

WCS CARE NEWS

What we've achieved in 2017

Take a look at our latest annual review results... **Pages 3, 4, and 5**



Celebrating Care Home Open Day

Residents open their doors as part of national celebrations...

Pages 8 and 9



Meet Ernest Smedley MBE

Former miner Ernest shares his life story in 'Five minutes with'...

Page 15



Fun with friends...there's nothing like community spirit!

Care homes: a community within a community



By Christine Asbury

Chief Executive

It's easy for some people to feel isolated from local life when moving into a care home, where everything feels different. Some might see living in a care home as a barrier to accessing the community and trying new things or enjoying the things they've always done – however, we don't.

Care homes are themselves communities within communities and the people living there have the opportunity to make choices and live the life they want to.

This includes supporting local attractions and places of interest through the Oomph! Out & About service, which

we're doubling from two trips a month to four a month for residents living at our homes for older people (see **page 7**) from this Summer.

It's welcoming all kinds of people to enjoy fun and laughter in their home as part of Care Home Open Day (see **pages 8 and 9**), and building the

foundations for a growing and popular service in our Rugby homes, supported by over 20 local volunteers (see **page 6**).

And we're working closely with Coventry University on research to understand just how important communities are in care homes, which we'll share more about in a future edition.

About NEWS

WCS News is one way newcomers to WCS Care get to know us, and also a way for people to share their events, thoughts, and ideas.

We try to capture the everyday things and show how people carry on doing the things they've always done – and also try new experiences.

WCS News is only possible thanks to the thoughts and ideas of everyone who lives or works with WCS Care – so if there's something you'd like to see here, please get in touch.

About

WCS Care is an independent, not-for-profit care provider, and every day we invite people to choose the things they want to do and to try new opportunities, so that every day is a day well lived.

We started operating in 1992 with a philosophy that put people at the heart of everything we do – it has shaped us into what we are today and continues to be the benchmark of the care we provide. We understand that everyone is different and what matters to our residents, matters to us.

Our staff are skilled and enthusiastic people who find their roles rewarding and enjoyable, which enables us

to offer care with a truly friendly and personal touch.

Your everyday experience of WCS Care should reflect our values – play, be there, make someone's day, and choose your attitude. We also believe that the standard you walk past is the standard you accept, so if you see staff walking past something that isn't acceptable or your experience doesn't live up to your expectations, please let us know – we value your feedback.



Get in touch

You can get in touch with WCS Care in the following ways:

- Talk to any member of the team or to a home's Duty Manager (their name is displayed in reception)
- Call WCS Care's Head Office on **01926 864 242**
- Leave a voicemail on our Chief Executive's hotline on **01926 856 130** or email chief.executive@wcs-care.co.uk
- Call the relevant home – numbers are on the back of this newsletter
- Email info@wcs-care.co.uk or the relevant home using the email addresses on the back page
- Complete a WCS Care Comment Card found in each of the homes' receptions (you can fill these in anonymously if you wish – all cards go directly back to Head Office)
- Speak at a Residents' Forum – ask your Home Manager about the next one
- Write to our Customer Service Support team using the address on the back page



Contact WCS News:

Email: news@wcs-care.co.uk

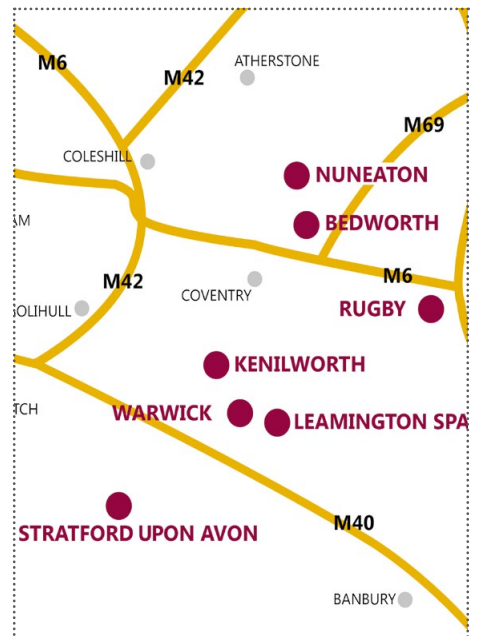
Or call: 01926 864 242

See also:

wcs-care.co.uk
Twitter: @WCS_Care
Facebook: /wccare



Our locations:



Annual review: what we've achieved in 2017



Overall, the average quality score for life at WCS Care is **8.2 out of 10**, the same as our previous survey...



