



1st Homecare

# Friends of 1st Homecare

SPRING 2023

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



## A few thoughts

### EXCITING TIMES!



From John Rennison, CEO

Spring seems to have brought a new spring to our step! As you may have read, there has been a nationwide shortage of carers since the pandemic, and we have had challenges too on this front but we appear to have resolved this through a combination of recruiting both

locally and by obtaining a sponsor licence from the Government allowing us to recruit from overseas. We have recruited four carers so far (two from Zimbabwe and two from South Africa) and we have teamed up with a care agency in Zimbabwe who can help source good carers for us.

We continue to develop our digital capabilities and have recently been certified as being responsible users of technology who take sensible steps to ensure that the data we hold online is kept as secure as possible. We are taking further steps to develop our software systems which I hope to announce in the next newsletter.

I am also delighted to announce that we have recruited a manager to open a new branch in Marlow, Buckinghamshire so that we will have 4 offices in four neighbouring counties. All four offices will be able to refer Live-in needs to our Live-in team of Michelle and Courtney who can arrange care in all of these counties when the need arises.

As we emerge from very uncertain times there seems to be a greater sense of stability – people are returning to the shops, going on holiday and prices aren't rising as much as they were this time last year. I find it re-assuring that despite all the uncertainties of the last three years the seasons continue to appear and that Spring has supplied its usual burst of blossoms, daffodils and buds – all emerging through the brisk winds and rain of early Spring.

*Take good care, John*

### IN THE NEWS

Our CEO, John Rennison, Director and Treasurer of Homecare Association, was invited to be part of the recent Future of Care Conference held at the Kings Fund, London on 28th March. The Panel John took part in looked at ideas for innovating to reform the care sector from within and identifying practical solutions to improve it for the future. Other delegates included Liz Kendall, Shadow Minister for Health and Social Care, and Prof Martin Green, OBE, Chief Executive of Care England.

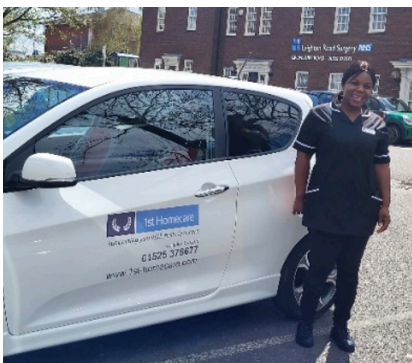


# Overseas recruitment sponsorship



We welcome Lucy, who has come to join us from Zimbabwe on an Overseas Sponsorship Licence.

Lucy came to us in early April and has been acclimatizing to life in Britain since arriving. We are delighted to have been able to offer Lucy this great opportunity to work here in order to help her support her family back home financially.



Zimbabwe is going through all sorts of really serious difficulties and Lucy's family only has mains electricity at home from 10am until 4pm and has no running clean water, instead having to rely on purified water from a well.

Having Lucy over to work here helps both us and our clients but also helps Lucy and her family by giving them access to a regular income stream of a far greater amount than she was able to earn back home in Zimbabwe. Of course, Lucy has had to make many adjustments since arriving and it hasn't been easy for her. She is proving to be an excellent carer and we are receiving good feedback both from our other carers and from our clients who she has visited.

## CASE STUDY

# Magda & Maureen

We have a great carer called Magda who worked in our Bedfordshire branch as a domiciliary carer for 2.5 years but went home to Poland during the pandemic.

Then she decided to return to the UK and we were able to offer her a job as a live-in carer according to the months of the year she wished to be in the UK. Her client is called Maureen (who recently had her goth birthday) and as the live-in carer Magda has helped Maureen with all day-to-day activities and moreover has even helped Maureen to plant vegetables in the garden! You can see from these lovely photos that this has been something they have both enjoyed!



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# DATA SECURITY

## How we ensure that data is kept secure

In an age where the public is hearing more and more in the news about data breaches and being warned to keep alert and look out for scams, we want to let all our readers know that we are doing everything we can to keep our data secure.

