwich created short videos retelling classic children's tales after being inspired during the pandemic to read to children who didn't have a grandparent to read to them. Homes around the country, from Edinburgh to Dorset, got involved to share their love of stories, welcoming school children, local authors and grandchildren into the homes to enjoy time with residents and encourage reminiscence.

Enabling environments

This year we introduced a wider range of portable interactive tables that enable residents to engage with sensory activities, such as playing the piano on screen or enjoying quizzes and games. They can even watch short comedy clips that were popular in their younger years, such as Morecambe and Wise, or listen to their favourite music from days gone by.

To encourage residents to keep active, we've also rolled out exercise programmes including a 'Love to

Move' British gymnastic programme. These dementia-friendly, seated exercises help residents stay mobile and live more independently, supporting cognitive stimulation and helping to improve memory and mobility.

Communication and connection

We know how important it is for residents to keep in touch with loved ones, and we support positive connections with family, friends and communities. One way we've continued to do this in 2023 is through the Relish app, which is being used successfully by many homes to record residents' personal stories and to provide an additional channel of communication for relatives.

On average, Care UK homes record 38,000 activities each month on Relish, and nearly 4,700 relatives are already engaging with the app. In the coming year, we want to work with families to do more, so we've launched the relative communication element of Relish. This allows loved ones to engage with what their relative has been doing in the home, share pictures and helps us to build their life history so our teams can get to know them even better. Relatives will also be able to send messages to their loved one.



Staying one step ahead

We're keeping up to date with the latest innovations

At Care UK, we believe it's important to integrate new technologies and cutting-edge research in our organisation to ensure residents are receiving the best possible care. In 2023, our innovative projects included introducing technology trials, launching new training schemes and improving our customer and employee experiences.



New technologies

Over 2023, we completed several pilots and trials of new technologies to continue pushing the standard of best-in-class care. This included a new piece of technology called PainChek that can help our teams identify when someone who cannot articulate their pain, needs medication or other interventions. This has been found not only to promote comfort and help reduce distress, but also to reduce the use of psychotropic drugs.

During the year, we also partnered with the Queen's Nursing Institute and Tympa Health to pilot the use of technology to identify and treat reversible hearing loss. Hearing loss can contribute to the onset and progression of dementia and increases social isolation. Through the Hear Well project, our nurses identified over 40% of residents in the trial homes who had reversible hearing loss. In recognition of the positive outcomes, we were proud to win the 'Nursing in Social Care' category at the The Nursing Times Awards. Read more about our awards on page 34.

The Seacole Academy

This year, we launched The Seacole Academy of Care and Clinical Excellence to support our nurses and team leaders with their career development. As part of the programme, we created a range of new resources for overseas colleagues, including a bespoke induction scheme, workshops about nursing in the UK and key information about the culture and ways of working within Care UK.

We also welcomed our first cohort of team leaders who will be upskilling to better support nurses to deliver clinical care. Not only does this ensure we have robust clinical knowledge in our teams, but it enables our



people to progress in their careers from carer to nurse assistant. We are also introducing courses around the management of areas like diabetes care for team leaders to ensure our teams meet residents' needs.

Digital strides

We continue to optimise our digital presence to ensure our services stand out in the digital space and to enable families to stay connected to their loved ones – from staying in touch with the home on

social media to receiving updates on the Relish app, or even topping up residents' allowances in our newly launched online payments portal.

We're also adapting our technology to create a seamless and engaging employee experience for new starters. Through the onboarding process, we now give a thorough welcome to new colleagues, from tailored messages introducing them to our values, to managing their expectations for their first day, and encouraging feedback through every stage of the process. With our strategy to ensure every new joiner has a fantastic experience and stays with Care UK for the long term, residents and families can expect to see consistent care from familiar faces.

Improving our service

We want every day in one of our care homes to be a positive one. From ensuring gardens are well maintained, to keeping reception areas tidy, and communal areas clean and safe, we are continuously improving our care home environments through internal audits.