By Ed Russell

Director of Innovation and Development

You'll often hear us talk about our ambition of making 'every day a day well lived' for people living in a WCS Care home – but what does it mean?

It's about providing opportunities to help people do the things they've always done and being able to try new things. It's also about the little things – the everyday experiences that mean just as much.

And it's why we run our annual satisfaction survey to make sure your daily life is how you want it.

Last November, we asked you what you thought about your home. You may also have been along to one of the annual review meetings where we published the results of the survey and to hear more about what your home's plans are for 2018.

Around **one in three people** responded to the survey in November 2017, so thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback.

We've collated all of the results across WCS Care to give an average score in five key areas: catering and food, personal care and support, daily living, premises, and management.

You'll find the results over the next few pages.

Highest rated areas

Below are the areas you've rated highest in the November 2017 survey:

- Facilities and amenities
- Accessibility of lounges and other public areas
- How staff carry out their work; staff attitudes and manner; and satisfaction with additional snacks and drinks offered

Lowest rated areas

Below are the areas you've rated lowest in the November 2017 survey:

- Social activities provided or arranged in the home
- Efforts to keep up with your personal hobbies or interests
- How residents get on with each other in general

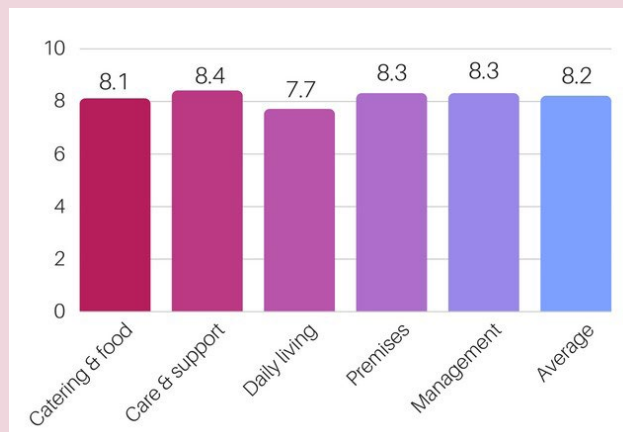
Most improved areas

Below are the most improved areas in 2017 (compared to our previous survey):

- Satisfaction with additional snacks and drinks – 8.6 out of 10 (up from 7.8)
- Facilities and amenities – 8.9 out of 10 (up from 8.2)
- Accessibility of lounges and other public areas – 8.9 out of 10 (up from 8.3)

Average ratings

Your average rating for each of the five areas across WCS Care were:

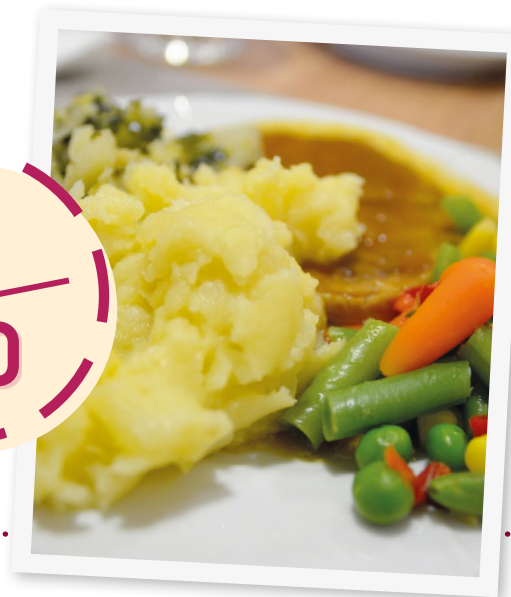


Catering and food

Overall, catering and food rated well with an average score of **8.1 out of 10** across the homes in 2017.

