



Friends of 1st Homecare

SUMMER 2021

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

In this issue...

- The future of Care from our CEO, John Rennison
- New branch in Buckingham
- News from Oxford
- News from Kings Langley
- News from Leighton Buzzard

LAST YEAR IN NUMBERS

Visits made: **122,000**

Masks worn: **100,000**

Clients served: **250**

Carers employed: **150**

Sleepless nights: **Too many!**

Days not worked because staff had to isolate: **120**

Missed calls: **0**

A few thoughts



From John Rennison, CEO

I hope you enjoy reading our first quarterly newsletter with a few comments and pieces of news in respect of our different offices. Firstly, I am immensely proud of all our staff who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic and who have served those whose needs have been greater than their own. Thank you to every one of them.

As we enter the next phase of the pandemic I see a few trends emerging:

- I sense that the Government is choosing to take advantage of Britain as an island nation by going down the Australia/New Zealand route of relaxing lockdowns while being very strict about travel requirements in and out of the country. Personally I would prefer this option to a series of lockdowns with less strict travel conditions.
- Recruitment will be very challenging for those in the hospitality sector mainly because there will always be the insecurity of employment if and when another lockdown looms. Fortunately I don't yet see that recruitment in the care sector will be affected in the same way.
- For those needing care I believe there will be a hesitancy to move into care homes and, to a lesser extent, to move into retirement homes, extra care schemes and other forms of institutional care. Instead, there will therefore be more demand for domiciliary care and for Live-in care.

Continued on Page 2



We've won for the second year!

Congratulations to the whole team. It really is a wonderful achievement!



A few thoughts

Continued from Page 1

- The Government appears to have stalled the overhaul of the social care funding problem where there is an urgent need to properly fund social care at a time when people are living longer and with many of them living with a multitude of long term conditions. The basic issue is that they haven't worked out how to plug the funding gap although an extra NI charge for those over a certain age seems to be a possible option. Until this matter is resolved Local Authorities are doing everything they can to find ways of reducing costs – with the result that many providers cannot afford to pay carers a decent wage or afford good training courses for their carers. Both these factors are likely to result in poorer care for those in need. Our policy is to have a healthy mix of local authority and privately funded care so that we can afford to recruit good people and give them great training.
- The vaccination programme is going well and I believe this is the best way to ensure we reach whatever the new normal will be. Personally I believe we should strongly encourage people to take the vaccine but that to force people to have it would be the wrong approach.

Over the last few weeks I have seen a few people – young and old – who have been at home alone for months on end. Some are very pale and others are very nervous about coming out and mixing with the rest of the population. On the other hand there is a group of other people, such as ourselves in the care sector, who have worked almost as normal throughout the pandemic. We all need to be very mindful of the very different viewpoints, levels of confidence etc and treat all those we come across with understanding and empathy as the two groups interact as lockdown eases. In the end all will be well and we will all find a way to look after each other.

As Captain Sir Tom said 'tomorrow will be a better day'.

Take good care, John

Hitting a century!

One of our clients, Trudi, reached 100 a few months ago. She lives in one of the Extra Care Housing schemes in Oxfordshire where we manage the care for any residents who need our help.

Extra Care Housing is a popular way of living whereby residents continue to live independent lives with their own front doors but can choose to share meals and other social events with other residents in the communal areas of the development. Often Care providers are on site at these developments to attend to any unscheduled care needs.



Trudi celebrating her birthday

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Supporting you with first class care





Expanding into Buckingham



As 1st Homecare grows, we are always looking at expanding the business and thinking about which area we can move into next. After careful consideration, we have decided to cover Buckingham and surrounding areas. We have chosen this area because Buckingham didn't have any providers based within the town with carers being provided from care providers based Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, Bicester and Brackley. Here at 1st Homecare, we aim provide the outstanding level of care that the Buckingham residents deserve, providing a service from the Buckingham area, not sending staff 10 plus miles out of their area to support people. Some of our 1st Homecare staff already live in Buckingham town so we really look forward to working within our own area.

