



Friends of 1st Homecare

SUMMER 2022

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

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OUR CLIENTS' WORDS

"We cannot fault the care staff. They are kind and sensitive to mum's needs. Always on time and happy. It's our first time that we've had to consider outside care. It is all very daunting but feel we made the right choice with this company."

"As I have a regular carer, I consider myself fortunate that we have such a good working relationship. She looks after me very well and we have some interesting chats. I certainly look forward to seeing her each morning and she really makes my day."

"I have been happy with the work, dedication, friendly attitude and devotion, I have received from the carers. They are a great bunch of people and 1st Homecare are very fortunate to have employed these lovely people."

A few thoughts

ABOUT KEEPING CALM AND CARRYING ON



From John Rennison, CEO

Since my working life started in 1983 I have been through various ups and downs – Big Bang, Financial crises, two gulf wars – but never have we had to contend with so many issues as we have in the last 2 years. In the context of the care world Brexit has affected the supply of European care workers, Covid has affected us massively in terms of rules and regulations and, most recently, has affected staff sickness levels. The war in Ukraine has added extra challenges with increases to food and energy costs which have had a direct effect on carers and their ability to manage their monthly bills.

And yet we are still going – we are a hardy bunch and able to handle pretty much everything that gets thrown at us. At the carer level there has been a similar set of challenges thrown at them every day and I sometimes feel that I could write a book about some of the situations that have arisen – a carer and a client got stuck in a lift and had to be rescued by the Fire Department, clients have gone 'walkabout' from time to time resulting in searches by the local community until found. We even had one carer who called us to say that she couldn't make a shift because she had been locked in jail that day (for something unrelated to care. She didn't work for us again).

Whether at management level or carer level my point is that we have had to become more resilient than we or they thought they were capable of over the last two years and that these qualities will make us into better and stronger individuals. I believe our clients have had to become more resilient too and more tolerant when we have to call them to explain why they would not be seeing their normal carer on a particular day or that the carer was running late.

Many thanks to all our clients and their families for showing such understanding.

Take good care, John



A day in the life of a carer

by Emma Batchelor



Beep beep beep...the 5.30 am alarm goes off, I'm so tired. I get up, do my LFT test and cross my fingers and get ready to start the day, not forgetting to update the visit data for my day on my phone before I leave. I make my coffee and leave for my first visit, hopefully my colleague is on time, I don't want to be late for everyone, yes, she is on time. We let ourselves in and go in to wake up our lady, the smile she gives us is amazing, it's such a privilege to be part of her life. We do everything that is needed from us, and we leave her feeling happy and comfortable. On to the next, the traffic is so bad, I really wish there were less schools in the area. We make

our way round everyone but have run late, I say goodbye to my colleague and go on to my other visit, hopefully the traffic calms down so I can catch up some time, I really need a coffee.

I manage to catch up, I go to the office to have my lunch, collect some more PPE and LFT tests, I'll be glad when Covid is gone forever! My break is over, time to go.

I get to my next visit, oh my this may take a while. I better call the office to let them know I am going to be late; I really don't like being late, maybe they can cover a visit for me, yes, they have, this is going to be ok. I finish up and carry on, the afternoon runs smoothly after this. I meet back up with my colleague and we do the next few together. Before we know it its 3pm, straight to the school I go, I see my child running towards me with a beaming smile, he is so happy to see me, we go home and talk about our days, I start cooking dinner ready for when the hubby gets home, dinner was nice, I clear up and start to get everything ready for the next day, before I know it its 8, the child is in bed and I am ready for a glass of wine... or 2. Time for bed...I'm so tired... set the alarm ready for another day!

THREE TIMES A WINNER



We've recently been named for the third consecutive year as one of the top 20 groups in the UK according to ratings independently provided by the clients who receive care from the company.

John Rennison, CEO, said; *"We are delighted to receive this award for the third year in succession. It is especially gratifying that we have done this during one of our most*

difficult years as we entered our second year of Covid restrictions. Once again our lovely clients across four counties (Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire) found the time to send in their reviews and give us such high scores. Our carers deserve all the praise – they have been as caring as ever during the pandemic and have consistently provided care at the highest level and, just as importantly, escalated any concerns quickly and effectively with family, local authorities and our offices for further action.

The care sector faces many challenges with acute staff shortages caused by Brexit and early retirement of so many people during the pandemic but we remain committed to meet these challenges so that our clients can continue to enjoy a good quality of life while remaining in their own home environments."