Satisfying individual requirements (**8.5 out of 10**), and additional snacks and drinks (**8.6 out of 10**) saw the most improvement, compared to **8.3 out of 10** and **7.8 out of 10** respectively in the previous survey.

Home managers will be focusing on the presentation of meals and the service, as well as the atmosphere at mealtimes.



Personal care and support

Overall, personal care and support received the highest average score on the survey with people rating it as **8.4 out of 10**.

Additional services and treatments saw an increase, rising from **8.5 out of 10** in the previous survey to **8.6 out of 10** in 2017.

You've continued to rate staff attitudes highly, remaining at **8.6 out of 10** in this survey, the same as the previous survey.

We'll be refreshing our values with staff this year as they're the foundation of our culture and our care. We've also invested in a new benefits scheme for staff and an employee assistance programme because we recognise that happy staff means happy residents.



Daily living

You've told us that you're generally happy with the daily living arrangements with an average of **7.7 out of 10**.

Social activities (**7.3 out of 10**) and personal hobbies/interests (**7.4 out of 10**) remain unchanged from the previous survey, however we recognise there is still some work to do in these areas.

Our home managers are already looking at ways to enhance the social experience – in Rugby for example, we're working with local churches and around 20 volunteers to provide religious and spiritual support, befriending, and 1-1 activities for residents (see [page 6](#)).

We're also doubling the number of [Oomph!](#) Out & About trips to local places of interest (see [page 7](#)).



Premises

You're happy with your home's premises, according to the survey, with an average rating of 8.3 out of 10.

Facilities and amenities, and repairs and maintenance saw the biggest improvements this time around with a rating of **8.9 out of 10**, compared to **8.2 out of 10** and **8.3 out of 10** previously.

You continue to be pleased with your home's decorations and furnishings overall. We're employing another handyman to speed up maintenance and repairs.



Management

Overall, you're happy with the management of your home with an average rating across the group of 8.3 out of 10.

Home Manager availability increased from **8.3 out of 10** on average in the previous survey to **8.5 out of 10**. Generally, you're happy with your involvement in the daily life of the home, scoring it an average of **8.3 out of 10** – the same as previously.

The way managers get things done (**7.9 out of 10**) and their effort to create a good atmosphere (**8.5 out of 10**) fell slightly from the previous survey when they were **8.2** and **8.6** respectively.

We've introduced the Relatives' Gateway – which provides a window into a loved-one's care, wherever you have an internet connection – to help improve communication between home managers and relatives.

Just over half of residents have at least one relative signed up to it.

Most relatives tell us they appreciate this level of transparency. Although the gateway still has a few glitches, we'll continue to work with the developers on this valuable tool – information is power!

What happens next?

Your Home Manager has put together an action plan based on the outcome of your home's survey results. This plan highlights what the team aims to do in response to your feedback.

If you've not already seen the results of your home's survey, you can ask for a copy in reception or speak to your Home Manager who will be happy to talk you through them. Alternatively, you'll find them on your home's page on our website.

Right: An example of your home's plan for 2018...



Volunteers bring the 'gift of time' in Rugby

Starting with one volunteer at one of our Rugby homes in 2016, we've worked closely with The Gift of Years Rugby to increase regular services of worship, befriending, singing groups, and 1-1 activities at Drovers House, Westlands, and Dewar Close, thanks to a team of over 20 local church volunteers.



'We are all people who have a great love of older people and we're working in partnership with the care homes to provide for the spiritual and emotional care of the residents, but also to be a supportive presence to relatives and staff', said Lindsay Pelloquin, Lead Chaplain at the Gift of Years Rugby.

'The great gift we bring is time. We have time for people, time to talk, time to get involved in the activities that people enjoy doing.'

Last year alone, there were over 3,700 volunteer interactions with residents living in those three WCS Care homes.

To find out more about volunteering with WCS Care, visit www.wcs-care.co.uk/volunteering.



Volunteers from The Gift of Years Rugby deliver a worship service at Drovers House in Rugby...

