



A look back at our year  
October 2023 - November 2024

care UK 



# From the CEO



In looking back over the last few years, I can genuinely say it is a real pleasure to reflect on how far we have come as an organisation.

At Care UK, we track our performance across a range of measures spanning quality of care, colleague engagement, relative and resident satisfaction and growth. Over the past few years, we have consistently moved forward on each of these measures and in 2024 we have seen areas such as colleague engagement, regulatory compliance and resident satisfaction hit their highest ever level.

Our regulatory ratings remain key to how we measure the quality of our care and we are delighted that for the fifth consecutive year we have retained the highest quality ratings of the larger providers in the UK. In England, we now have 93% of our homes rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and continue to operate more 'Outstanding'-rated homes than any other provider. Not only do Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulatory inspections assess our care quality, but so do our own internal quality assurance visits, which follow CQC processes and are in many cases undertaken by ex-CQC inspectors. These internal assessments indicate a current measure of 96% CQC framework compliance in England. We are also extremely proud to have 100% compliance with the Care Inspectorates in both Scotland and Wales.

We remain the most awarded care provider in the UK, with almost 30 new accolades recognising individuals, teams and the organisation in a range of areas, such as our approach to recruitment and retention to the dining experience in our homes and our efforts to ensure all residents, including those living with dementia, are treated with dignity and respect. Our recent recognition as winner of the Care Home Group of the Year at the National Care Home Awards is a great achievement for the whole organisation.

Thanks to the feedback and testimonials of both residents and relatives, we were also awarded Top 20 provider status by carehome.co.uk. This recognises care home providers of all sizes that receive positive feedback and we are grateful to all of you who took the time to share your thoughts during the year. These types of testimonials, alongside our more structured relative and resident survey, are incredibly helpful in our continued efforts to improve the care we provide which is why I make a point of reading relative reviews on a weekly basis.

In 2024, we saw some changes to our corporate structure. After almost 14 years of working with our investor, Bridgepoint, we moved to a new company

structure which separates our management company from the ownership of our properties. This enables us to work with a range of large and stable institutional investors and means we are now well positioned to continue delivering the very best care for residents as we push forward our plans for the future.

The Care UK leadership team remains in place within the new structure, and stays committed to delivering the highest quality of care. It has, however, enabled us to be more ambitious with our plans – both in terms of investment in our people, our environments, and meeting future demand. In the last few months of the year, we not only opened three beautiful new care homes, but took on management and leadership of an outstanding portfolio of six homes based in Yorkshire, whilst ensuring continuing focus and investment in our existing homes. We are very excited to welcome these new colleagues and families to Care UK.

As always, the year has not been without its challenges. The change in Government has brought some notable changes, and the recent budget included some unexpected elements such as a steep rise in national insurance contributions for businesses of all sizes. Against a backdrop of continued wage

rises and high food and utility costs, these new announcements have meant we needed to review some of our fee levels, and we are actively working with local authorities to review funding. We are always conscious of the financial implications of any changes to fees for those who pay for their own care and continue to work hard to minimise the impact of increases to our cost base while ensuring we don't compromise our quality of care.

As we head into the new year, it's always a good time to publicly thank the teams working in all Care UK homes for their contribution throughout the course of the year. I am grateful for their ongoing professionalism and commitment, and am exceptionally proud of their efforts to support you and your loved ones and to deliver on our promise of fulfilling lives.

I would also like to thank you for your continued support, and to wish you and your family all the best for 2025.



Andrew Knight, CEO

# Care UK in numbers

Our organisation as of November 2024



**85,000**

The number of activities residents engaged in on the Relish app.



**15,570**

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



**2040**

The year Care UK aims to achieve carbon neutrality.



**656**

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



**164**

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



**97%**

Of our colleagues feel proud of the work they do.

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





93%

The overall satisfaction score given by residents.



93%

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



80%

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



53

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



21

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



17

The number of our homes rated 'Outstanding'.







# Trusted to care

Always striving to enhance care and support for residents

We continue to build on our vision to provide safe and enabling environments in which residents are supported to lead *fulfilling lives*. Our dedicated teams and tailored approach to care puts residents' individual needs and wishes at the heart of everything we do.



## Taking care to another level

We're proud to have more 'Outstanding'-rated homes than any other provider, but we're always looking

to improve and deliver even more. In 2024, we demonstrated our unwavering commitment to provide the very best care and support for residents across the UK by continuing to achieve market-leading regulatory ratings.

We maintained and improved ratings for our homes under a new Single Assessment Framework of inspections introduced by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Seventeen homes in England are rated 'Outstanding', meaning they continue to achieve the highest level of excellence – going above and beyond set requirements expected for care homes.

