



Friends of 1st Homecare

WINTER 2022/2023

News and views from 1st Homecare for staff, clients and their families

OUR CLIENTS' WORDS

"1st Homecare Solutions, in Leighton Buzzard, are wonderful in helping my mum to stay in her home, as long as possible. The carers are kind, practical and the assessment prior to starting, was thorough and well planned. They listened to our requirements as my mum has Parkinson's and Dementia and needs to be assisted getting out of bed, toileted and washed/dressed. I can truly recommend the great staff here. They are a caring and compassionate team and very reliable."

"I contacted 1st Homecare (Oxford) after my father had a fall. I live quite a distance away and wanted someone to pop in a few times a week to check on him. My father says that all of the carers that visit him are pleasant and friendly. Sometimes they help him with housework, but they also make him a cup of tea and take him for walks in his wheelchair. I feel reassured to know that someone regularly checks that my father is ok and would contact me if there was a problem. It is also good that when I visit, the house is clean and tidy. It means that I can enjoy visiting my father, rather than rushing around catching up with chores. We are very pleased with the service."

"In the short time that I was able to use your services, I found the experience extremely helpful and efficient. The staff were understanding of my needs, compassionate and always friendly and helpful. I would not hesitate to recommend 1st Homecare."



FROM THE DIRECTORS...

Unbelievably, it is only a few days until Christmas. By striking contrast to this time last year, the pandemic now seems to have been brought under control, and we hope very much that you and your loved ones can be together this Christmas time.

We wish you and your families a happy and peaceful Christmas and a very happy New Year.

10 year Anniversary!

We bought 1st Homecare Solutions 10 years ago when the company was only two years old. At the time, the rotas were prepared on a spreadsheet, all care and employee records were in a paper form, payslips were paper records and rotas were printed off and delivered by hand to those carers who hadn't been able to get to the office to pick them up.



Since that time, we have introduced a digital rota management system with visit details sent to carers on their company owned phones, all care records are kept digitally and sent to the office after every care visit and these records can now be seen by clients and their family using the Next of Kin app on their phones, and all employee records are kept digitally too. That's quite a lot of change – all designed to provide better record keeping and a more immediate awareness of any incidents or problems, more time spent caring, less time writing notes, and allowing for better communication between carers, office staff, and clients and their families.

We now have four parts to the business – three offices and a Live-in Service that started a year ago, which allows us to help those clients who don't feel ready for residential care with a stay-at-home option. CONTINUED ON PG 2



10 year Anniversary!

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During the past 10 years, we have had to deal with numerous inspections from the CQC, tenders with 4 different Local Authorities and a pandemic. We've had snow, punctures, missed alarm calls, aggressive dogs, aggressive clients, and have faced a multitude of other things – a client who chucked our prepared lunch out of the window, a client who threw their TV out of the window (the client had dementia), a centenarian client (with dementia) who tried to hit our carer with a walking stick while he was on a walk, and a carer who couldn't attend work because she had been locked up in jail for the night! (She didn't work for us again). I sometimes think we could make a TV series out of the various incidents we have come across!

More seriously, the above experiences have shown that we can handle pretty much every eventuality with common sense and professionalism, ensuring that all incidents are dealt with fairly and consistently, thanks to our well-developed teams of management at all the branches.

We look forward to what the coming years will bring!

Homecare Association – appointment of our CEO as Treasurer



We are delighted that at the end of October, our CEO, John Rennison, who was already a board director of the Homecare Association, was appointed as its Treasurer. The Homecare Association is the trade body that represents Homecare Providers across the UK. It lobbies the Government to make changes on matters which affect care, and also provides training, guidance and others resources, criminal record checks, and other services to its members. During the pandemic it fought hard for free PPE for care providers and was also instrumental in making the Government drop its plan for all care workers to have Covid vaccinations as a matter of law (which would have caused up to 10% of all care workers to leave their jobs).

John intends to add value to the role of Treasurer by using his 10 years' experience as a care provider and his previous 30 years' experience as a Finance Director/ Controller in a number of previous roles.

WE ARE CELEBRATING!

Care staff with long service

We have several carers across our branches with impressive length of service – just in the past month we have celebrated with a carer at Kings Langley with an incredible 25 years' service, and a carer at Oxford with more than 10 years' service.

As part of our Values, we have a commitment to Quality of care, and as part of this we aim to recruit, train and retain the best carers. We are delighted that we have retained these excellent carers for such a length of time!



Asha Ali – more than 10 years' service!

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Live in care – the first year



From Michelle Thomas, Live-In Manager

Our Live-In care branch has now been up and running for a year. Our first client joined us at the end of November 2021 and we are happy to say, is still going strong. During this time, we gained some more clients and sadly lost a few as well. We have enjoyed having clients on a respite service and have met some amazing people along the way.

Some of our clients, thanks to having a live-in carer, have become more confident and independent and just do not need live-in care anymore at present. We took on a client who had fallen and broken his hip. Initially he only wanted someone for a two-week period, but he then saw how much progress he had made within those two weeks, and he asked for an extension and eventually had a live-in carer for 6 weeks. He re-gained his strength and whereas prior to his fall he was using a wheelchair most of the time, after having a live-in carer he started walking with much more confidence.

Another client, who we cared for just for a week, went out walking with the carer, slowly gaining her strength again, and confirmed this was the first time she had been outside walking since before Covid!

As a service, we have been quick to react to enquiries for end-of-life care and managed to support three clients to stay in their own homes, surrounded by family and friends, until the end. This was their wish and we have been privileged to be able to help.

We have had such great support from families of clients who cannot thank us enough for finding the right carer at the right time. As a small team we have worked extremely hard to ensure that everyone is happy with the care they receive, and we have gone over and above to help where we can, such as looking after a client while her daughter was on holiday and taking charge of everything to give the daughter peace of mind.

We are still looking for more clients, we have some lovely carers who have joined us who are experienced in Live-in care and love working with clients on a long-term basis.

Care staff return to work for us

We are very happy that a former carer, Julia, has returned to work for the Kings Langley branch after a gap of over 10 years. We asked Julia to let us know why she returned to the Kings Langley branch when she came back into care, and she told us:

"I worked for the Ainsworth agency (now 1st Homecare) from 2009-2011. I left mainly due to the fact that I had a very young son and wanted to be around more for him and my other children. Due to recent circumstance in my life, I decided to go back to agency work and immediately thought of Ainsworth (1st Homecare). When I worked for them previously, I was supported so well by Lesley, Sharon, Helen and the team and I always felt they were there, so I never felt as though any problems I might have were just mine. I was delighted to find out when I came into the office for a chat, that they are all still here! A real bonus as it immediately made me feel comfortable going back into agency work after such a long time."

It's great that our former carers are returning – as well as Julia, we have had former carers at our other branches return to work with us in past months. Carers leave for various reasons but we are delighted that they still find that a number of years on we remain an organisation they want to work for.