Dot knits and natters while sharing her South African story

As a former Head Parlour Maid, Dot's used to dealing with big occasions but as she approaches her centenary at her Fairfield home in Bedworth, she's happy doing what she's always done – knitting!

She said: 'I used to knit as a child but once I started work, I never had time because I'd be on duty from 6am to 10pm daily.'

Dot spent most of her working life waiting on tables for families in large homes across Hampshire, before moving to the Midlands in 1985.

It's only more recently that Dot's re-kindled her hobby and knitted hand-made cardigans and clothing for

orphan children in South Africa; something she's been doing for the last six years.

'My son and daughter belong to a gardening club and some of the people there belong to the church, who helped organise this.'

'I've probably made and sent hundreds over the years. Since moving into Fairfield six months ago, I've already made six sets of cardigans! It's something very worthwhile that helps keep my hands busy', Dot added.



Above: Dot's knitted hundreds of clothes for orphan children in South Africa...

Even more opportunities to get Out & About

You might remember that we introduced a new minibus service last summer that gave residents access to even more excursions after we became one of the first care home groups in England to use Oomph! 'Out & About'.

Right: Hazel, who lives at Fairfield, enjoyed meeting new four-legged friends at Hatton Country World...



Complete with an onboard conductor, 'Out & About' takes people from our ten homes for older people to a host of carefully researched destinations including museums, music and sports events, and art galleries, as well as markets, pubs, and farms to name only a few local attractions.

Initially, each of our homes ran two excursions per month, in addition to our usual visits to places linked to residents' own personal interests.

Just over 12 months on, it's proven such a hit that we're offering even more opportunities to get out and about and are pleased to announce we're doubling outings to around four per month for each of our homes for older people from July.

Last year, WCS Care residents filled over 2,200 seats on the 'Out & About' service, with museums, garden centres, country parks, and farms among their favourite places to visit.

Hazel went on a recent 'Out & About' trip to Hatton Country World near Warwick – among our top ten most visited locations – and explained why she enjoys getting on board: *'It's fantastic to have lots more opportunities to explore some of the exciting attractions near my home and a little further afield.'*

Top 10 Out & About locations (WCS Care)

No.	Location	No. of times visited
1	Coventry Transport Museum	12
2	Blooms Wyevale Garden Centre, Rugby	9
3	Castle Brook, Kenilworth	7
4	Dobbies Garden Centre, Atherstone	5
5	Redwings Oxhill – Horse Sanctuary	5
6	Stratford-upon-Avon – Butterfly Farm	5
7	Coombe Abbey Country Park (near Coventry)	3
8	Draycote Water (near Rugby)	3
9	Hatton Country World (near Warwick)	3
10	Paradise Found Educational Farm, Sapcote (Leics)	3

** visits from June 2017 to 15 May 2018*

'I got up close to some lovely farmyard animals including goats – and smaller animals like guinea pigs – at Hatton Country World on my last trip and I'm looking forward to even more experiences like this in the future.'

And with the average location rating of 4.6 out of 5, Hazel's not the only one who enjoys the outings!

Speak to your Home Manager for more information about Oomph! Out & About and how you can go along.

Drovers House and the 'Free Buskateers'

It was all aboard the 'Free Buskateers' as people living at Drovers House prepared to set off for another fantastic trip on the 'Out & About' bus...

There was added excitement as residents learned their Rugby home's Deputy Manager, Steph Sinclair, had come up with the name of their bus as part of a competition organised by Oomph!

So, Kay and Gloria were only too pleased to share the news and help present Steph with her prize – a lovely hamper – which she donated to Drovers House for Care Home Open Day. *Well done Steph!*



Above: Kay and Gloria helped announce the news to Drovers House Deputy Manager, Steph Sinclair...

Celebrating your community:

residents open their doors for Care Home Open Day



Linking communities was the theme for National Care Home Open Day this year, as residents in all 12 WCS Care homes welcomed neighbours into their home on 21 April to share fun, laughter, and plenty of merriment.