To provide the best possible care, it's also important that we understand the conditions residents are

living with. We completed a Care UK Census in 2023 so that we could better understand the needs and medical conditions of the people living in all Care UK homes. This highlighted the need for a bespoke education package for our colleagues, and we developed a unique 'Care of the Older Person' module for all team members to complete. Our colleagues tell us it is a fantastic addition to their learning and development programme. The annual Care UK census continues to highlight key areas for further workforce development and also ensures we have sufficient resource to support best practice and the individual needs of residents.

Focus on food

A best-in-class dining experience

At Care UK, creating a resident-centred dining experience is the highest priority for the catering teams in each of our homes. We tailor every aspect of food and dining to residents' needs and wishes and provide high-quality, nutritious meals. In 2023, we continued to develop colleagues by offering a wide range of learning opportunities, and their drive to improve their service shines through in external recognition.



Celebrating our chefs

Our catering teams have had a lot to celebrate this year. We were delighted to be awarded the prestigious Care Catering Award at the Public Sector

Catering Awards (PSCAs) for our 'Dining with dignity' initiative, which was a testament to all the hard work and dedication of our chefs, kitchen and dining teams and the outstanding service they provide. Across the UK, they create nutritious and beautifully presented meals for residents, while fully catering to any special dietary needs in a sensitive and respectful manner. The PSCAs also crowned Caroline Lloyd, Head Chef at Prince George House, with the Unsung Hero Award for consistently putting residents first, while Llys Cyncoed in Cardiff was presented with the Care Home Catering Team of the Year accolade at the Care Home Catering Awards.

I was delighted that four of our chefs qualified for the National Association of Care Catering (NACC) Chef of the Year competition, including Darren Nelson of Trymview Hall, Alex Millichamp of Chandler Court, Kasia Hab-Bialkowska of Highmarket House and

Graham Watson from Lauder Lodge. Congratulations to Kasia who took home the Sustainability and Waste Management Award.

We also like to celebrate our fantastic chefs with our internal Chef of the Year Award. This year, we had a record 24 entries, narrowed down to six finalists who performed in a cook-off for a panel of judges, including special guest Patricia, a resident of Mountbatten Grange. Congratulations to our 2023 winner, Stuart Pelham of Llys Cyncoed!

Jon Bicknell, Food and Services Director



Training opportunities

Our Care UK Chef Academy continues to offer our chefs the opportunity to upskill and learn specialist techniques to create exceptional meals that appeal to residents requiring a range of modifications and special diets. Since launching the academy with Lifetime Training, we have enrolled 35 learners, 14 of whom have completed the programme and achieved their qualifications. We continue to support team members through the academy to enhance the dining experience in Care UK homes.

We're also proud to offer opportunities for catering development that tap into the depth of knowledge of nutrition for older people within Care UK. In 2023, we launched a new café book to showcase how homes can maximise nutrition and hydration for residents, while catering to dietary needs and offering plenty of choice.

As part of our commitment to a high-quality dining experience, we strive to provide a positive working environment for kitchen teams. We were the first care home provider to join the #FairKitchens movement in 2021, and we will continue to play an active role in driving this forward.



Dining with dignity

Over the last year, we have made strides in our goal to provide the best possible food and dining experience for residents living with dysphagia (swallowing difficulties). Every manager has had the opportunity to attend a training session on the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) to learn more about the framework for texture modified diets.

Several Care UK homes are driving high standards of IDDSI food in the sector. Anna Sudak, Head Chef

at Montfort Manor, has been learning about best practice in IDDSI and showed exceptional dedication to understanding what it would feel like to live with dysphagia. As part of her level 4 management apprenticeship, she took it upon herself to eat an IDDSI diet for five days, including three days eating only pureed food and two days eating only liquidised food. Meanwhile, the home manager and head chef at Catherine Court, in Buckinghamshire, run a monthly forum on IDDSI to highlight the importance of providing choice and safe, great-tasting food no matter what specialist diet a resident requires.





