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**Grab your chance to win a £25 gift card!**  
The Easter Bunny has been up to his usual antics and hidden Easter eggs throughout the pages – how many can you find?

## Dear Residents, Families and Team Members

### Welcome to our Spring 2022 Excelcare Voice Newsletter!

Team members across the Excelcare family have worked hard to make the start of 2022 as special as possible for the people living in our homes. We have been celebrating important national occasions such as Valentine's Day and LGBTQ+ History month and creating new traditions with the Excelcare World Cruise. We have really tried to use this first edition of the year to share with you some of the joy that we have felt across the group.

We have also dedicated pages to honouring the people living in our homes, by sharing some of our 'Life Fulfilled' stories. The people living in our homes have lived such interesting and enriching lives; each with a unique story to tell. Our 'Life Fulfilled' website series shares these stories with the world, and we are delighted to be including some in this issue.

Each new season always brings with it so many new opportunities for adventure and stories, and we can't wait to see what this Spring brings. But first, we are excited to share with you all of the events and stories from the beginning of this year. So, sit down, grab a cuppa, and enjoy our Spring edition of the Excelcare Voice.

**Sam Manning**  
Chief Operating Officer

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## We are starting off this issue with a Spring challenge for you...

The Easter bunny has been up to mischief and has hidden Easter eggs all over the pages of the Excelcare Voice!

While you take your time to read this season's stories, see if you can find the hidden eggs. Email us at [info@excelcareholdings.com](mailto:info@excelcareholdings.com) with the number of eggs you think are hidden in this issue. Any right answers will be entered into a prize draw, for the chance to win one of two £25 Love2Shop gift cards!

Good luck to everyone who chooses to take on the challenge... We hope you have an eggcellent time!





“ Happiness held is the seed;  
Happiness shared is the flower. ”

- John Harrigan



## Group Updates

### The Excelcare family embark on a 2022 World Cruise!



This year, members of the Excelcare family are embarking on a cruise around the world... All from the comfort of their homes!

The Excelcare World Cruise is an initiative run by Andrew Seal, Excelcare's Hospitality Lead. It is designed to encourage the teams and the people living in our homes to explore different cultures and learn more about different places around the world. Each month, everyone across the group will embark on a virtual journey to a different country and are prompted to partake in activities and enjoy food and facts about that country.



The homes will be sharing their travels with everyone on their individual Facebook pages using the hashtag #ExcelcareCruise, as well as through stories on our website. So, we invite you to follow along and see where our cruise takes us!



**Excelcare's World Cruise is an event which 'stops off' each month at a new and exciting world destination. Sadly no ships are available, so we will create the destination country in our homes instead!**

Throughout each month we will celebrate and learn about the culture and background of each location as we invite people from across the Excelcare family to try something new, as well as sharing their own stories and experiences around that month's location. We want to be able to give the people who live & work in our homes a holiday of a lifetime, all without leaving the comfort of their home!



## Supporting LGBTQ+ History Month



### Excelcare: Supporting LGBTQ+ history this February and beyond

LGBTQ+ History Month is for everyone. It is an opportunity to educate and grow ever closer to our peers. At Excelcare, we are incredibly proud to support the LGBTQ+ people who live and work across the Excelcare family and beyond, as we respect people for who they are, with distinct identities and needs.

A recent study by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) revealed 1% of people aged 65 and over identify as LGBTQ+. They noted that this figure is rising and is being influenced by the greater acceptance in society towards people expressing different sexual identities.

There has been a recent increase of purpose-built care homes for people who identify within the LGBTQ+ community, but across the Excelcare Family, we support

people for who they are in all of our homes.

In each of the homes we operate, the people we care for are encouraged to be whoever they want to be. This is achieved through person-centred care plans, tailored to the needs, likes and dislikes of the individual, which are constantly updated by our loving team. Care is delivered in line with each person's care plan, so everyone can live a fulfilled life.

Throughout the month of February, we honoured LGBTQ+ History Month and showcased our support for individuals who identify within this community. To do so, we shone a light on people's individual stories and shared them with the group.

## Spring Activities

### Hunters Down residents make some animal friends during visit from Zoolab

The people living at Hunters Down Care Home in Huntingdon enjoyed making some animal friends when Zoolab came to visit!



Zoolab is a company that provide mobile animal experiences for schools, care homes and other educational facilities. Their aim is to make animal encounters accessible to all whilst providing educational and wellbeing benefits.



Hunters Down welcomed Chris from Zoolab to deliver an interactive animal session with the people living there. He brought a range of different animals along for people to meet, which included snakes, tarantulas, cockroaches, lizards and rats.

When Chris arrived, he introduced himself, the animals he had brought and went through some safety tips with the residents. Chris then took the animals out of their carriers and asked if people wanted to hold them. Some brave residents took



him up on his offer, whilst others preferred to admire the animals from a distance. As each animal was taken around, Chris shared some information about the species, where they live and what they eat. He also shared some interesting facts with the group, which everyone enjoyed hearing.



Residents then discussed what their favourite animal was. Although they loved them all, the rat stole their hearts as they said it was gorgeous.

As the session came to a close, everyone reflected on the joy that



animals bring to our lives which started a discussion about how they should be treated. They voiced their concerns about animal cruelty and said how animals deserve to be treated like we would treat any person, with dignity and respect.

It was a wonderful afternoon that raised many smiles at Hunters Down Care Home.



## Gecko returns

Lime Court Court Care Home in Essex were fortunate to receive an Artist Residency with Gecko.

