



# 1st Homecare

## Friends of 1st Homecare

WINTER 2023/2024

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

### CHRISTMAS IN PICTURES



Office team Christmas event



The Kings Langley office team took part this year again in the local church Christmas tree festival, creating a lovely display with branded baubles and using the 1st Homecare logo colours.



Christmas jumper celebrations

## A few thoughts

From John Rennison, CEO



I very much hope that all readers had a restful and social time over Christmas and New Year. For some of our clients it is a joyous time when family members who live some distance away are able to visit and celebrate, but for others – perhaps those with no family at all – it is a lonely time, and we do our best to make sure we visit them on Christmas

Day so that they have some company on the day.

Our office staff enjoyed the first Christmas meal out in a few years, which gave them the chance to meet colleagues who they have spoken to by phone but who they had never yet met in person. All the carers received a present too – each office arranged slightly different presents but all were well received.

The New Year means different things to different people, and we always hope that each New Year will bring a better year than the previous one. From a care perspective we, as a nation, have been allowed to recruit carers from overseas and become better able to meet the nation's care needs. However, there do appear to be several unscrupulous care employers who have exploited these overseas workers with the result that they haven't been paid the minimums set out by law. Please rest assured that 1st Homecare is not one of these employers and that we pay our overseas carers the same as we pay our existing carers. Additionally, if we come across carers who we believe have been exploited, we have reported their situations to the appropriate authorities with a view to helping bring an end to these poor practices.

We wish all our clients, staff members and other friends of 1st Homecare a healthy and happy 2024.

*Take good care, John*





## 2024 speaking engagements



We are passionate about promoting home care as the best possible option for people when they reach the stage of their life where they are no longer coping so well.

The homecare sector is facing many challenges, including well publicised financial viability and workforce recruitment crises. We are privileged that John has been asked to participate in two public speaking engagements in the first half of this year to raise awareness of the challenges facing registered home care providers and drive improvements for the sector.

The first of these was a workshop panel at the Homecare Association Conference on 24 January 2024. This workshop focused on Financial Viability of Homecare Businesses.

The second invitation is to be a panellist at their Future of Care Conference taking place on 30th April at the premises of the Kings Fund, London, discussing the future of Domiciliary Care in the UK.

## Are you concerned for a family member who you saw over Christmas?

We often see an increase in calls from concerned relatives in January and February. Christmas time, when families traditionally get together, is often the first time in many months that families may have caught up with a grandparent. They may appear to have aged more and be more forgetful, or to be struggling with daily tasks, forgetting to take their medicines or unable to keep up with GP appointments.

If you are fortunate enough still to have both parents, it can sometimes be the case that one parent naturally falls into the role of a carer for the less able spouse, so introducing a professionally trained home carer at this stage can ease the burden and gently introduce the idea of care. As difficult as it is to suggest introducing a domiciliary carer, in our experience it is best to introduce the concept of accepting trained help earlier rather than later, as many individuals need time to adjust to accepting help.

For a friendly chat about your situation please don't hesitate to contact us (see our website [www.1st-homecare.com](http://www.1st-homecare.com) for contact numbers).

## Shortlisted for national award

We are constantly striving to deliver the best service and be an outstanding employer, so industry recognition is extremely welcome. We were therefore delighted to receive an email at the start of January letting us know that we have been shortlisted as a finalist in two categories of the Home Care Awards 2024. The Home Care Awards seek out examples of the expertise of companies providing home care in the UK and praise the teams that are making a difference by looking to raise standards, and are supported by the Home Care Association, the representative body for home care providers in the UK. CEO John said:

*"Our carers and support staff work very hard to care for our clients and I am delighted that we have been shortlisted in these national awards. It is so important to applaud the efforts of those working hard and shine a light on the care sector."*

1st Homecare has been shortlisted in two categories:

- 1) Best start-up home care services for our growing live-in care services
- 2) Team Support expertise for staff wellbeing, personal development, mental health and career guidance

Winners will be announced at a ceremony in March 2024.





## VALUES AWARDS!

There is lots to celebrate at 1st Homecare, not least of all some fantastic team achievements that we'd like to share...



### Celebrating Kings Langley

At Kings Langley, care worker Paula has been given a Values Award. Registered Manager Helen said: "Paula has been awarded our Values award this month based on the compassionate care she has given to her clients, especially for one client with quite complex communication needs that she has spent time building a really comfortable relationship with. This client has had a family member staying over Christmas and New Year who has passed his compliments to us on numerous occasions over the last few weeks. He lives abroad and feels the team here is fantastic and his mum's care is in safe hands with Paula. Well deserved, Paula, well done!"



### Celebrating Oxford

At our Oxford branch, the first Values Award of the year has been given to our care worker, Tayyba. Branch Manager Michelle commented: "Tayyba is always compassionate, respects the clients as individuals and always has a smile on her face and helps us out by picking up extra visits outside her normal availability." Congratulations to Tayyba!

### Celebrating Live-In

And finally, Sinead, Live-In Care Manager has given a Values award to live-in care worker Mukayi. Sinead awarded this to her "for her dedication shown to Colin and Judith. When Colin developed pressure areas Mukayi was responsive to the changing needs of Colin, implementing 2-hourly turns throughout day and night. She persevered with Colin's pressure area care. His pressure areas healed, and he was discharged from the care of the district nurses on 3/1. Judith and Colin have both described Mukayi as an 'asset.'"