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Alicia Tomlinson

Respite Care

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Highlights from 2023

Building an even stronger organisation to support more people than ever across the UK

Our big focus areas for 2023 were investment and growth, improvements to our teams, facilities, and care quality. We are committed to continuing to improve Care UK for colleagues, residents and their families. We are proud to have been able to help more people find the care that's right for them.



Our teams

The passion of our colleagues shines through in everything they do, and I'm proud to support them so they can continue

providing the best care for residents.

In 2023, we made several significant improvements to how we support our colleagues, including introducing new training tools and programmes, wellbeing resources and investing in pay and benefits.

For residents living in Care UK homes, we know that stability is important. The investments we made in our people during 2023 helped us to significantly reduce turnover, resulting in more consistency within our teams and creating environments where residents and carers can get to know each other well. I look forward to continuing to see what our teams can do in the coming year.

Martin Friend, Chief Operating Officer

Improving our environments

We redoubled our focus on our physical facilities with a record level of investment. Through refurbishments and garden works, we created engaging environments where residents can live meaningful and fulfilling lives.

For example, Heather View in Crowborough, Foxbridge House in Orpington and Mill View in East Grinstead underwent renovations that included the redecoration of lounges and kitchens on the nursing and dementia suites, as well as brand-new cinemas, salons, bars and cafés on the ground floors. Salisbury Manor in Salisbury reopened in June following a complete redecoration of all communal areas, a reconfiguration that enables residents living with dementia to enjoy a safe outside space and the construction of large, specialist rooms for residents receiving end-of-life care to allow families to stay by their side.



New openings

In 2023, we opened the doors to three new care homes: Oxbow Manor in Shrewsbury, Llys Herbert in Cardiff and Cuttlebrook Hall in Thame. These new homes are beautifully furnished with the latest care and lifestyle facilities, as well as extensive gardens and outdoor spaces. We look forward to continuing to welcome residents into these beautiful, purpose-built homes.

Quality care

Our teams continued to build on their knowledge and skillset by working towards and achieving best-in-class care accreditations, such as the Gold Standards Framework for end-of-life care and Care Fit for VIPs for dementia care. This focus on providing the highest quality care has seen us improve our ratings in England, become the top-rated private care provider in Scotland, and maintain our position in Wales*.

We continue to uphold cleanliness and infection prevention measures, and we also see it as our

* Regulators are the CQC in England and the Care Inspectorate in Scotland and Wales

professional responsibility to encourage covid and flu vaccinations in our teams when these are available.

Environmental sustainability

We are committed to transitioning our business to net zero emissions by 2040, and we have engaged Achilles who have over 15 years' experience assisting organisations to measure, manage and report their carbon footprint. We have confidence that our future carbon reduction plan will deliver progress year-on-year and enhance the resilience of our business to withstand climate change impacts happening now and in the future.



In this past year, we have made significant strides towards our environmental sustainability goals. Through our waste diversion programme, in partnership with our Eco Ambassadors and waste management services, we achieved a 100% landfill diversion rate for general waste. We also launched an electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme to help decarbonise business-related travel. These efforts demonstrate our commitment to responsible use of resources and carbon footprint reduction. Moving forward, we continue looking for ways to minimise our environmental impact.

Social responsibility

Our colleagues are our greatest asset. We believe our diverse and supportive workplace is a strength, and this year we have appointed and trained over 154 mental health first aiders, with the ambition of ensuring this support is available to colleagues in every care home and to central support teams, to help us build on a respectful culture where all employees feel valued and able to thrive. We have also continued to support local communities and empower local charitable organisations by donating over £24,000 via matched funding.

Governance

This year, we established a sustainability committee to govern our environment, social and corporate governance (ESG) strategy. We also comprehensively updated policies on cybersecurity, health and safety, and whistleblowing, among others, to align with global best practice. Compliance audits make sure we adhere to laws and ethics. Going forward, robust governance and care delivery will remain central to upholding our reputation as a provider of high-quality care.