In Wales, standards remain high across all four areas of inspection: care and support, how we support wellbeing, the environment we provide for residents, and leadership and management, with



100% compliance in one home. In Scotland, Care UK continues to be the top-rated private care provider, with all our homes in the country rated Excellent, Very 'Good' or 'Good' by the Care Inspectorate.

We are focused on continuous improvement to ensure that every aspect of residents' lives is always considered, every need met, and every wish possible, accomplished.

**Rachel Harvey, Director of Care, Quality and Regulatory Governance**

## Giving dementia care the gold standard

Every resident, whether they are living with a diagnosis of dementia or not, is supported to live their life in the way they choose.

We now have 12 homes that are Care Fit for VIPs accredited – the gold standard of person-centred dementia care. Our teams work closely with each resident and their loved ones to tailor care and support in an approach that places value on individual needs, empathises with a resident's own perspective of their care, and recognises the need for a stimulating social environment.

All our homes are now working towards this important internal accreditation, which involves a thorough and rigorous process.

Residents and families are integral to creating and reviewing each resident's care plan to identify what really matters to each individual, incorporate it into their daily lives, and ensure it evolves as needs change.

We regularly train our teams and harness the latest research and techniques from dementia care experts. We support families with resources and advice to help



them navigate their loved one's dementia journey and we raise awareness across society about dementia to address misconceptions surrounding the condition.

In 2024, we launched the Big Dementia Conversation to get the nation talking about dementia. Our advice hub featured conversations from real families sharing their experiences, as well as expert tips from dementia specialists on how to approach them.

## Residents' safety is paramount

Keeping residents safe is always the utmost priority, and we report and investigate incidents, and take the necessary action in relation to any incident that might take place in a home.

Our Safety Incident Response Framework (SIRF), introduced across all Care UK homes, supports the

NHS model and ensures our teams are always learning and improving safety for residents.

This year, we've moved our auditing system to an online platform that enables us to quickly collate, analyse and assess essential information that we can use to implement measures that reinforce our health and safety processes.

We are always prepared, so that our homes can run as smoothly as possible whatever the circumstances. For example, we have refined our fire drill procedures and regularly rehearse an array of scenarios to ensure residents' health and safety at all times.

## Excellence in infection prevention control

From flu to Covid, infection prevention is always a top priority. Our professional and highly trained teams remain vigilant and focused on maintaining stringent infection prevention control (IPC) and cleanliness procedures.

As part of our efforts in this area, we have dedicated IPC Champions in our teams and identified colleagues to lead on infection prevention measures, as well as continuing to support vaccination programmes and encouraging everyone to play their vital part in trying to keep our homes infection free.





# 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. Our values of caring, passionate and teamwork underpin everything we do. This vision and these values inspire and guide us as a team and as individuals, informing our approach to every aspect of delivering care. We see our vision and values lived every day in the amazing work our colleagues and teams do.

Four home managers, recognised for their outstanding leadership and the values-based cultures they've nurtured within their homes, share their thoughts on what our vision and values mean to them.



## Fulfilling lives

As the Home Manager at Bishops Manor, I am privileged to lead a team that is dedicated to ensuring every resident enjoys a fulfilling, meaningful, and joyful life. At Bishops Manor, we don't just provide a place to live - we create an environment where each resident is treated with dignity and respect, and we offer a lifestyle that celebrates individuality, independence and connection.

We have nurtured our team to develop an award-winning culture that prioritises the wellbeing of both residents and colleagues. We believe that happy, supported colleagues are the key to delivering exceptional care. That's why we've made it a priority to create a workplace with a family atmosphere.

Residents enjoy a lifestyle filled with engaging activities, social opportunities, and moments of connection and belonging. Whether it's joining in fitness classes, participating in arts and crafts, or simply enjoying time with friends and family, every day offers a chance to thrive.

Our phenomenal team continually strives to make Bishops Manor a place where residents don't just live—they flourish. We are proud of the culture we've built and the trust we've earned from both residents and their families. It's this culture, combined with our unwavering commitment to personalised care, which makes Bishops Manor a truly special place to call home.  
**Thomas Bampfield, Home Manager at Bishops Manor**



## Caring

We always aim to fulfil the lives of residents and the team goes the extra mile to involve them in decision making within the home. Residents with a passion for gardening take the lead in our outdoor space, including its design, layout and planting. We created an allotment at the request of residents who want to grow their own vegetables, and even made an outside area into a putting green! One of my favourite examples is when we had chicks hatch in an incubator and residents watched their progress over ten days, after which we were begged to keep the chickens.

It's important to us that residents continue to do the things they love, so our minibus gets frequent



use for trips to the local shopping mall or art gallery, to walk at Clifton Downs, or to their weekly swimming session.

Every resident's birthday is special, and we like to make a fuss of them and help them to have a fantastic day. The outside of their room will be decorated with balloons and banners, there is a cake created by our chef, and a party where their family, residents and colleagues all sing them a happy birthday.