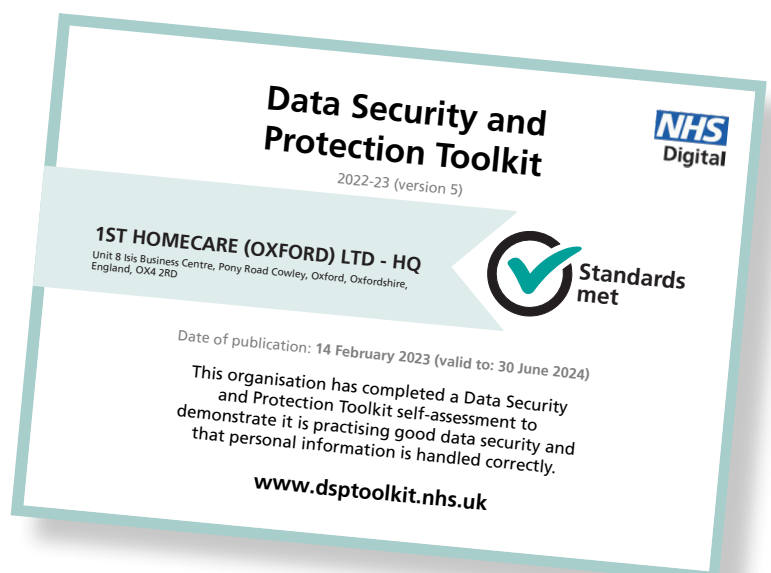
There are two key ways in which we have to take action:

- Firstly, we have to do all we can to prevent client names and addresses falling into the wrong hands. We don't want unscrupulous traders trying to sell our vulnerable clients things they don't need (double-glazing, new driveways, solar panels etc) or worse, expose them to the risk of having their home broken into.
- Secondly, if we don't secure our data there is a risk that our systems get 'hacked' so that we can no longer produce rotas, care plans or record care notes. While you might think this would never happen to a care company there have been two recent examples where systems at other care providers have been hacked and systems frozen until a ransom has been paid!

With the above in mind, we have completed the Data Security Protection Toolkit ("DSPT") for all of our branches. This is an online self-assessment tool published by NHS England, and it allows organisations to measure their performance against the National Data Guardian's 10 data security standards, which in translation means that an organisation that is DSPT compliant provides assurance that it is practising good data security and that personal information is handled correctly.

The DSPT consists of a very long questionnaire asking if we have certain controls, passwords, back-ups, contingency plans etc all aimed to ascertain that we have done all we can to prevent cyber-attack. I am very pleased to report that we have now passed all these questions and are DSPT approved.

We are fully supportive of digital initiatives and now have a fully digitised system of assessing care, carrying out care records and for management to monitor the care being provided. We use very little paper (which is more secure plus it also saves on trees) and care information is passed to and from the offices quickly and efficiently so that we can be fully appraised of situations as they develop and quickly pass on any queries and concerns to family and medical experts.



**A SPOTLIGHT ON LIVE-IN CARE**

## What makes 1st Homecare the provider of choice for live-in care



As our clients get older and more frail many face that difficult decision – often a decision made by the person receiving care together with close family who are providing increasing support – of whether or not to move to a care home.

Sometimes this might be the right choice but there is another alternative which costs about the same as a care home which is Live-in care, allowing people to stay in their home and live life in the way they want.

Our Live in care service has grown substantially over the last 18 months and we now have a good number of clients looked after by our carers and managed by our management team of Michelle and Courtney. Michelle and Courtney have a bank of carers to call on as and when we take on a new client. Each carer is introduced to the client by using a combination of a carer profile, a chat by telephone or by Zoom. They often live overseas and come to the UK for the duration of the Live-in assignment and then fly home again. They all speak good English and have often already been engaged by us or other Live-in care providers known to us.