Highlights from our homes

There's never a dull day in a Care UK home

During 2023, Care UK homes kept busy welcoming friendly new faces to events, celebrating royal occasions, and getting out and about in their local communities. Our highly trained care home teams tailor events and activities in each home to the interests and needs of the residents who live there, so that each person can live a meaningful lifestyle full of experiences that are tailored to their preferences.

In 2023, we invested in six conferences around the country to provide inspiration and knowledge to our hard-working lifestyle teams. These featured expert speakers from the National Association of Providers of Activity (NAPA) and Namaste International, who shared the latest research and best practice with our home managers, lifestyle teams and dementia care coaches.

'Amblefest' takes the stage

Over the summer, we held an exciting lineup of events at numerous Care UK homes to mark Care Home Open Week. As part of the national celebration, we turned the garden at Ambleside in Stratford-upon-Avon into a Glastonbury-inspired festival site, complete with a main stage, food stands and even a VIP area. The aptly named 'Amblefest' saw residents and their friends from neighbouring Care UK homes don their wellies, flower crowns and homemade banners for a day of fun.

Plenty of other homes got in on the celebrations. Up north, Deewater Grange in Chester had festival fun, with face painting, game stalls and bouncy castles available, as well as the chance for those feeling brave to get a temporary tattoo – all while enjoying

live music from a local band. Further south, the team at Skylark House held a festival for foodies in the local community and invited them to put their tasting skills to the test. Meanwhile, Bishops Manor in Sutton Coldfield had a Caribbean-beach-themed festival for locals. There's nothing like sipping a rum punch cocktail, enjoying a Caribbean-inspired buffet and listening to the wonderful sounds of a steel band to take all your worries away.





A royal occasion

Care UK homes enjoyed celebrating the King's Coronation, marking the occasion with street parties and celebrations decked out in Union Jack flags. In Crowborough, residents at Heather View celebrated the milestone in British history by writing and recording a song for the King. All the residents had their say in what they wanted included in the song and how the tune should go, and residents Monica, Jill, Jean and Ethel assisted in writing and creating the song.

They were even able to record the song using professional equipment, which was set up in the

cinema of the home, and a CD was made and sent to King Charles for an exclusive first listen. Monica Langfear, a resident at Heather View, said: "I really enjoyed writing and recording the Coronation song, it was such fun in the studio. There was a lot of laughter involved as well as singing. We loved making it and having our photos taken."

Loud and proud

We love to see colleagues representing our values in their local communities, so we were delighted when colleagues from 10 care homes and several of our support teams took to the streets of Birmingham

with rainbow flags at the ready to celebrate the 25th Birmingham Pride.

Colleagues and residents also showed their support for the LGBTQ+ community in care homes across the country. The kitchen team at Blossomfield Grange created a fabulous seven-layer rainbow cake, while at Metchley Manor, the team organised an evening of entertainment from drag queen Hazel Nuts, and colleagues at The Potteries held a virtual disco and a Pride party in their café. Harrier Lodge also hosted their very own Pride event and went all out for their celebrations, spending the afternoon in the sunshine,



enjoying a tasty BBQ followed by a fantastic musical performance, with balloons, bunting, flags and rainbow accessories for as far as the eye could see.

Competition time

Care UK homes always enjoy a bit of friendly competition, and over the past year they have had several opportunities to test their mettle. In spring, our chefs were busy baking up a storm to take part in our Easter bread competition. We were blown away by the skill and imagination on show, but Asterbury Place's show-stopping focaccia plate and sweet spiced buns shaped like bunnies took the crown.



Residents and team members from 11 care homes in Suffolk also enjoyed taking part in their sixth annual sports day. The day involved traditional sports day challenges, including the sack race and tug-of-war, as well as activities designed so residents could join in the fun, before a special buffet prepared by the homes' chefs.