I am immensely proud of our team at Trymview Hall. Everyone is so caring and treats residents like their own family, ensuring they feel at home and are supported with kindness, compassion and empathy.

**Nicole Anderson, Home Manager at Trymview Hall**



#### **Passionate**

At Elwick Grange we are passionate about the care we deliver and the residents we support. We hold regular resident meetings to

understand what they would enjoy doing most, and we use our Wishing Tree to make special requests

happen whenever possible - whether it's a visit to Hartlepool football ground, a day out in Scarborough visiting the sealife centre, the local pub for a pint or soft drink, or a day at the seaside.

One of my favourite events this year was at one of our resident's special 101st birthday celebrations. Motorbikes hold special memories for her and when our maintenance team heard this, they, with other colleagues, rallied the local motorbike club to attend the home with over 40 bikes to give her a birthday salute to really remember!

We truly are one team, brought together by our passion for delivering the best care and doing the very best job that we can.

**Wendy Winspear, Home Manager at Elwick Grange**



#### **Teamwork**

When people visit Amberley Lodge they always say it feels like a family. I am immensely proud that my team and I have been with Care UK for many

years and that we have all been promoted into our current roles. This has created an incredibly strong

leadership team which leads by example and delivers a real sense of teamwork within the home.

Colleagues always work together to make every day as special as possible for residents and to provide them with meaningful experiences, such as creating our own café, games room and cinema spaces for them to enjoy.

We are continually aiming for improvement in all we do, we want to do more, better, and are proud of our 'Outstanding' CQC rating which we have been awarded for three consecutive inspections in 2018, 2021 and 2024 - and that we use the Gold Standards Framework to deliver exceptional end-of-life care.

Amberley Lodge enjoys a great diversity in backgrounds, driven by different experiences and cultures, but is united by our values and purpose to deliver the best to both residents and colleagues.

I am very lucky to have such a positive and dynamic team who support each other; I couldn't do what I do without them - they are my second family.

**Azalea Moses, Home Manager at Amberley Lodge**





# The highest quality care

## Our approach to award-winning care

At Care UK, we have six pillars in our Approach to Care, ensuring colleagues across every home work towards providing residents with consistent, high-quality, person-centred care.

These pillars provide support and guidance, encourage innovation and, most importantly, help us to fulfil the lives of residents. The six pillars are: health and wellbeing, dining with dignity, living well with dementia, meaningful lifestyles, enabling environments, and communication and connection.

### Health and wellbeing

Care UK is committed to ensuring residents receive the highest quality of care, no matter their needs.

Our homes are 100% compliant with the care regulators in Scotland and Wales and in England 93% of our homes are rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission. We have more 'Outstanding'-rated homes than any other large provider.

Care UK is extremely proud to have five recipients of the Queen's Nurse award, with three of our colleagues achieving the accolade this year. This is one of the most prestigious honours you can receive as a registered nurse, with just 2,500 Queen's Nurses in the UK, and it reflects the innovative, person-centred nursing care that we provide to residents.

Care UK homes are working towards achieving the Gold Standards Framework (GSF) accreditation. This supports excellence, compassion and professionalism in end-of-life care. To date, 18 homes have achieved GSF, with Weald Heights in Sevenoaks, Kent, being named GSF Home of the Year 2024. A further 30 homes are in the process of becoming GSF

accredited, and another 12 will take on the relevant training in 2025.

### Dining with dignity

Our hospitality team continue to ensure residents' dietary requirements and preferences are at the forefront of everything they do. They develop meals which are creative, nutritious and can suit everyone's individual needs. You can read more about their hard work from page 18.



### **Living well with dementia**

Colleagues are continuing to work towards the Care Fit for VIPS accolade, which is the gold standard for dementia care. This rigorous process takes an average of 18 months to complete and is a holistic way of supporting those living with dementia. This year, we had an additional seven homes accredited, bringing our total number of homes up to 13. With homes working towards Care Fit for VIPS, we are reinforcing our commitment to providing the highest standards of person-centred dementia care.

### **Meaningful lifestyles**

Our lifestyle teams continue to make dreams come true with the Wishing Tree initiative (you can read some of our favourite wishes from this year on pages 29-31). Daily activities range from exercise programmes to meaningful day trips and we partner with Namaste International to deliver world-class sensory care.

Regular exercise is a crucial component of success at most Care UK homes. Whether it's regular exercise programmes from fitness experts, or sessions delivered by our care colleagues, they can be tailored to support all levels of movement in the homes.

And of course, who can forget The Big Care UK Sports Day? This year it returned with fierce competition, with residents and colleagues taking on everything from badminton to egg-and-spoon races – one home even took on sumo wrestling!