While it's an opportunity to show people what care homes are really like, it helps form positive relationships across generations; it's also a great excuse for a party – and, as you'll see from the photos, residents know exactly how to do that well...

Right:

A pony called Boo stole the show at Attleborough Grange as residents welcomed the community to their Nuneaton home...



Above: At Drayton Court, residents pulled out the stops for an action-packed Care Home Open Day in Nuneaton, complete with a fire-breather, stilt-walker and plenty of dancing...



Above: Residents at Fairfield held a best dressed queen competition and English tea party to celebrate Care Home Open Day and Her Majesty's 92nd birthday...



Left: There was plenty of fun on four wheels as people living at Dewar Close invited friends and family for a garden party in Rugby...

Left: Over at Castle Brook, it was a picture-perfect afternoon in Kenilworth, until the singer made it rain...



Right: Meanwhile in Rugby, people living at Drovers House invited the town's Mayor, Cllr Mrs Belinda Garcia, to join in with their traditional fete...



Left: There was some friendly competition at Mill Green as people living at their Rugby home held a bake-off and tasting competition...



Above: Residents at Sycamores shared their dance moves with staff and visitors to their 70s-themed celebrations...



Left: The 'Queen' made an 'appearance' at Four Ways as the local community joined in with the Royal-themed party in Leamington Spa...



Right: The mixed weather failed to dampen spirits at Newlands in Kenilworth where there was plenty of entertainment on offer ...



Left: Photo competition judge Harry, who lives at The Limes, was delighted to launch WCS Care's greetings cards at his Stratford-upon-Avon home ahead of Care Home Open Day...



Left: Westlands officially kicked off the celebrations for Care Home Open Day with a Royal birthday party including live music, cake competition, and fancy dress...



50 years at the centre of the Camp Hill community...

Drayton Court has been part of a Nuneaton community for 50 years, a milestone it shares with its neighbour, the Church of St Mary and St John, so our PR Manager Stuart Goodwin was invited for a cup of tea and a chat with the vicar, Father Thomas Wintle.

'The church already had a close relationship with Drayton Court through the previous vicar who had a very strong connection here. Within a week of first knocking on the door, I felt like part of the furniture, which was great', said Father Thomas.

'I was initially very nervous about working with people with dementia as I hadn't done it before but the trust and confidence in me was great. Staff have been really helpful and some of the relationships that I've formed with residents have been brilliant.'

The Church of St Mary and St John is nestled proudly on the edges of the Camp Hill estate which was built by the local authority and the National Coal Board in the middle of the 20th century – just 100 yards from Drayton Court.

Opening within the space of a few months of each other in the late 1960s,

they've been at the heart of a tight-knit community ever since.

Father Thomas joined the Church of St Mary and St John three years ago as Assistant Curate. The Church supports residents at Drayton Court with their religious and spiritual needs but also provides a listening ear for people who simply want to have a chat.

'I've imagined myself as the unofficial Chaplain and that has been made easier by the welcoming nature of Drayton Court, where I can just be myself and get to know people – and work out what I can offer on a personal and spiritual level to residents.'

'We've got a lay person who goes in for services and also just goes to visit as well. At Christmas, we offer a carol service and we find ways to work with the home throughout the year – we've recently started a side-by-side café with

Below: Drayton Court – celebrating 50 years in the community...



the Alzheimer's Society, which is very well attended by residents.'

The Church regularly attends events organised by Drayton Court too including Care Home Open Day, which this year coincided with the home's 50th birthday celebrations.

Father Thomas added: *'I hope we just keep building on the relationship we already have moving forwards – I couldn't ask for anything more from Drayton Court in terms of how the staff and the home in general have helped us support residents.'*

'We're a presence and as long as we're allowed to keep doing that at Drayton Court, then I think we can't ask for more.'

"Staff have been really helpful and some of the relationships that I've formed with residents have been brilliant."



Father Thomas Wintle shares his thoughts on the importance of community spirit in Camp Hill...

Drayton Court's caterer Tracey Keeling is celebrating a milestone of her own – 32 years behind the stove! Read more on page 16.