Gecko is an award winning and critically acclaimed physical theatre company based in Ipswich. They create theatre that inspires, moves and entertains their audiences. Gecko's work is visual, visceral and ambitious and they create work through collaboration, experimentation and play.

some wonderful movement and music workshops, as well as scripted plays, screenings, and so much more. They also had a big finale where residents watched themselves perform alongside Gecko on the big screen!



Lime Court were delighted to welcome Gecko back to the home in person at the end of 2021. In preparation, they built an amazing stage outside the home, located in one of their garden areas. The stage was adorned with some wonderful props including vintage radios, musical instruments and even a parrot in a cage. On attending the home, Gecko provided



The talented Helen and Miguel at Gecko filled the home with fun, laughter and such a wonderful energy. Lime Court feel very privileged to welcome Gecko back, and look forward to working with them again later this year!



## Stanley Wilson Lodge wait for their flowers to bloom

The winter weather was particularly kind this year, so Stanley Wilson decided to take advantage of this and plant some bulbs ready for Spring.

The people living at the home really enjoyed getting out into the garden and stuck into the task. They tidied up the pots before they planted the bulbs, then wrapped them up warm so that they

can grow in time for Spring.

Everyone finished the day with a well-earned hot cup of tea, while they nestled up warm with some blankets. They are so excited now that Spring has rolled around, as they want to see their display of crocuses, snowdrops and daffodils!



## Sweyne Court residents are eco warriors!

During a recent arts and crafts activity at Sweyne Court Care Home, the people who live there were discussing climate change and the effects of global warming. This inspired them to question the things that they could do to help the planet.

They decided that planting a tree in the garden would not only be a fun project but would also help in their quest of doing something positive for the planet. As they sat and discussed

their plan, someone said it would be a good idea to plant a pear tree, as they would be able to grow their own fresh fruit.

The team thought this was a great idea and a couple of days later went to purchase a pear tree that they could plant.

Due to the wet and windy weather, planting the tree was delayed, but on a recent sunny Thursday morning, they used the opportunity to plant the tree. With help from Len, who lives at Sweyne Court, they found the perfect spot, dug a small hole and planted the pear tree inside. This was an exciting event at the home so everyone wanted to watch. Those who didn't want to be outside in the windy weather watched from their windows!

The people living at Sweyne Court will be keeping a close eye on the pear tree and helping to look after it throughout the year. They hope this will produce some lovely fresh fruits next year and help to combat climate change!



## Etheldred residents go on a trip

The people living at Etheldred House Care Home in Cambridge were recently invited to Impington & Histon recreation ground, and willingly accepted!

The day out was organised by the local community, in an effort to gather everyone together and enjoy different activities. They were also kind enough to provide transport and serve refreshments throughout the day.

The residents enjoyed it very much, as it allowed them to socialise with other people. This led to so many laughs and shared conversations, and they returned to Etheldred with large smiles on their faces.



## Celia shares gifts with team members at Castlemead Court

Regional Operations Director, Celia, who leads our Milton Keynes region recently stopped by at Castlemead Court Care Home to deliver some gifts to the people working there.

Her kind gesture was inspired by everyone's continued hard work during the pandemic and commitment to keeping people safe and living well.

As a token of thanks, Celia dropped off a selection of soaps, that had been hand made by 'Momma Olleys of Sidmouth'. This small business makes a selection of natural soaps and candles that smell delicious too.

Team members were delighted with the selection and were grateful to Celia for her thoughtful actions. Celia hopes these soaps will help to keep their caring hands well cared for!

Alongside the handmade soaps, Celia also treated team members to a coffee from a drinks van that stops by at the home once a week. During a busy day at Castlemead, a



fresh coffee helped to brighten everyone's mood and boost wellbeing amongst the team.

Although a token gift, Celia hopes these little deliveries helped to show people how valued and appreciated they are!

## My experience as a relative by Sam Manning, COO

I have worked for Excelcare for 29 years now, in a variety of different roles. But when my dad moved into Park Avenue Care Home in Bromley, I took on a completely new one, experiencing life as a relative of a person living in an Excelcare home.

For the last 15 months, I have experienced the unwavering love and dedication that our team members provide day to day. I have watched first-hand as they worked tirelessly to make sure that my dad's time at the home was filled with reassurance, comfort, and communication - not only for him but for my mum and 4 sisters too.



Unfortunately, my dad's dementia progressed to end of life, and he passed away on the 17th of January. But his memory lives on forever, both in our hearts and at the home.

After Dad passed, the team at the home said that they missed his banter and hearing him call out to them. Giuseppe, the home's maintenance man, spoke of how much love there was for Steve and how sad the wheel of life unfortunately is, turning and never stops, and how without it we just couldn't be here to meet and love amazing people like Steve.

Dad loved sitting in the garden, listening to the birds singing at Park Avenue, and given the love felt by everyone for him;

the team and I wanted to create a memorial in his honour. So, I ordered a memory bench which everyone can use to sit and chat, or listen to the birds singing – just like Dad used to enjoy.



A special ceremony was held at the home on the 28th of February, where my mum (his wife) Val, was proud to cut the ribbon and sit on the memorial bench that displayed a plaque with Dad's name. The bench was incidentally the exact right size for her (very short) legs – bringing to life my dad's nickname for her, 'Little Legs'. Mum took the opportunity to blow Dad a kiss, and to say a few words thanking the team for their support, and for continuing to make his days fulfilled, during his journey with dementia.

The team gave hugs to Mum, and told her that they all missed her too; and it was at this point that they asked her to join them as a Volunteer – which she enthusiastically accepted. She said that she feels it will be her chance to give something back to the team who cared for Steve, and also an opportunity to help the residents and their families with their dementia journey, using her experience to support them.