### **Enabling environments**

This year, we have continued to invest in our homes to ensure that they remain safe, comfortable and accessible for residents and visitors.

Homes, including Cranford Grange and Blossomfield Grange, have undergone refurbishment, with the dining experience being prioritised. Mealtimes are an important time for residents to enjoy each other's company, and creating a social hub often stimulates residents to eat more and maintain a nutritious diet. For example, on the reminiscence floors of these homes, those living with dementia now have a choice of two separate dining rooms, providing them with a peaceful and manageable experience.

At The Potteries, a revamp of its reception also led to an improved bistro area, creating a relaxing, welcoming space that has become the heart of the home.

Residents and relatives at Weald Heights have celebrated the addition of a new front garden. The transformation included a patio, planters and a variety of seating options, so that everyone can enjoy the outdoors together in the warmer months.

Across Care UK, our dementia environment guide has also been reviewed. This ensures that dementia suites – and homes in general – offer increased engagement for residents. More destination points have been added to support wayfinding, and we continue to pride ourselves on enhancing existing environments.

### **Communication and connection**

Families can be more involved with their loved one's day-to-day activities. Many of our homes are now producing a regular newsletter for relatives using the Relish app. Access to the app allows relatives to see pictures of their loved one taking part in the day's activities and updates as to what they've enjoyed that day. The feedback received from families has been overwhelmingly positive in helping residents and their relatives to feel more connected. To learn more about Relish, please speak to your home manager.







# Staying one step ahead

Innovating our ways of working for the benefit of residents, colleagues and our communities

At Care UK, we're committed to keeping up to date with the latest innovations in order to provide the best possible care to residents. This includes new technologies, training and community initiatives. In 2024, our projects included our environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategy, veteran friendly accreditation for our homes, and rolling out a new colleague communication platform.

## Our approach to ESG

As one of the UK's largest care home providers, we recognise the impact our actions have on our local communities and beyond. Our homes have the potential to make an incredibly positive contribution to the local communities in which we operate – whether that be creating jobs and learning opportunities for colleagues, or supporting an ageing population in living well for longer. We also understand this comes with a responsibility to make decisions that speak to the longer-term sustainability of our homes and the wider care sector.

Earlier in the year, we tasked ourselves with gaining a thorough understanding of our carbon footprint. Analysing the data we hold, such as gas and electric usage and clinical and general waste management, gave us an overview of our impact on the environment and allowed us to set out our ambitions moving forward – we are working to meet net zero carbon emissions by 2040. Following a rigorous process, Care UK is now carbon reduction certified, recognising our meticulous measurement efforts and our commitment to managing and reducing our emissions.

Our belief is that every one of us can make a difference so raising colleague awareness of sustainability and

seeking their involvement in our activities was high on our agenda. This year we launched a new development role for colleagues, the Sustainability Champion. The 'environmental conscience' at the heart of our homes, our Sustainability Champions support their leadership teams with initiatives to reduce Care UK's impact on the environment. In 2024, this included taking part in our biodiversity wildlife project to support the conservation of wild animals and plants in our care homes' gardens and at our support centre. It was fantastic to see so many colleagues so enthusiastic about this project, resulting in some beautiful and creative wildlife gardens.

As part of our early efforts in working towards our net zero goal, we are currently installing LED lighting across our whole estate, and have reviewed and renegotiated some of our procurement contracts in favour of more sustainable practice.

## The Seacole Academy

One year on, we're thrilled to celebrate the success of The Seacole Academy of Care and Clinical Excellence. This year, we proudly saw our first graduate complete the programme, with many more nearing graduation. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and



we're seeing increased engagement across Care UK's range of clinical training offerings.

Launched to support the career development of our nurses and clinical colleagues, the Academy has also provided a comprehensive suite of resources tailored for our colleagues from overseas. These include a specialised induction programme, workshops on nursing in the UK, and essential insights into Care UK's culture and operational practices.

We're introducing targeted courses in areas like diabetes management for team leaders, ensuring our teams are well prepared to meet residents' specific needs and maintain the highest standards of care.

### New technologies

Following a successful pilot, this year saw us complete the rollout of our new social media style rostering and communication app for colleagues, introduced based on their feedback. With widespread adoption across the organisation, Loop has enabled two-way communication and allowed us to reach colleagues working in our homes directly. Loop also provides a 'self-serve' approach to employment aspects such as annual leave and rostering, to appeal to those

with busy lifestyles. Feedback from our teams has been incredibly positive, with managers now having a platform to publicly recognise colleagues' achievements and share important messages and best practice in an easily accessible way.

Since implementing Loop, we've seen increased engagement in initiatives such as nominations for our in-house awards, and in our annual Over to You! survey, we saw an increase in colleagues stating that communication from Care UK makes them feel part of the wider organisation.