Having good life is up to the raising them

Fish tree
the lifestyle team
if a resident of
Means has a wish
to plant

Fulfilling lives, granting wishes

Going above and beyond to make residents' wishes come true

Our Wishing Tree initiative empowers residents to live active and fulfilling lives, from reliving happy memories to achieving dreams they never thought possible. Residents in each home have the opportunity to hang a wish on their home's tree, and then our teams get to work doing everything they can to make it happen. This year, we were delighted to support residents around the UK to celebrate new experiences, special occasions and beloved hobbies.



Reaching new heights

Adventure-lover Sally Webster took our breath away when she completed a daring wish to soar over Penrhyn Slate Quarry on the fastest zipline in the world. The team supported 85-year-old Sally, a resident at Deewater Grange, and her daughter, Juliet, to zoom over Snowdonia at 100mph, taking in the incredible views.

Speaking about the experience, Sally said: "Wow! Doing the zipline today really made me feel alive. I was nervous at first but so excited. I never thought at my age I'd see myself at the top of Snowdonia – never mind ziplining down it! The best part was getting to do the zipline together with my daughter."

Sally was a keen rambler throughout her life, enjoying many hikes around East Anglia and Europe as part of the Fulbourne Ramblers. "The drive to the summit was breathtaking, and seeing the mountain ranges and the fresh country air reminded me of where I grew up as a child," she said. "All I can say is a big thank you to the team for organising it, and once again, wow."

Living the dream

When 92-year-old Betty Richardson, a resident at Sway Place in Hampshire, told Care UK she had always wanted to see a Dreamboys show, the team were keen to make her wish come true. Betty has always had a zest for life, and she loved going to the theatre with her girlfriends.



After the team got in touch, Betty was gifted tickets and a meet and greet with the performers before the show, and a behind-the-scenes tour of the theatre. Betty proved age is just a number, saying: "Well I'm not going to forget that in a hurry. Was that a dream or was I really there!"

An ice surprise

Doreen Barber, a 97-year-old resident at Mountfitchet House, was a keen ice skater in her younger years, and she regularly shares fond memories with the team and other residents about her skating days. Having



learned that Doreen was keen to get back on the ice herself, the team arranged for her to visit Riverside Leisure Centre in Chelmsford. Inspired by Doreen, several other residents also went along to skate for the first time, proving it's never too late to take up a new hobby.

Reflecting on the day, Doreen said: "Imagine being my age and being on the ice – I never thought I'd see the day! It was so much fun and I had a wonderful time." The team also went one step further and reached out to the Dancing on Ice team to share Doreen's story. Moved by her commitment to the sport and love of the show, Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean sent Doreen a personal video message, sharing their admiration and well wishes. The video was a complete surprise for Doreen, who said: "I'm touched that they would take the time to do this for me. I feel like a celebrity – people will have to pay to talk to me now!"

Having a ball

Laurice Clark, from Scarlet House, celebrated her 100th birthday on 17th June with a garden party to be remembered. In her younger days, Laurice and her husband owned and bred dachshunds, sparking her love for the sausage dogs. With encouragement



from her husband, Laurice began entering her canine companions into competitions all over the country – including Crufts, where her dogs placed second and third.

Knowing of Laurice's life-long love for dachshunds, the team set out to create a paw-some surprise, issuing a call-out to the local community. On the day, almost 30 waggy-tailed dachshunds trotted excitedly into the home to wish Laurice a happy birthday. Laurice said: "I'm always talking about dachshunds, and I couldn't believe how many of them there were!"

Tats a new one!

Helen Allen, a resident at Foxland Grange, just outside Wolverhampton, decided to make her teenage dream come true and get her first tattoo at the age of 77. Local tattoo studio, Someink Different, was happy to make Helen's wish a reality, and offered to help free of charge. With her design chosen, a small butterfly which Helen has always admired, Helen wasted no time jumping in the tattooist's chair.



Commenting on the experience, Helen said: "I don't know why I didn't get it done sooner – or why people say it's painful! Although it's hard to describe the feeling, I wouldn't call it painful. Garth, the tattooist, made me feel so at ease, and I couldn't believe how quickly he created my tattoo. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience."