I feel so inspired by my mum for agreeing to become a volunteer. She is now an ambassador for the Excelcare family with a special purpose to help others. I know that my dad would have been super proud of her, as he always said she had a heart of gold.

I am so grateful to my Excelcare family for the way that they made my dad's time at the home so special, and I cannot thank them enough for the continued support that we've received from them since Dad passed away.



## Love and loss: When a parent is living with dementia

For many of us, our parents are the people we turn to for support, guidance, and a helping hand when we are struggling. They are our life teachers, and many of us wonder where we would be without them in our lives.

As we grow older, we realise, more so than ever, just how special our parents are. We begin to understand that there may be a time where the roles are reversed, and we become the person they turn to for support in their later years. For people who have parents who live with dementia, this process can become more challenging. Watching dementia start to transform the people we hold so dear can be a very emotional process.

When a person's parent is diagnosed with dementia, it has an effect on the whole family. The initial heartache of hearing that diagnosis can be challenging and confusing, but also hard hitting to know about the sad inevitability of this disease. With no cure, and no direct way of treating dementia, it can be a rollercoaster of emotions.

As a person's dementia develops, their children may start the grieving process months or years before they pass. Watching the person that you love start to change, both in personality and behaviour, can feel alienating and hard to come to terms with. People whose parents have lived with dementia have described it as "seeing little pieces of the person they love slip away week by week".

Many people find comfort in holding onto the memories they have of loved ones before their diagnosis. They prefer to remember their loved one for who they were – their morals, personality, and demeanour - rather than letting the changes they faced during their dementia journey define who they are.

Often, when a loved one is living with dementia, you have to readjust and learn to live in their world. Though this can be upsetting, it is a beneficial way to reconnect with a person who is in the later stages of this life changing diagnosis.

This tumultuous journey is certainly challenging, and there is no "right way" to process your emotions and your situation. But know that you are not alone. We encourage you to look for support, be that within your family, or externally.

Each month, we host dementia webinars for loved ones, team members, and the general public, so we can share

guidance and advice. They are a safe space for everyone to share their own experiences, often leading to people feeling less alone and overwhelmed. Please see the webinar page on our website for more information as well as details of the upcoming sessions.



### Upcoming Dementia Support Webinars

Supporting End of Life Decisions and Discussions on Palliative Care  
*Tuesday 26th April*

Reminiscence and Montessori  
*Tuesday 24th May*

Understanding the language of dementia  
*Tuesday 21st June*

Keeping Healthy: We are what we eat  
*Tuesday 19th July*

Arts as a means to freedom in care homes  
*Tuesday 30th August*

## Lives Fulfilled

At Excelcare, we're proud to support the people who live with us to lead a life well lived, every day. Our series 'A Life Fulfilled', focusses on the incredible stories we learn from residents, and how we encourage people to continue enjoying their life-long interests, hobbies and routines as part of their everyday schedule.

### Marcella's Story

Marcella was born in Coton in Cambridgeshire, and lived in the first house on her street, right next to an apple orchard. Being next to the orchard had its perks, and her older brothers used to sneak through the hedges at night when no one was looking and retrieve the apples that had dropped to the floor.

Marcella was the youngest child, with five older brothers. Her eldest three brothers, Morris Victor, Wilfred and Kenneth all served in the army, and would tell her all of their war stories. Her second youngest brother, Douglas, was a bus driver in Cambridge, and then there was Ivan who worked on an animal farm.