### Improving our service

In 2024, we piloted new technology to support us in providing the best possible care to residents, with specific focus on preventing falls. Along with introducing enhanced falls prevention e-learning, we piloted acoustic monitoring technology. Data tells us that a lot of falls happen during the night, so currently, our colleagues complete regular welfare checks. This new technology gets used to a person's habits such as breathing, turning over and moving around, and sends out notifications for any out of the ordinary movements, meaning our carers are less likely to disturb residents while sleeping, without good reason.



This year has also seen many of our homes undertake training to become veteran-friendly accredited. To achieve the Veteran Friendly status, homes are required to meet eight standards. These include: noting Armed Forces status within care plans; addressing social isolation; and signposting to support services, such as their local Royal British Legion branch, and other charities that provide support for veterans or partners of veterans.

# Focus on food

## A resident-centred dining experience

We understand how much residents value mealtimes, and we work to ensure it is a highlight of their day, every single day. The mealtime experience is person-centred, with menus that are resident-led and tailored to their needs and wishes. We're incredibly proud of the service we provide, and the talent we have in our kitchens, which continues to be recognised.



### Reason to celebrate

This year has been phenomenal for our catering teams, whose passion has continued to be celebrated. For the second year, we triumphed at the Public Sector Catering Awards with the prestigious Care Catering Award. To win last year was fantastic but two years in a row is unprecedented and testament to the unwavering dedication and skill of our teams.

This award was the first of many. Britten Court won Care Home Catering Team of the Year at the Care Home Catering Awards and Bourley Grange was crowned Care Establishment of the Year at the

National Association of Care Catering Awards (NACC). We are incredibly proud that some of our colleagues have also been individually recognised with awards, all very well deserved.

To ensure our catering teams can deliver on our dining with dignity standards, this year we made a significant investment in crockery, kitchenware and linen, to support our dining promise.

### Keeping standards high

In 2024, we've focused on supporting homes to deliver a consistent level of service with the creation of our brand standard guidelines. Based on your feedback through our resident and relative surveys, we've identified the areas that matter most to you and your loved ones and looked at ways we can ensure delivery of the standards you expect. This includes in our homes' café and refreshment areas, embedding a culture of noticing and acting to ensure consistent, positive experiences.

A new system has also transformed how we audit our homes, and the mealtime experience for residents. With the introduction of Go Audits, we can provide immediate feedback and follow up with





any support that may be required such as additional training. Our support centre compares key themes from audits with survey data to identify areas for further improvement.

### Showcasing our culinary talent

To highlight the calibre of our chefs and showcase their extraordinary talents, we host an annual Chef of the Year competition. This year saw some changes to the format, resulting in a record 50 entries, and some extremely close cook-offs. Rather than a mystery box on the day, the final five were given the list of ingredients in advance which allowed them



to incorporate local produce and showcase their creativity. We were delighted to welcome guest judge and Cuttlebrook Hall resident Dina to our final cook-off. Having owned a bakery with her late husband, her expertise helped to decide our Chef of the Year for 2024. Congratulations to this year's winner – Adrien Henard of Chandler Court.

### Training opportunities

It has been another successful year for our Chef Academy. We currently have 24 colleagues on board, who are passionate and committed to becoming the best chef they can be. This year we enhanced

the Chef Academy with the addition of a Level 3 qualification, so that colleagues can further advance their catering careers. This course will provide the skills and knowledge needed to progress our second chefs to head chefs, by attending masterclasses across the country, and being able to network and share ideas.

A whole-home approach is required to keep quality high, which is why we've extended the International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) training to more colleagues. Understanding what good looks like and exercising best practice doesn't only sit with our catering teams; having more colleagues aware of what is required for residents on a texture modified diet will help to drive the high standards we strive for in all our homes.

With some residents unable to make it to the dining room, it's important to us that those dining in their rooms can experience the same high standards of service. We have so far trained over 100 of our homes on our 'in-room dining' standards, covering what good looks like for food choice, service and mealtime assistance. With this framework in place, we can support residents to dine with dignity.







# Highlights from 2024

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

The quality of care that residents receive is our top priority. We know that this is always the most important part of the job, and we're very proud of how our teams continue to deliver against the very high standards of care quality – not just those of regulators, but within our own thorough internal assessments, and by actively listening to the feedback from residents and their families.

We offer opportunities to let us know what's going well, or not, through surveys, resident and relative meetings and other communication channels, so that we can take action to improve the care we deliver.



We are very proud of how our teams in England have adapted to the new Single Assessment Framework from the Care Quality Commission. Of the inspections we've had so far

under this new framework, we've received an impressive mixture of 'Outstanding' and 'Good' ratings. At the time of writing this, Care UK is the highest rated private care provider in Scotland and, recently, one of our Welsh homes received some of the highest set of scores ever provided from the Care Inspectorate Wales. This is a testament to our teams and their unwavering dedication to the high-quality care your loved one receives.