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Aid to Ukraine



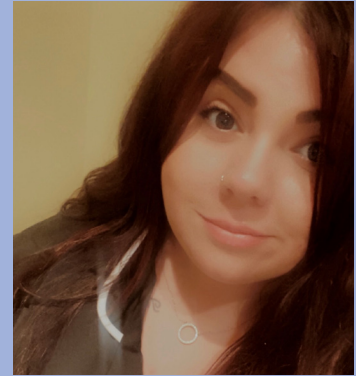
We have recently been approached by a Leighton Buzzard based haulage company called Pierce Recovery & Breakdown who deliver Aid directly to the Ukrainian border with Poland. They take mainly medical equipment to help the injured civilians and soldiers and we were able to load up spare equipment that we had in our offices including walking aids and incontinence pads. Far better to load equipment into the truck than to donate funds in the hope that the funds reach those who need it. Pierce have been able to get free ferry rides on Stena Sealink and have been given use of the German toll roads free of charge on their way through to Poland.

Feel free to give similar such equipment to our carers on their travels and we can arrange for it to be taken to Leighton Buzzard for onward journey. Hannah, who works at Pierce specifically asked for knitted and crocheted socks and gloves for the little babies who may not be able to grow up in their own homes.

We are delighted to have been able to help and hope that anyone reading this article may be able to help too.



Greetings and Congratulations!



Welcome to Paige who has joined the Live-In team.



Congratulations to Michelle Brown for promotion to manager in Oxford after 12 years with the company.



And congratulations also go to Becky for her new role as Oxford Co-ordinator.



How we add quality of life

by Lesley Bignold, Registered Manager, 1st Homecare Kings Langley



We have been looking after Doris since October 2020. Doris had had a full social life but the lack of socialisation during lockdown had a detrimental effect on her wellbeing and much as she insisted she was coping, her family could see she was becoming forgetful and wasn't eating regularly, and they suspected she had begun to neglect herself. Doris is fiercely independent and had resisted previous attempts by her family to arrange care, much to her family's frustration. Doris' daughter described her mum as a highly intelligent lady who worked as both a chemist and a maths teacher whilst bringing up her three children largely alone as her husband was stationed overseas. Doris had recently been diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease and so the family wanted some contact with a local provider to begin building a relationship before she became more frail.

Doris' daughter made the decision that 1st Homecare was the company she wanted to engage to care for her mum. We met with Doris who very begrudgingly agreed to us visiting 'as friends' to placate her family although vehemently insisting she didn't need help. Members of our very experienced Intake Team started to 'pop in' and help with lunches, play cards or accompany Doris to the shops and after some hiccups we were all delighted to see that Doris was looking forward to their visits. We knew that it was essential not to push things too quickly. We identified a small team of carers whose personalities suited Doris, who were confident and could offer her support without appearing to take over. We realised that Doris had an extremely short-term memory and didn't want the world

to know it, so we worked out that if we approached her with a smile and quiet confidence, Doris accepted that she knew us as friends and would let us help her. We pinned up photos of her team of carers in her kitchen, with their name's underneath, to help her recognise and put a name to faces, and they wore name badges in the house to help her remember. Doris needed to feel in control in her own home so our carers helped her with everyday tasks, including cooking and housework as well as shopping and appointments eg to go to the hairdresser.

Our carers have Company mobiles linked to our computerised care system, and keep digital notes. Doris' family have access to her care notes via our Next of Kin App enabling them to see, in real time, information about how she was at any visit and what the carers have done for her. Over time, our care has increased and we are now visiting three times a day, seven days a week. We are managing most aspects of Doris' daily life but in such a way that she still feels that she is fully in control. Her family's support is essential so we keep in contact with them via email, calls, Zoom meetings and of course, our Next of Kin App. In turn, we have supported them to understand and accept Doris' failing memory and abilities. Doris now struggles to recognise even familiar faces which makes her very vulnerable both when she is out or when people knock on her door. She still wants to go out to the village and is a well-known character who shopkeepers all greet by name but because of her extremely poor short-term memory there is the concern that one day she won't find her way home. Carers are very used to her being out when they arrive and so they go looking for her and have perfected the knack of appearing to 'accidentally' bump into her and 'insist' on accompanying her home. The family have broached 'what comes next' with us and we have spent time discussing it with them. Doris is happy in her own home – she feels safe in her familiar surroundings and so because she is still determined to live an independent life our assessment is that live-in care is the most obvious next step for her. I will be handing Doris and her care over to the Live In branch of 1st Homecare, and it will be a privilege for 1st Homecare to continue to manage Doris' future care.