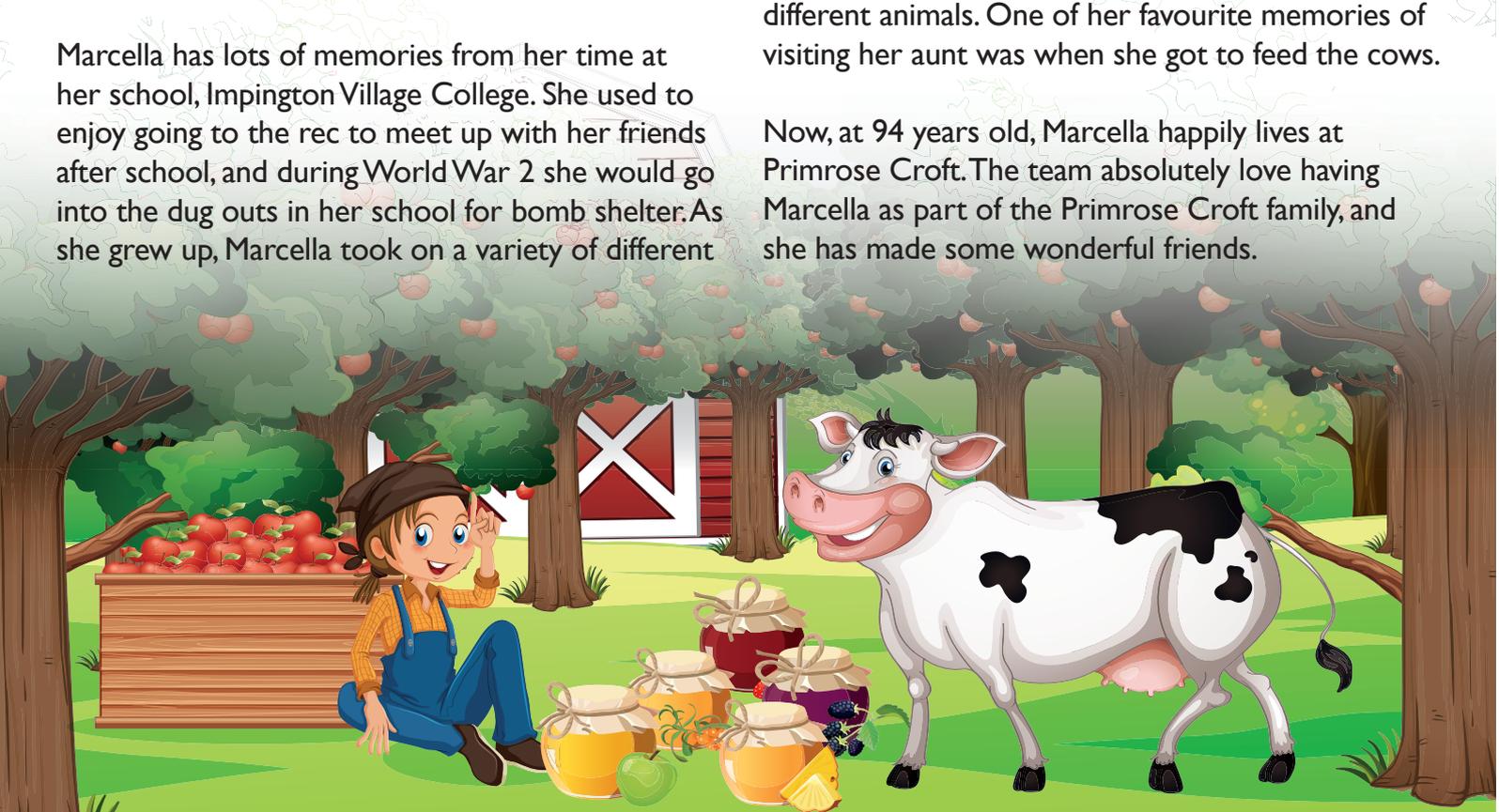
Marcella has lots of memories from her time at her school, Impington Village College. She used to enjoy going to the rec to meet up with her friends after school, and during World War 2 she would go into the dug outs in her school for bomb shelter. As she grew up, Marcella took on a variety of different

jobs. Some of her favourites included making jam in Chivers, and housekeeping at Ridley Hall for the Cambridge University grounds.

Marcella met her husband through one of her brothers, because they used to work together. She said that her husband was a very good drawer and great at maths. They got married in Coton Church, with an after party in the town hall. Marcella wore a white satin dress with a long white veil and her cousins were Bridesmaids and Paige Boys.

Though Marcella never went abroad, she did have many holidays around England. She often frequented Surrey because her aunt lived there. Her aunt would take her on lots of different days out, and Marcella particularly enjoyed when she would take her to see different animals. One of her favourite memories of visiting her aunt was when she got to feed the cows.

Now, at 94 years old, Marcella happily lives at Primrose Croft. The team absolutely love having Marcella as part of the Primrose Croft family, and she has made some wonderful friends.



## Mervyn's Story

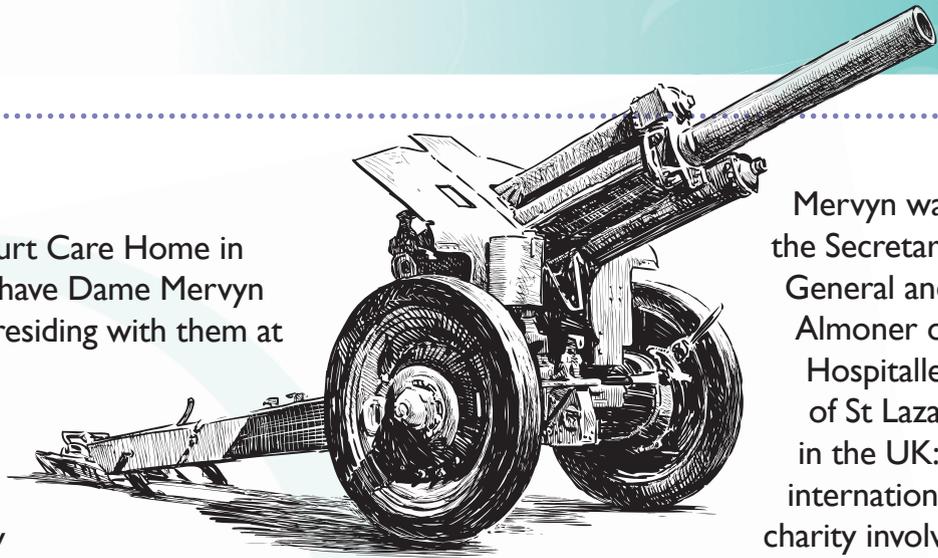
Everyone living at Sweyne Court Care Home in Essex feels very honoured to have Dame Mervyn Redding CStJ, DCCSts, FRSA residing with them at the home.

Mervyn was born in Shoeburyness to a Royal Artillery family and was locally educated at Westcliff High School for girls.



Mervyn's professional career was largely with the Ministry of Defence until her early retirement in 1995. She was a Chief Welfare Officer, managing

30 other Welfare Officers and 12 teams across one third of the country. She also spent 10 years as the Senior Administrator at the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Foulness Island. Mervyn had many roles throughout her career and was also a qualified teacher, providing first aid courses to local colleges and organisations.



Mervyn was the Secretary General and the Almoner of the Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus in the UK: an international charity involved

with leprosy, skin disorders

and the support of burns victims. She holds the appointment of Secretary for the registered company, the St Lazarus Foundation, and for a time was the Receiver General for the Grand Bailiwick of England and Wales of that order, together with being the Commander of the Commandery of Londinium.