In addition to regulator approval, we are continuing to improve our standards all the time. We now have 18 homes accredited to the Gold Standards Framework of end-of-life care and 13 homes internally recognised for the Care Fit for VIPs scheme, which supports residents living with dementia.

We are focused on recruiting and retaining permanent, well-trained colleagues who deliver high standards across all areas of the home, from the dining experience,

a personalised approach to care and lifestyle needs, to creating a warm and welcoming environment that feels like home. We have established and consistent ways of working to ensure there are safe processes ranging from clinical governance, HR support and health and safety – with specialist teams in our support centre providing homes' leadership teams with the right tools to do their job and deliver the highest quality of care. We offer continued development to our teams with new training opportunities in dementia and nursing skills, as well as our existing Future Home Manager programme. The feedback we've had at our annual Colleague Voices forum and from our internal Over to You! survey show that colleagues feel more valued than ever and that they are more likely to stay with us to develop their career in care.





We have also been able to invest in elevating the look and feel of our homes to ensure the experience of living in, and visiting, a Care UK home is continually improving. We have recently installed new signage and, to ensure residents' experiences are elevated, invested in new bed linen and crockery to name just a few of the enhancements.

I'm pleased to say that, for some homes, this has also included a revamp of their outdoor space for our Wildlife Garden project. This was the first significant project for our Sustainability Champions, and has seen

residents, relatives and colleagues getting outside to plant wildflower seeds, install bug hotels, and fill up their bird boxes. We have had some wonderful results so far, and this is one of the many steps we are taking to become a more sustainable organisation.

We have also welcomed new teams and families with the opening of Oat Hill Mews in Market Harborough and Ladden View in Yate this year. We're continuing to expand, with new homes opening in Angmering and Wantage, and we feel very privileged to be able to serve new communities.









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# Highlights from our homes

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

During 2024, 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.

## Festive fun

In the run-up to Christmas 2023, it was brilliant to see several homes making their mark on the festive season. None more so than the team at Heather View in Crowborough, West Sussex, who went all out in recording a Christmas song, filming a music video, and aiming for the top spot in the charts! Unfortunately, Natasha and the team didn't quite reach the heady heights of number one, but we know that everyone had a huge amount of fun taking part.

## Music and memory

We know that music is a particularly helpful gift for residents, but especially for those living with

dementia. That's why Shona and the team at Appleby House in Epsom decided to make resident Sylvie's wish come true and help her recreate her favourite song: Elvis Presley's 'All Shook Up'. An in-home recording studio was built for the day, and residents and the team threw their all into a special music video, which was shown to colleagues at our internal Stars awards (there was not a dry eye in the room)!

## Leading the conversation

In January, our homes took part in The Big Dementia Conversation. We would like to express thanks to the families and loved ones of residents, past and present, who shared their time, expertise and



experiences with us. The campaign was seen by over one million people and challenged the subjects that are still considered 'taboo' in dementia care – using interviews with relatives and tips from Suzanne Mumford, our Head of Dementia, Care and Nursing, we were able to start a national conversation about this very important topic.

### Getting sporty

This summer, things got sporty with the Big Care UK Sports Day. As has become tradition, homes invited family members and members of the local community to take part in everything from egg-and-spoon races to badminton, with some homes having the chance to come together for a day of friendly sporting competition.

### Recipes to remember

This year also saw residents come together to reminisce about childhood favourites, or dishes that held particular sentimental meaning, and we were able to produce our first resident-led cookbook. Recipes range from Burmese khow suey to traditional rock cakes and are available to download on our website, just search 'Care UK Recipes to Remember cookbook'.













# Fulfilling lives, wishes and heroes

Our Wishing Tree initiative is available for all residents. From childhood wishes, to revisiting old hobbies, or taking on something completely new – nothing is ever too much for our teams.



## Flying high

Arthur, who lives at Ivy Grove, was an RAF pilot during World War II and wished to fly again. To mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day this summer, the care home team worked with Classic Wings at Duxford, enabling Arthur to fly over London in a 1930s Dragon Rapide plane.

## Move over, Roman Kemp!

Former radio DJ, 102-year-old Margaret, found herself on the news agenda after her wish was granted. In celebration of World Radio Day, the team at Pear Tree Court arranged for Margaret, who presented well



into her 90s, to return to her former studios at Angel Radio. This visit coincidentally took place around the same time Roman Kemp announced his departure from Capital FM's Breakfast Show – with Margaret declaring she wanted to come out of retirement and “give Roman a run for his money”, which made headlines around the UK (and even garnered a few shout-outs from the DJ himself)!