## OPEN DAY SUCCESS

Our Open Day in Kings Langley new office held in October 2023 was a great success. Carers who had not seen each other for a long time were able to catch up; a few clients attended, local press dropped in, and also a local councillor who had brought his neighbour along. We really appreciate the community support. We plan to hold similar events at Oxford and Leighton Buzzard in the Spring and will publish the dates in our Newsletter.







# Refer a Friend to 1st Homecare



At 1st Homecare we are always on the lookout for individuals who share our Values to join our team. We are very proud of the length of service of our employees, with an average length across the group of 6.1 years. In one office the average length of employment is 10.4 years. Skills for Care research shows an average length of service of 5 years across the UK.

In our last employee survey issued late last year, employees' comments included:

*'Great company to work for'*

*'Great organisation to work for, very supportive to everyone'*



We have a generous Refer a Friend scheme. Carers who introduce a new carer to 1st Homecare receive a £100 bonus and an additional £200 after the new carer has completed 6 months' work with us. Over the past 2 years, 9 carers have been recruited in this manner and most recently one live-in carer has successfully introduced 3 other live-in carers to the Company. Payroll Manager Emma recruited her daughter, Mia, who commented: "Being a carer took me miles out of my comfort zone, but I would highly recommend it to others. I am very well looked after by the office team and can always talk to someone. If there is a problem with the visit rota, they are adaptable and will change it."

**If you know anyone who has a caring, "can do" attitude, and who is interested in working in care (or is already a carer but looking for a change) please recommend 1st Homecare and benefit from our Refer a Friend scheme.**

## Contact us

Leighton Buzzard	01525 376677	<a href="mailto:info@1st-homecare.com">info@1st-homecare.com</a>
Oxford	01865 744174	<a href="mailto:info.ox@1st-homecare.com">info.ox@1st-homecare.com</a>
Kings Langley	01923 269877	<a href="mailto:info.kl@1st-homecare.com">info.kl@1st-homecare.com</a>
Live-In	01525 304676	<a href="mailto:info.livein@1st-homecare.com">info.livein@1st-homecare.com</a>



# End of life and Palliative Care



Talking about death can be an uncomfortable subject for many, however, where clients are in their last months and years of life, it is a necessary and important part of planning care.

We believe that for those nearing the end of life, every day should be as comfortable and precious as possible, and most would agree that passing away in one's own home is the best outcome. At 1st Homecare, we support our clients who are end of life with dignity and respect at all times, with sensitivity to any cultural preferences, and our carers who support our end-of-life clients are trained and comfortable to be involved at this stage. We know how important it is for families and clients to make decisions about their wishes and choices at the end of life and we will help with drawing up an advance care plan setting these out.

We also add value by the fact that we can facilitate getting in place all the arrangements that are needed in order to provide palliative

care at home - knowing the right support network and who to contact within this network can be daunting for family members who are unsure how to navigate the NHS system and is a key part of our role.

As an example, one of our carers had been living with a husband and wife for around 5 years, initially looking after the husband before he passed away and then staying on to care for his wife. When she became unwell and her mobility declined, we arranged for an occupational therapist and the hospital at home team to undertake a review and all parties arranged to move the client downstairs into the living room with the right equipment so she could enjoy the view over her beloved garden. By moving to a larger room, she was able to get out of bed, move around, and sit at her dining table to eat meals. A care plan was agreed with the family in advance. Very sadly, only a short time after she moved downstairs, our client suffered a stroke. Our carer was due to go on a two-week break, however, she postponed this as it was clear our client was getting to the end of life and chose to stay with our client until the end.

We can also help in emergency situations at short notice. We were appointed to support a lady who had been living a full and active life well into her 80's but she had suffered a fall and been in hospital for around six weeks. Upon discharge it was obvious she needed help and we were able to put in place an experienced carer who helped her transition smoothly back home, liaised with external professionals to ensure all the right equipment was supplied, and arranged with a district nurse and occupational therapist to help her. When the time came the family was called in the night to come and be by her side and she passed away peacefully at home.

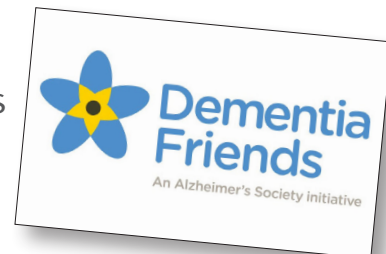
**If you would like to find out more about the support we can provide, please contact us (see our website [www.1st-homecare.com](http://www.1st-homecare.com) for contact information).**



## Partnership with the Alzheimer's Society



You may remember that we partnered with the Alzheimer's Society last year and pledged to help our carers to become Dementia Friends.



Vicky, our Assistant Manager at the Leighton Buzzard branch, who specialises in dementia care, has been doing a sterling job and has so far registered 15 carers on the Dementia Friends Dashboard. She has been rolling out dementia training to staff at our branches, with a very well-received training session at our Kings Langley branch in early January and a session to be held at our Oxford branch in early February. Vicky's passion is infectious and to bring the training alive, she has purchased some tools (seen being worn by staff during training in the photos below) which give participants a good indication of some of the challenges people with dementia face and this in turn helps them learn ways in which to best support our clients living with dementia.



## Fire In Kings Langley

On 30 January our Kings Langley office had to be evacuated when quite a major fire took hold in some premises very close to the office. All praise to our office staff who quietly diverted the phones and evacuated the building. We continued to visit our clients and take phone calls from clients on mobile phones until we were allowed to return to the offices the following morning.

And many thanks to Hertfordshire Fire Brigade who attended with 12 appliances and put out the fire with no injuries to anyone onsite.