Mervyn recently celebrated her birthday with everyone living at Sweyne Court, and they made sure that the day was as special as her. Everyone celebrated her life with cake and snacks and a song, and she named it "one of the best birthdays ever".

## Michael's Story

At Excelcare, we provide personalised and person-centred care to bring out the best in everyone we care for, and we strive to ensure they are fulfilled to live a happy life, with our support and care. We reinforce personal choice and ensure there are a wide variety of activities, events and one to one activities people can take part in, but more importantly, enabling and encouraging independence.

Unfortunately for some individuals, freedom of choice has not always been so easy; growing up in a completely different era, certain views and pastimes were not so openly accepted or supported.

One of these ideologies is that of gender fluidity. This was a contested matter that was frowned upon in the early to mid-20th century and often diagnosed as an 'illness'.

Fortunately, in today's society, gender fluidity is supported and widely accepted as something we should encourage and promote to ensure everyone can express themselves in whichever way they feel. ▶





In this case study, we take a glance into the life of Michael, who lives at Okeley Care Home. Michael sometimes lives as a lady called Michelle, and shared with us some of the struggles they have faced up until the present day.

Michael was born in 1939, sometimes he can be quiet and shy but when relaxed, has a cheeky sense of humour and is softly spoken. He enjoys spending time observing those around him but welcomes one-to-one conversations with those who show an interest in him.

As a young man growing up in the 1950s and 60s, Michael always felt he was different from other people. He knew that he liked women, but also that he was attracted to men as well. At times, this made Michael feel quite confused, as society was different in these times and having feelings towards the same sex wasn't something many people spoke about.

Michael dated women and men throughout his life, but learnt that as much as he enjoyed female company, he was often interested in their clothing and makeup. Picking out an outfit for a woman was exciting to him and he often felt like he was 'living his dream through someone else'.

After some time, Michael started to dress in feminine clothing in private. He soon found himself being more comfortable wearing dresses, wigs and perfume. He admired women for their scent, demeanour and characteristics. This is when Michelle was 'born'.

Michael unfortunately had to keep this side of his life a secret, as in the 1950s it was a crime and, if found out, a person could be taken for 'treatment' to change one's sexual orientation or desires.



In 1972, Michael was referred to a doctor for advice, who diagnosed him with Schizophrenia – a

mental health condition that may cause someone to hear voices that aren't real or cause 'confused thinking'. This is a diagnosis that Michael and the people around him still question to this day.

Michael felt isolated after this diagnosis and was left to deal with his 'confused thinking' by himself. But in Michael's head, he knew who he was, his likes and dislikes as both Michael and Michelle.

From 1980 to 2018, Michael lived in a flat with his partner – in a comfortable relationship that allowed him to present both his gender preferences. The bedroom was set up to Michelle's preferences, which included cuddly toys and soft colours, with the wardrobes predominantly filled with feminine clothes and perfumes.



Michael enjoyed this period of his life, but after his health began to decline in 2018, he moved into Okeley Care Home, with the help of Essex County Council.

When Michael arrived, he came with only male clothing and there was no indication of Michelle being a part of his life.

He was often quiet and enjoyed time to himself. He was encouraged to take part in activities with the other residents but would often decline and opt for an afternoon watching television.

Michael didn't welcome help with personal care – he liked having his hair shoulder length and declined assistance with shaving. When he was offered a hair wash and blow dry though, Michael would accept and have his hair styled into a ponytail.





In November 2020, Michael was moved to a different suite at the home, where he would benefit from a change in schedule and more dedicated support. Within just one week, Michael showed more signs of being happier there; smiling and interacting with others more during mealtimes.



On this suite, the team were supported by a Senior Carer and the Home Manager to have a conversation with Michael and ask some questions about Michelle. Michael's face immediately lit up. He was excited that someone had remembered this important part of himself without judging or dismaying his preferences. He then began to 'tell all'.

Michael expressed his desire to wear feminine clothes. He said he felt beautiful, loved and free. The team responded positively and said it is something they would completely support him to do, which made him quite emotional, as no one, aside from his partner, had ever acknowledged and supported this

side of him before. As he left the room, he gave a sincere thank you to everyone present.

After this conversation, Michael was supported with some online shopping so he could pick out some items that he liked. This included women's clothes, shoes, jewellery, undergarments and accessories which were then presented to Michael when they arrived. The joy and excitement in his face made the team feel young and it was delightful to see him looking so happy!

Michael was excited to try these clothes on and once again, become Michelle. Dressed in his new attire, Michelle walked around the home with confidence and ready to be a part of the community at Okeley.

Michelle was beaming with joy and began accepting help with her personal care, which included shaving her legs, getting her hair washed and styled, and asking the team to make her feel 'pretty'.

The other people living at Okeley also support Michael and Michelle as part of their family, welcoming them to activities and social sessions.

Above all else, we are proud that Michael can live in freedom, without judgement or prejudice – simply being who he wants to be with support from the people around him.



## Julia's Story

Julia describes her life as "a series of happy accidents", that all led her to have the experiences she's had.

She was the eldest of three girls and was brought up in Brixton. Her mum and dad worked full time, so she would often spend the summertime at her nans.

She was a very chatty child and used to keep her grandmother up at night with all of her stories, so eventually her nan brought her a sketchbook and some pencils, in the hopes that this would keep Julia entertained. Although the book didn't stop Julia chatting, she did love it, and describes it as the

first "happy accident" that changed her life for the better.