## Paying tribute to the top dog

Dorothy, a resident at The Burroughs, decided to make her teenage dream come true and get her first



tattoo at the age of 89. Local tattoo studio, Jodie's Tattoos in Slough, were happy to make Dorothy's wish a reality and offered to help free of charge. Dorothy wasted no time jumping in the tattooist's chair and can now proudly show off her Snoopy tattoo to everyone she meets.

### Back on the slopes

Clare Bell, 68, has always been a keen skier, but had to stop after being diagnosed with MS. After she made a wish to go back on the slope, the team at Mountfichet



House worked with Snozone, in Milton Keynes. Thanks to a seated ski device, Clare was able to go down the slope again and experienced the slalom too.

### Fitting the bill

Alan was a police officer for 33 years. When he made his wish to get back behind the wheel of a police car, the Oakfield Croft team reached out to the Trafford District Force. Together, they surprised Alan with not one, but three vintage police vehicles – a 1964 Hillman Imp, a 1969 Morris Minor, and a 1981 Range



Rover – some of which Alan had driven over the course of his career. Alan's time with the cars and officers made him feel like he was still one of the boys in blue.

### Up, up and away!

There was one thing on Charmain's list for her 95th birthday – to go up in a hot air balloon. The Sway Place team got busy organising a gift to remember and took Charmain on a memorable flight above Hampshire. This experience fulfilled a childhood dream and was a magical way to celebrate a very special birthday.





### Rugby reunion

Bryn, a former rugby coach and resident at Elizabeth Lodge, was surprised when the team he first coached back in 1964 joined him to help celebrate his 94th birthday. Bryn was delighted to find his team singing happy birthday and carrying a birthday cake into the home's dining area, alongside his friends and family – all arranged as a surprise by the care home team. Bryn, who taught at Chase Boys Secondary School, was shocked to discover the school had no rugby team when he first started

working there in 1964. He soon set one up and created a lasting legacy both on and off the pitch.

### Back to B&Q

June worked at B&Q, in Macclesfield, for more than ten years. After clocking in for her last shift in 1992, she never thought she'd be back behind the till ever again – until the Hollins Park team stepped in. Working with June's daughter and the store, they took June on a trip down memory lane for one last shift. On arrival, June was given a B&Q apron, like she used

to wear, and a name tag. After a quick introduction to the new till system and touch screens, June quickly got the hang of it and rang through several items for customers. She also shared some guidance with newer members of the B&Q team, advising them that the key to be successful in their role was to be 'polite and patient'.

# Supporting our people

## Investing in our colleagues and supporting them to thrive

Our homes wouldn't be what they are without our people, so it is important they feel valued, are recognised for their outstanding achievements, and are supported to grow long-lasting and fulfilling careers.



We know residents value the relationships they build with colleagues, which is why reducing turnover remains a key focus and has resulted in significant investment into our teams. This year we've launched new colleague benefits, improved wellbeing support, enhanced our training and development opportunities, and listened to colleague feedback to make positive improvements to our ways of working.

We're committed to ensuring Care UK remains a great place to work – if colleagues are happy then we know this will have a positive impact on our homes and the high quality of care provided.

Inspiring our future workforce has also been a priority, with our 'early careers' initiatives showcasing careers in care to the younger generation and highlighting the wide variety of roles available. From school taster sessions to work experience placements, the project has provided development opportunities for our existing workforce who are mentors to the young people.

**Leah Pozo Queripel, Human Resources Director**

### Investing in our colleagues

We want colleagues to thrive and believe everyone should have access to the support they need to maintain good mental health and wellbeing.

To support colleagues with their mental health, we now have more than 250 trained Mental Health First Aiders across Care UK. Colleagues also have access to Wisdom, a newly launched app provided by our employee assistance programme, which offers an array of wellbeing tools.

To ensure colleagues have all the tools needed to fulfil their roles at no cost to them, this year we started reimbursing eligible colleagues for payment





of their Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Pin, as well as reimbursement for the Scottish Social Services Council fee in Scotland.

With financial wellbeing in mind, we launched a brand-new colleague benefit. In a care sector first, we partnered with Blue Light Card to offer our permanent colleagues a free membership to its discount platform.

Blue Light Card is the leading discount provider for the social care sector, emergency services, NHS, and armed forces – providing members with thousands of amazing discounts online and on the high street.

### Recognition for a job well done

Teamwork is fundamental to our success as an organisation. In this year's colleague survey, a fantastic 93% of our 15,000 colleagues took the time to share their views on working at Care UK, helping us to shape the future of our organisation.

Our annual Colleague Voice forums were back with Champions from across the business invited to share feedback from their homes. There are

always some brilliant ideas that come from these events, with colleagues contributing to open and honest discussions.

It's because of colleague feedback that we've been able to implement many positive changes. This year has seen us focus on improving colleague communication with the rollout of Loop (read more on page 17).