Once the carer is in place we continue to manage the care being provided and receive daily reports from the live-in carers (which can also be sent to family members through the use of our Next of Kin app). We review these as part of our quality assurance processes to establish that care is safely delivered. Sometimes extra carers are required if, for example, our client's condition has deteriorated for some reason. With our network of three local domiciliary care branches we can bring in additional carers at short notice.

A recent case demonstrates how we as an organisation can take swift action to ensure our client's safety and wellbeing: A client in Oxfordshire, Pat (not her real name), was reported by her carer as struggling to bear her own weight when transferring in and out of bed. This happened to be when Michelle, Live-in Manager, was on annual leave and also happened to be on a Friday night! We needed to take action quickly, however, so Emma, Registered Manager of our Bedfordshire branch, and Annabella, a Director of the Company, travelled over on the Friday evening to assess Pat's situation, and put in place safe arrangements pending Michelle's return from holiday and a visit from the OT. The Oxford branch were able on the spot to arrange for an additional carer to go into Pat's home to help with caring for Pat in bed which was the safest place for her at that moment. Michelle quickly arranged an OT visit and a hoist and a hospital bed was installed, with Michelle going out to help the client's family rearrange Pat's room to ensure these items could be installed. Pat (who had initially been insistent that none of this was necessary) thanked us for putting in place all these changes in such a professional way.

We genuinely would not have been able to do this without our network of offices and it couldn't have been handled by a lone care worker employed by Pat who would not have had access to these back-up facilities. A lone carer might well have struggled on for some time at the risk of injuring herself by trying to move Pat on her own or by causing injury to Pat if she had fallen (or, more likely, slipped) to the ground during a manoeuvre.

We have a unique live-in arrangement in the counties we cover by being able to provide a live-in service with the back-up of our three local offices with carers and management willing and able to help out when necessary. We are very proud of the way in which everyone pulled together to do what was needed for our client in her moment of need. Thank you to everyone involved over those few days – Michelle T, Emma, Annabella, Michelle B and Becky.





# OUR VALUES

A few years ago, we spent some time thinking what really embodied the 1st Homecare values, and formulated a set of values representing what we stand for.

One of our stated Values is our commitment to the quality of care, as part of which we aim to recruit, train and retain the best carers. We encourage all our care staff to undertake ongoing professional development, including a professional qualification (to which we contribute funding). At present we have 7 learners who are working towards a professional qualification at levels 2, 3 and 5. These allow them to build on their depth of knowledge and understanding. Emma, our Registered Manager at our Bedfordshire branch is undertaking Level 5, the highest level of qualification, and commented as follows: "I started my Level 5 back in 2022 and I have gained so much knowledge that I am able to apply to my role as Manager. It has been a roller coaster ride but I feel that it is worth every minute."

In March in our Oxford Branch Alison Russell was given a Values Award, and in February Wendy Page and Janet McNab at our Kings Langley branch also received a Values Award. While all our staff share the 1st Homecare Values, we give these awards to carers who particularly demonstrate our Values in their daily work.



Alison Russell - Oxford Branch



Wendy Page & Janet McNab - Kings Langley branch



## Greetings and Congratulations!



### Introducing Courtney

We are delighted that we have recently been joined by Courtney, who is assisting our Live-in Manager Michelle as Live-in Care Supervisor. Before joining 1st Homecare, Courtney had most recently been working for HART (Home Assessment Reablement Team) within the NHS and gained valuable experience and knowledge.



### Congratulations to Lesley!

The Registered Manager of our Kings Langley branch, Lesley, has just completed 25 years working at the branch – first joining when it was known as Ainsworth Care, and then continuing after 1st Homecare acquired Ainsworth Care (in 2019) and it was renamed 1st Homecare Kings Langley. Many congratulations to Lesley on her long service and her dedication and passion to ensuring our clients receive first class care.