During the summer, her nan would often visit the pub, and since Julia was living with her, Julia had to go too. However, at 7 years old, Julia wasn't allowed inside the pub, so she would sit on the stoop with her sketchbook and draw. Her drawings started to catch the attention of ▶



passers-by, and after a while everyone knew Julia as the artist on the stairs. As they passed her, they would give her drawing requests, and Julia would happily sketch images for them all.

From then on, Julia knew that she wanted to be an artist, but unfortunately, she needed to prioritise working to earn a living. So instead, she got a job selling school uniform on Oxford Street.

Julia believes that this was “happy accident” number two, as she was soon selected to be the person that went round to the posh schools and measured the children for their uniform. As a result, she got to go around the UK and see cities she had never seen, as well as see for herself just how the rich live. This opened her eyes to a different way of living, and greatly inspired Julia’s art.

Years later, when she was looking for a new job, she ran for a bus only to find that it had broken down. Nevertheless, the driver handed her a free Metro, and told her she could wait on the bus until a new one arrived. While she waited, Julia decided to keep busy, and wrote her first poem on the pages of the Metro out of boredom. This “happy accident number 3” led her to realise she had a real skill for poetry and kick-started her poetry habit.

As well as this, she found an ad on the back of the Metro that read “Art students wanted: any age, no qualifications necessary”. It had been a while since Julia had considered pursuing her art, but she took

this as a sign and applied to interview.

Since she had shown up to the interview with no art to show, the interviewer pointed her towards a free art class and suggested she come back next

year. Julia went straight to the class that day, creating a beautiful life drawing and taking it back to the interviewer. They took one look at it and accepted her on the spot, which eventually led to her First-Class Honours Degree.

During her time at art school, Julia was advised to create her own artistic style, so began exploring what that meant for her. She began creating women’s portraits, displayed in a 3D fashion on wood, with each background being each woman’s favourite colour. As a gay woman, Julia wanted to put women at the centre, and often explored women, homosexuality, class and children through her art. She wanted to “put her art where the people are”, and even hosted an exhibit under this name at Carnegie Library (Herne Hill) in 2014.

Julia now lives at Queens Oak Care Home in London, where she displays her art all over her room. She still sketches from day to day, inspired by her surroundings, and the team at Queens Oak are happy to supply her with all that she needs.



## Alan’s Story

Alan grew up in Edmonton, North London where he lived with his parents and 9 siblings!

He was a young boy when the war started and has many vivid memories of the sights and sounds of bombs and sirens from his early years. He remembers the time a doodlebug bomb hit his house and blew up the doorway! Luckily no one

was injured, but it did demolish the front half of Alan’s house. Alan’s friend who lived around the corner also had a bomb hit his house, so Alan and his family were evacuated to Halifax, a town near Leeds.

Alan’s Auntie also lived in Halifax, so during this time, he got to spend lots of time with his family, so being evacuated didn’t feel too daunting.

After the war, Alan and his family moved back to Edmonton. By this time their house had been repaired and the damaged surroundings were being rebuilt.

During Alan's teenage years, he spent a lot of time cycling. He remembers regularly cycling to the Isle of Wight for the day, before cycling back home to Edmonton, which is more than 200 miles in total!

When he was 18, Alan was called up to be a driver in the army. He spent 2 years in the Army and remembers driving his lorry back to Edmonton to visit his mum, even though this wasn't allowed.

After completing his service, Alan started working at a post office in Tottenham. During this time, Alan met the love of his life, Dolly at a local Picturehouse. Two of Alan's sisters worked with Dolly, so they helped to set the pair up and they connected instantly.

A few years later, the happy couple got married and had two boys, Stephen and Michael.

Throughout his life, Alan continued his passion for cycling and also said he enjoyed meeting up with friends in the pub for a little tippie.

During his time at Abbot Care Home in Harlow, Alan continued these hobbies. He enjoyed staying active and having a drink in the onsite pub, the 'Abbot Arms'. Alan also kept an eye on the news and could regularly be found relaxing in his room with a cuppa, reading the paper. With the support that Alan received at Abbot, he has now regained his independence and has moved back to live in his own home, with support from visiting carers.



## Evelyn's Story

Evelyn lives at The Willows Care Home in Milton Keynes and recently achieved an incredible life milestone as she celebrated her 100th birthday.

On the day, she was treated with cake, cards and lots of birthday singing, but also spent some time with the team recalling some memorable moments from her life.

Evelyn was born on the 17th of December, 1921 in Newport Pagnell. During her younger years, Evelyn moved to Mill Road, not knowing at the time, but this is the road her future husband Don lived on.

After moving to Bletchley, Evelyn's dad became the landlord of the Plough pub which was just down the road from her house.

Evelyn remembers when she met Don, and how he used to sneak in the back of her dad's pub to get a pint of shandy and see her. Their romance continued to blossom and in 1943, Evelyn and Don got married. This was during World War II, which Don was called up to serve in. It was tough for them to be apart, but Evelyn used the time to work in a factory making small parts for air crafts. She doesn't remember the names of the people she stayed with whilst working at the factory.

After the war, Evelyn and Don moved back to Mill Road and had two children, Greg and Gail. Don began work at Gurney Farm whilst Evelyn stayed home and looked after the children. Later in life, when the children were older, Evelyn worked as a cleaner for the vicar and in the Coop cashing cheques.

Now living at The Willows Care Home, Evelyn says she has lived a long and happy life! She thoroughly enjoyed celebrating her 100th birthday and looking back on her life milestones.