Our homes also took part in the first ever Colleague Appreciation Week in April. Each home put its own spin on the week-long celebrations, with daily treats including pizza, ice cream, sweets, pastries and cupcakes. Lots of homes thought outside the box too with colleagues' cars washed by managers and pamper sessions in the homes' salons.

We constantly review pay rates in the wider market, to ensure that we attract and recruit the right people to our homes, and that we retain our existing colleagues.

### Career growth and development

We're committed to empowering and supporting our colleagues to develop professionally, including

through apprenticeships, leadership programmes, e-learning and champion roles. More recently, we partnered with Warwick Business School, one of the world's leading business schools offering a variety of courses to enable great leaders.

In 2024, we had a record number of colleagues go through our leadership pathways – 66 Future Deputy Managers and 25 Future Home Managers. We're immensely proud that to date, these leadership pathways have led to 74 internal promotions, 23 in the past year.

Our approach to e-learning has focused on modules including care planning, falls prevention and sepsis awareness. Training compliance is high, currently at 96%, supporting our teams to provide the highest quality of care to residents.

How we support new starters, especially those new to care, has been transformed in the last year. We have 808 buddies across the organisation, who are trained to guide new starters through their first few weeks at Care UK. We've also rolled out 'inducting your team' training for managers and created a New to Care training pathway, resulting in improved turnover.

# On the podium

## A triumphant year for Care UK and our colleagues

Looking back at our awards successes this year, what stands out is the recognition of the great work every single Care UK colleague is doing - bringing our belief, that every one of us makes a difference, to life.



Care UK celebrated sector-wide recognition this year as the winner of the Care Home Group of the Year (over 10 settings) at the National Care Home Awards. Alongside this award, one of our home managers - Shona Bradbury of Appleby House - also took home the trophy for Dementia Care Manager of the Year. Her team later received the accolade for South Care Home of the Year at the Caring UK Awards.

At the UK Employee Experience Awards, Care UK won the Best Employee Experience Journey and scooped a silver award for Best Large Company to Work For, as well as our HR Director being recognised for her leadership. At the Stars of Social Care Awards, Care UK was recognised with the Recruitment and Retention award, and at the Greater Essex Careers



Hub Conference, was named Employer Encounter of the Year 2024. The team also landed a Bronze Award for Use of Technology at the In-house Recruitment Awards.

Our dedication to health and safety was recognised at the annual RoSPA conference with a silver award.

At the Public Sector Catering Awards, we were awarded the coveted Care Catering Award, which showcases the commitment of all those who work to create nutritious and innovative meals for residents. This was echoed at the Care Home Catering Awards, where Britten Court won Care Home Catering Team of the Year and head chef Adriano Goncalves De Carvalho, from Newbury Grove, was named Chef of the Year.





The National Association of Care Catering Awards saw wins: Bourley Grange for Care Establishment of the Year and Anna Sudak from Montfort Manor was Our Care Catering Hero. At this year's Dementia Care Awards, she won The Creative Nutrition Award. Meanwhile, at the Wales Care Awards, Llys Herbert's head chef Kyle won the award for Excellence in Catering.

At the Hotel Housekeeping Honours, the team at Britten Court won Care Home Team of the Year.

The Care Home Awards saw Murrayside take home the award for Best for Nursing Care and Halecroft Grange won Outstanding Care Provider in a Group. Our Bedtime Stories campaign was highly commended in the Best PR, Advertising or Marketing category.



Colleagues were also celebrated at regional awards. At the Berkshire Care Awards, Adriano from Newbury Grove picked up his second Chef of the Year title. His colleague, Sandra Vilica, was Activity Coordinator of the Year and home manager of Winchcombe Place, Shirley Summerbell, won the Leadership award. Care assistant Jan Delos Santos was Care Home Front Line winner at the Care & Support West Care Awards. At Richmond-upon-Thames' Dignity in Care Awards, Jackie Maskell from Whitefarm Lodge was the proud recipient of the Carer of the Year for Older People's Care Homes. Murrayside was recognised as the Best Workplace at the Forth Awards and at the Suffolk Care Awards, Cedrus House won the award for their compassionate approach to End of Life Care.



At the Leaders in Care Awards, Toby Sturges from Lonsdale Mews was recognised as Registered Manager of the Year. Vicki Lambourne, senior customer relations manager for Winchcombe Place, was awarded the Agent for Social Change at this year's Women Achieving Greatness in Social Care Awards.

Head of Nursing Care and Dementia, Suzanne Mumford QN, received the prestigious William Rathbone X Annual Award for Excellence in the Executive Nurse Leadership of Community Nursing Services.

It is a privilege to be able to support and develop colleagues in their specialist fields and the awards we have received this year recognise the expertise and ongoing dedication of the Care UK family.

## Contact us

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Trusted to care