Ferry impressive

Invicta Court's Maintenance Manager Brian Thornton went above and beyond to recreate the cabin of the ship that 95-year-old Mary Savage sailed around the world on, aged just 23, to marry her future husband.

When Mary shared her story of following her soon-to-be husband around the world when the Navy posted him in Hong Kong, the team knew they had to do something special to bring her memories back to life. Tasked with recreating the cabin of the ship Mary sailed on, the HMT Empire Trooper, Brian first studied the ship's design and old photos Mary had captured, before putting his engineering expertise to the test. Built in sections over the course of several months, the ship's cabin was created using recycled material, including cardboard boxes and wood saved from a fallen down gazebo in Brian's garden.



To officially unveil the recreation, the team at Invicta Court invited Mary's family and friends, which included four generations, alongside her extended family at Invicta Court, to hear her story and share her memories. Commenting on the surprise, Mary said: "I was lost for words when I saw the cabin. It looked so realistic that it was like walking back to the past – I couldn't believe it. I'm so thankful to Brian and for being able to share my memory with my family."

Supporting our people

How we care for our colleagues

We're passionate about helping our team members to gain new skills and develop in their careers, and we want them to have a positive working experience with us.



An improved experience

Over the last year, in recognition of the important job our teams do, we have invested in colleague pay and rewards, as well as

creating more development programmes and tools for supporting career development and wellbeing.

We have also made it a priority to gather and take action on their feedback. Our 2023 survey of over 10,000 colleagues showed that this work has been effective, with more colleagues aware of the benefits and health and wellbeing support available to them, and more being confident that we will take action as a result of their feedback.

Following the launch of our new online platform for training, iLearn, we have tailored training modules and videos to individual roles, enabling us to create an engaging learning pathway for each colleague, as well as supporting day-to-day training. Through these schemes, we will continue to help each colleague build their skills and ensure residents know and trust their care teams.

We continue to recognise colleague successes every day, with GEM (Going the Extra Mile) awards in care homes and our annual Care UK Stars Awards, which celebrate the fantastic work colleagues do and their incredible achievements.

Leah Pozo Queripel, Human Resources Director

Engaging our colleagues

Throughout 2023, we provided more support to colleagues to make Care UK a welcoming and engaging place to work. For new team members, we introduced an induction video session that guides them through their first days and weeks with us. Around 7,000 colleagues have taken part in this training, and their feedback has been overwhelmingly



positive. We have also trained 900 of our colleagues to be Care UK Buddies, helping new joiners to learn the ropes and feel part of the team from day one, while also ensuring residents receive a consistent care experience.

We were delighted to have this work recognised externally in the UK Employee Experience Awards, where we won bronze for Best Employee Engagement, and the Engage Awards, where we were shortlisted for Great Place to Work and Best Use of Innovation in Employee Engagement.

Positive steps

At Care UK, we take colleague mental health seriously. We have achieved our commitment to train a minimum of one Mental Health First Aider in each care home, as well as training colleagues in our support centre and in regional roles. Mental Health First Aiders support both colleagues and residents who are experiencing a mental health challenge to get the help they need.

We believe it's important to listen to our colleagues' feedback, and 2023 saw Care UK receive very positive input from our Home Manager and Colleague

Voice sessions, which provide a forum for sharing ideas, feedback and solutions across our teams.

These sessions are always a highlight in our year, and our senior leadership and executive teams value the opportunity to hear feedback directly from colleagues working day-to-day in our homes.

Training opportunities

Our new training modules for 2023 included specific resources to support those colleagues who are new to the care sector. Our apprenticeship schemes have

also continued to boost team members' skills, with nearly 600 current apprentices, making us one of the biggest providers of apprenticeships in the sector.

We support colleagues with their ambitions and have built pathways that encourage development of our teams. Over the last year, seven home managers were promoted after taking part in our Future Home Manager programme. Overall, 34% of home manager vacancies have been filled through promotions within our teams. Feedback from our newly-launched Future Regional Director programme has also been positive.