## Awards, Achievements and Milestones



### Samantha Crawley claims the cover of Care Home Professional!

Our Director of Care, Quality and Transformation, Samantha Crawley, was featured in January's 'Big Interview' feature by leading care sector magazine, Care Home Professional.

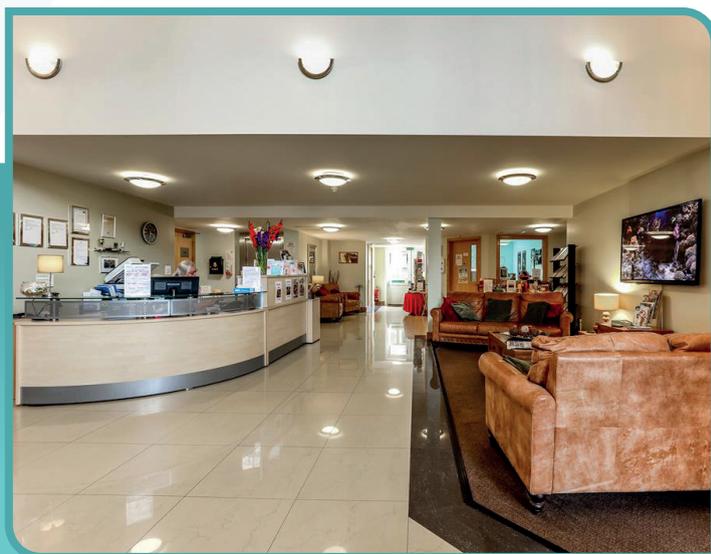
As well as featuring on the front page, inside the magazine Samantha goes into detail about how Excelcare became England's top care provider and shares more information about our core values and beliefs.



### Glennfield celebrate 13 years of caring

The people living and working at Glennfield Care Home in Cambridge recently celebrated 13 years of working. The team pulled out all the stops to make it special, including lively entertainment from vocal duo CJ and Catt, as well as cake and a glass of wine or two.

Happy 13 years of caring to Glennfield! Here's to 13 years more!



### Gary and Becky celebrate career milestones in Milton Keynes

Gary, the Regional Maintenance Manager in Milton Keynes celebrated his first full year at Excelcare. In true Excelcare family style, his colleagues came together to celebrate and congratulate him for his first year in this role. They all shared praise with Gary about how well he has done and had a good laugh and joke too. When asked if he wanted to say a few words, Gary said, "One year with Excelcare already – how did that happen?! I have really enjoyed working with the ladies at the regional office – they keep me on my toes, and I don't feel outnumbered at all lol! We're a great

team who work hard but know how to have fun and celebrate all the small wins! Roll on year 2!"

The celebrations didn't end there though, as Becky, Regional Learning and Development Lead passed her six-month probation on the same day! Everyone congratulated Becky and thanked her for all of her hard work in achieving this. The team also gifted her with a bottle of white wine to toast to her achievement after work. ►

They all posed for a picture together to mark the occasion; all be it without their colleague Gale who couldn't be there on the day. So, Gary decided to edit her into the picture, in the form of a pantomime dame!

To end the day, they enjoyed their favourite drinks and a slice of cake. A fitting close to a day of celebrations.

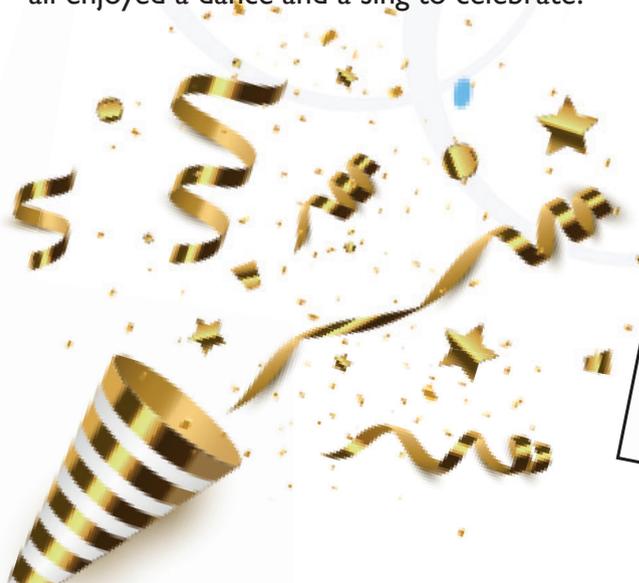


## Maria & Jon celebrate their 64th wedding anniversary

Maria & Jon from Etheldred House Care Home in Cambridge were shocked, when the home surprised them with a tea party for the 64th anniversary.

The pair sat down to enjoy an amazing cake, lovingly prepared by the chef at the home. Then they were able to open some Anniversary cards from the people living and working at Etheldred House.

Everyone extended big congratulations, and they all enjoyed a dance and a sing to celebrate.





# A career in caring

with **Excelcare**

**You will need:**  
A caring heart and a heartwarming smile

With 32 care homes across Cambridge, Essex, London and Milton Keynes, as well as a homecare service based in Tower Hamlets and our Support Office in Bromley, we are always looking for caring, kind and committed people to join our family.

## Would you like to be a part of our friendly and compassionate team?

### Do you have a kind heart?

Caring is the essence of Excelcare, and we are on the lookout for people who will care for the residents in our homes as much as we do.

### Do you want to feel appreciated?

We see every member of our team as a member of our family and we take every opportunity to express our gratitude for all that they do, be this through surprise gifts, our annual appreciation days or simply saying 'thank you for all you do!'

### Do you have a passion for learning & developing?

A career with Excelcare will see many new opportunities open up to you - our career pathways offer a variety of tailored training courses to transform your passions into the necessary skills.