Meet the Brown Family



Michelle and Michael

As many of you know 1st Homecare is owned by husband and wife, John, and Annabella Rennison. For us family does not stop there. I am sure many of you have had the pleasure of meeting Michelle or speaking to her on the phone. Michelle is based in our Oxford office and she has been with us for over 11 years. She is a jack of all trades. Michelle started as care co-ordinator and has worked her way through the many office roles and is now our ECH team lead.

After Michelle joined our team, she referred Kerry her stepsister. Kerry has now been here 7 years. Before joining us, she worked at the Nuffield Hospital as an Admin Assistant. When speaking to Kerry, she told me she cared for her nan after she had an operation, and she knew this was her calling in life. Since joining us, she has not looked back.

Michelle did not stop recommending and referring there! 2 years after Kerry, along came Michelle's mother, Mandi. Mandi works for us as a bank carer in her spare time. Mandi teams up with us alongside her job at Sobel house. This is testimony to Mandi and her wonderful caring character.

Whilst we have maintained the family feel for staffing, we then also gained Michelle's nan as a client. She has been receiving our care and support for over 3 years now.

However it does not stop here; for 2 years now we have had the pleasure of Ruby. Ruby is Michelle's sister-in-law. She was a carer in the community, and then after maternity leave, she went on to be a carer at the Extra Care scheme which she thoroughly enjoys.

Then the final piece of the family puzzle is Michael, Michelle's brother, who joined us as the Extra Care Scheme Chef. Michael cooks 4 days a week here and takes such pride and passion in the meals he serves to the residents. Michael has worked in restaurants and worked his way through all the channels to learn and develop his skill set. He now puts that to fantastic use by cooking fresh, nutritious, and delicious food for the residents at our Extra Care Housing Scheme in Greater Leys.

According to a CIPD survey over half of UK employees want a workplace culture with a 'family feel'. Yet despite this, only just over a quarter describe their current workplace as such. Which is exactly what we have here. Not only do we have several family units who work with in 1st Homecare, but we also have a family feel. A familiar feel. A comfortable feel. We want this culture to radiate through our team, into your homes. We hope you feel like we care for you like you are our family.

I do wonder, is Michael the final piece of the puzzle?



King of the Carers



Lesley Bignold - Branch Manager

1st Homecare Kings Langley is the most recent addition to John and Annabella Rennison's growing 1st Homecare business, becoming part of the organisation in June 2019 when our previous owner retired. Formerly Ainsworth Care, since its start in 1994, the business has built an excellent reputation providing tailor made care at home to elderly people in the Kings and Abbots Langley areas. All the Ainsworth office and care staff remained as the business transferred.

Although we are a relatively small team (23 people including office staff) we have a wealth of experience providing care in the community. I have been with the organisation for 23 years and one or two of our carers were here before I started! Between us, the average length of service is 11.8 years and so, in an industry where the most common retention time of care staff is between 12 and 18 months, I feel that we are doing something very right!

As 1st Homecare took over, I was delighted to see the company's values of compassion, respect and dignity, openness and honesty, collaborative working, commitment to quality of care and caring with a smile. These values apply to both our care of our clients and our interaction with our carers and continue the ethos which has made our carers want to stay with us and be proud to be part of our organisation.

Our clients benefit from experienced, extremely competent and reliable carers who are passionate about the work they do.

We recognise that our staff are our most valuable asset and because they know they are valued (whether they work in the office or in the community) they will continue to have a firm allegiance to the company and its standards and values and continue to give a first class service to our clients.



Let's get more connected

We have now successfully rolled out our digital system in all of our offices, enabling us to be more responsive, updating files within someone's home at the time of changes occurring. Each carer has a handheld device to log in and out of their visits and complete the care notes whilst on their shift. We also have the "Next of kin" app up and running, giving family and friends of our clients access to our clients' care records (with the permission of the client) on their smart phones. The key benefit of this is that it provides peace of mind to family, especially if work commitments or geography prevents daily visits to their loved ones. As part of this (free of charge) service we give you online access to scheduled and actual call visit times, names of carers, notes of visits relating to each task performed and also allow you to send messages to carers or the office with concerns or to simply ask the next carer to pick up some milk.