Celebrating our Stars

The Care UK Stars Awards 2023 received more than 4,000 nominations for colleagues and teams, and we were incredibly impressed by the calibre of the submissions. We'd like to congratulate all the finalists and winners of this year's awards, including:

- Home of the Year: Whitebourne
- Most Improved Home: Llys Cyncoed
- Region of the Year: North Central
- Most Improved Region: South Midlands
- Outstanding Local Reputation: Dashwood Manor



On the podium

A triumphant year for Care UK and its colleagues

We've had another outstanding year on the podium, picking up no less than 30 awards and accolades. We're immensely proud that so many of our team members, from across the organisation, have received the recognition they deserve for their hard work and dedication.



Health Investor Awards

The Health Investor Awards have been running for nearly 20 years, celebrating the very best in health and social care. For the second year in a row, we were delighted to be awarded the prestigious **Residential Care Provider of the Year Award**, in large part due to our consistently-high quality ratings, plus excellent customer and employee satisfaction scores.

Care Home Awards

With an astounding eight awards, we were thrilled to be the most recognised company at this year's Care Home Awards. In addition to receiving the overall award for **Outstanding Care Provider in a Group** for Asterbury Place in Ipswich, we also took home the following accolades:



Winner: Perry Manor, Best for Specialist Care.

Winner: The Potteries, Best Continuing Covid-19 Response.

Winner: Sway Place, Best for Wellbeing.

Winner: Care UK, Best Care Home Marketing, Advertising or PR Activities

Highly Commended: Weald Heights, Best for Nursing Care.

Highly Commended: Metchley Manor, Best for Wellbeing.

Highly Commended: Franklin House, Best Facilities Management, Maintenance or Housekeeping Team.



National Dementia Care Awards

These awards celebrate outstanding contributions to specialist dementia care, rewarding team members who demonstrate advanced knowledge of the condition. Tracy Norbury, Home Manager at Hollins Park in Macclesfield, was awarded **Best Dementia Care Manager** for her dedication to residents and the care home community. Tracy regularly picks up night shifts where, as a registered nurse, she enjoys the opportunity to connect with residents. Under Tracy's leadership, Hollins Park has been rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission.



Caring UK Awards

The dedication of Care UK colleagues was recognised at the 2023 Caring UK Awards and, as a result, we were named the **Care Group of the Year**. It follows a successful year for our homes, where colleagues remain dedicated to ensuring that residents are able to live fulfilling lives on a daily basis. This is highlighted through our 'Wishing Tree' initiative and our support of local communities.



Nursing Times Awards

Our innovative Hear Well project won top spot in the **Nursing in Social Care** category at the Nursing Times Awards. This nurse-led project was headed up by Natalia Stan, Deputy Manager at Milner House in Leatherhead, and Suzanne Mumford, Care UK's Head of Nursing, Care and Dementia. The aim was to identify whether specialist training for nurses could help alleviate challenges faced by residents with hearing problems. Read more about this project on page 16.



Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards

Over 85% of the social care workforce is female, and the WAGS Awards aim to promote and celebrate the incredible achievements of the female workforce.

We're extremely proud of Bozena Szczepaniak, Home Manager at The Burroughs, West Drayton, for achieving Highly Commended in the **Wellbeing at Work Award** for her inspirational leadership with an emphasis on mental health and wellbeing.



The Public Sector Catering Awards and Care Home Catering Awards

Our catering and kitchen staff have been cooking up a storm this year, winning three awards across two events.

At the Public Sector Catering Awards, our Dining with dignity initiative, developed to ensure residents with special dietary requirements are fully catered for in a sensitive and respectful manner, scooped the **Care Catering Award**. Head Chef, Caroline Lloyd, from Prince George House, Ipswich, took away the accolade for **Unsung Hero**. Caroline won this award for putting



residents first over the Christmas period in 2021. Caroline put herself into isolation to ensure residents were safe, and then sacrificed spending Christmas with her family so that she would be able to cook. With the help of her kitchen assistant, they made 120 Christmas dinners for the home's residents.