## Your career pathway

**As part of the Excelcare family, you will enjoy a career where you can progress, feel secure, and feel an enormous sense of personal achievement from knowing you are helping other people.**

Whether you are looking for a career change, thinking of returning to the social care sector, or beginning a new career straight from school or college, there are always opportunities with Excelcare.

There are many different career paths in care; our Care Assistants support people with their daily routines, while Lifestyle Coordinators organise meaningful activities and entertainment to bring smiles to people every day. Our nurses

work as a team to ensure every person is as healthy and comfortable as possible, while our dedicated kitchen teams provide delicious hot meals three times a day. In addition, our management and administrative team members ensure all of the appropriate paperwork is in place for each individual, and ensure smooth-running of our care homes. We have developed our very own Career Pathway which has been designed to provide progression within each role.

Our Career Pathway provides each and every team member with opportunities to develop towards becoming a degree-level professional.



## Shilpa's Journey



Shilpa originally qualified as a nurse in India, where she studied and passed a four-year Bachelors in Nursing Degree. During her time in India, she worked in a 650-bedded hospital, where she developed her experience and was able to put the knowledge she had gained from her degree into practice. She worked in different areas of the hospital, further developing her nursing experience, before applying for the Overseas Nursing programme to continue her career in the UK.

Shilpa showed dedication to learning and commitment to providing the best care for people throughout her career at Excelcare. She has had a successful journey, achieved a number of promotions and is now a Care Manager at Stanley Wilson Lodge.

*"I wish to enlighten all nursing professionals that you have a great scope of practice, learning opportunities, leadership qualities and complex decision-making abilities in a nursing home setting. It's a career that allows you to become more independent, confident and a leader with great empathy towards residents and colleagues. I have successfully completed 10 years here, and I'm looking forward to many more."*

## No experience necessary...



Your time as a mechanic has been great, but you don't have much work right now – Harry was a mechanic, too, and despite living with dementia, he knows a carburettor from a head gasket, and loves to chat about his work whilst being helped with his meals.

**Harry needs YOU!**



So, you're a beautician and don't know how you can help? Marjorie loves to have her nails done and thrives on having chats.

**Marjorie needs YOU!**

We need people who care, who put the customer first and support people with kindness and a smile... Please do not worry about experience in care - if you have the right attitude, a kind heart, an honest approach and a willingness to learn, we can support you to support people just like Marjorie and Harry.



## Join us and receive...



Highly competitive rates & salaries



Excelcare Awards



Contributory pension scheme



Long term service awards



Uniform provided



Team Appreciation days



DBS paid for

**Excelcare**  
Careers

[careers.excelcareholdings.com](https://careers.excelcareholdings.com)  
[recruitment@excelcareholdings.com](mailto:recruitment@excelcareholdings.com)  
0208 313 5003

## Sharing is caring

Fitzwilliam Care Home wanted to emphasise how important their team members are, so they created a fun window display, showcasing that they think they're all champions.



Here is one of the beautiful paintings done by the people living at St Georges Court.



Dorothy lives at Hunters Down and has loved art throughout her life. Now, at Hunters Down, she displays her works of art in frames in her bedroom. Here are some of her favourites.



Sweyne Court repurposed the flower corsages from their 2021 Valentine's Day Ball to make these amazing pressed flower greeting cards!



The people at St Fillans worked together, making paper art to create this wonderful display for Valentine's Day.

The team at Windmill have painted a tree on one of the walls and invited residents, team members and loved ones to write memories on the leaves.

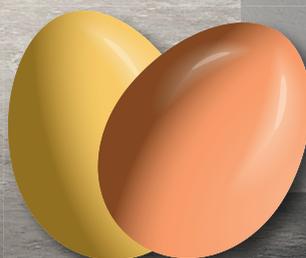


The people living at Primrose Croft had fun making sticker magnet kites.



The people living at Etheldred celebrated National Hug Day by creating a giant card, featuring a bear giving a hug

The people living at Sherrell House were recently sent a variety of stencils and materials from Fevered Sleep. As a result, they were able to make this wonderful leaf drawing!



## 6 excellent reasons to choose Excelcare



### Something for everyone

Our varied activities and events plan includes daily activities chosen by the people who live here, and provide the perfect opportunity to socialise and discover new hobbies!



### A home from home

Throughout our homes, everyone is welcome to spend time relaxing, socialising or enjoying watching some films. We also welcome you to make your own room homely by bringing any personal possessions with you.



### We love wellbeing

We understand the importance of keeping well and active. Our schedule, mealtimes and environment are each carefully and expertly designed with comfort and happiness in mind.



# THANK YOU!



### Connecting through technology

People are also able to keep in regular contact with their friends and family by telephone, or video calls on our dedicated wellbeing tablets.



### Our dedicated team

Our friendly and welcoming team are on hand to support you 24 hours a day. We also benefit from regular visits from our local GP's, District Nurses and Primary Care Teams.



### We're here for you

We are proud to provide care that is as individual as each person who lives here. We speak to everyone to find out their likes, dislikes and interests, to find the best way to support everyone.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter!

We would love for you to send us your feedback, or any suggestions you have for the next issue.

To get in touch please send an email to

**info@excelcareholdings.com**



The Easter Bunny has been up to mischief in this issue of The Voice and has hidden Easter eggs throughout the pages!

How many Easter eggs can you find? Send the correct number to [info@excelcareholdings.com](mailto:info@excelcareholdings.com) with your name and address, to be in for the chance to win a £25 gift card!



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