We were also delighted for the team at Llys Cyncoed, Cardiff, who won the **Care Home Catering Team of the Year Award** at the Care Home Catering Awards. The team was recognised for their efforts in providing an enjoyable and creative dining experience for residents.



Hotel Housekeeping Honours Awards

The housekeeping team at Bourley Grange in Church Crookham was thrilled to take home the **Housekeeping Team of the Year Award** for their unwavering high standards of service and cleanliness. These national awards recognise the companies, individuals and services that showcase exceptional professionalism and customer service; demonstrating innovations and initiatives that make every guest or resident's experience special.



National Activity Provider Association Awards (NAPA)

The NAPA Awards recognise and celebrate excellence in activity provision across the care sector. We were delighted that Shona Bradbury, Home Manager at Appleby House in Epsom, won the **Arts in Care Homes Award**, in testament to the home's dedication to creative therapies. Appleby House has worked with community arts organisation, Creative Minds, for several years and even has its own gallery, Appleby Tate, which showcases residents' art.



Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

Internationally recognised, the RoSPA Health and Safety Awards is the largest occupational health and safety awards programme in the UK. Now in its 67th year, the awards receive nearly 2,000 entries, reach over seven million employees, and cover nearly 50 countries, annually.

We were delighted to take home the **Silver Award** in the Occupational Achievement category, demonstrating our dedication to making sure colleagues are safe at the end of every working day.



UK Employee Experience Awards

These awards recognise the best employers across all areas of business to help raise the bar of global employers' standards. Care UK beat stiff competition to win the **Bronze Award** in the Best Employee Engagement category. We were praised for the efficiency of our internal communications, our improving levels of employee satisfaction, and the amazing charity fundraising efforts our teams across the organisation undertook in celebration of our 40th anniversary.



Regional Awards

We've also had another successful year for regional awards with colleagues being recognised for their outstanding work at our homes.

Katrina Evans, Deputy Manager at Perry Manor, was presented with the **Care Home Worker Award** in the Worcestershire Health and Social Care Awards. Amongst other things, Katrina was praised for her approach to leadership, where she's created an open, empowering culture amongst colleagues, and her development of new processes within the home.



Essex Care Awards

We were delighted when three of our Essex homes celebrated this year after being recognised among the top providers in the region. Mountfitchet House was named the winning home in the **Diversity and Inclusion Award**. Congratulations also go to: Vilma Duncil, Clinical Lead at Manor Lodge, for taking home the **Outstanding Care Sector Nurse Award**; and Kim Richardson, Senior Customer Relations Manager at Colne View, who won the **Community Partnership and Collaboration Award**.



Suffolk Care Awards

Asterbury Place celebrated winning the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Category** at the Suffolk Care Awards, which acknowledge excellence and innovation within the region's care sector and the local communities that support them. The team at Asterbury Place was recognised for running an LGBTQ+ book club and hosting quarterly LGBTQ+ café sessions.



Dignity in Care Awards in Richmond and Islington

Two of our London-based homes were awarded with Dignity in Care Awards. Highbury New Park was presented the **Heart of the Community Award** for continuously going above and beyond to ensure that residents feel part of the local community through activities and day trips. In Richmond, Ranna Choudhry from Greville House was bestowed the **Carer of the Year for Older Peoples' Care Homes Award** for her hard work providing stimulating activities for residents and going out of her way to share these important moments with relatives and families.



Surrey Care Awards

We recently scored a hat-trick at the Surrey Care Awards. Jagpal Singh, General Manager from our Liberham Lodge home, won **Registered Manager of the Year**; Appleby House took **Care Home of the Year**; and Jubilee House scooped **Nursing Home of the Year**.

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Care UK

Connaught House, 850 The Crescent, Colchester Business Park, Colchester, Essex CO4 9QB

0330 165 1330

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