The green, green 'grass' of home...

With the summer well and truly here, you might be used to seeing people in your local community playing bowls on the green... but what about on the rooftop?

Not something you'd expect to see in your town, and certainly not something you'd expect in a care home...until now, that is, at Castle Brook!

Keen bowler Doreen is delighted that her home's new rooftop bowling green is now open, albeit a year later than planned, complete with artificial turf, score cards, and of course some traditional caps and hats to keep the sun out of players' eyes.

Surrounded by other residents, friends, and her family – who have donated a wonderful set of woods, specially for the occasion – Doreen enjoyed sharing her skills and love for bowls at the launch on the 5th of July 2018.

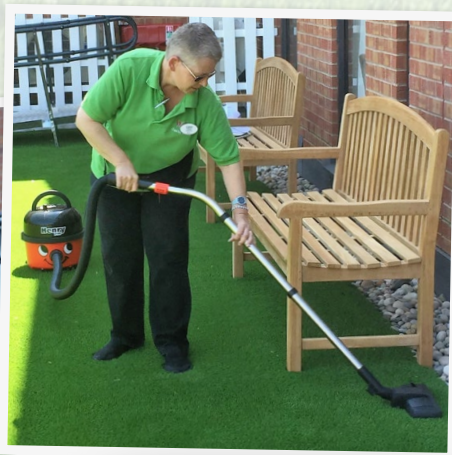
'It's fantastic to be able to play my favourite game in my home and be able to share the experience with my friends and family, whatever the weather!'

Louise Goode, who recently joined Castle Brook from Drovers House as the new Home Manager, said: *'We're really excited that the rooftop bowling green is now open. It's certainly created a buzz around the home – we have a few bowls players at Castle Brook who've been eagerly watching progress, as well as wannabe players who wouldn't mind giving it a go for the first time.'*

'We'd like to say thank you to Doreen and her family for the generous donation of the woods, which will go a long way to inspiring future fans of the sport and ensuring seasoned players feel right at home.'

It's one of a number of ways that carers help encourage people to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine, alongside other features including the side-by-side bike-for-two and cycle track, secure gardens, and the Oomph! 'Out & About' service.

'It's fantastic to be able to play my favourite game in my home and be able to share the experience with my friends and family, whatever the weather!'



Above: Lifestyle Coach Carol made sure everything was as it should be ahead of the launch...

Left: Doreen and her husband Bob joined our Chief Executive Christine to launch rooftop bowling...

Right: Bowls is not the only sport you can play on Castle Brook's rooftop green...



Breaking-ground on our ground-breaking new Warwick care home

Just over a year ago, Woodside in Warwick closed its doors for the final time to make way for an inspirational new £7.5 million 'village experience' for 72 older people and people with dementia, which is being built on the existing site at Spinney Hill.

It'll include smaller, more domestic family-sized households for up to six people with ensuite showers and toilets for everyone, a relaxing spa, café, pamper salon, deluxe cinema, mini mart, traditional launderette, table tennis, and companion cycling for two. Doors are set to open in Autumn 2019.

Now that the demolition of Woodside is complete, former resident Val – who now lives at Castle Brook in Kenilworth – was keen to celebrate the start of a new chapter at Warwick and officially marked the start of construction with a ground-breaking ceremony.

Val welcomed invited guests to Spinney Hill on 27 April 2018 to reminisce about her former home and to find out more about the exciting plans.

She was joined by the Mayor of Warwick, Cllr Stephen Cross, Cllr Richard Edgington from Warwick District Council, Edward Hudson from developer Deeley Construction, and Kenny Nelson from the

Royal Bank of Scotland who've helped fund the project.

WCS Care's Christine Asbury (Chief Executive), Ed Russell (Director of Innovation and Development), Paresh Parekh (Director of Finance), and Jo Barnett (former Woodside carer-turned-hostess at Castle Brook) also joined in.

Val said: 'I have some very happy memories of Woodside but I'm excited about seeing the new home take shape over the next 18 months. Moving to Castle Brook has given me a taster of the facilities that'll be available at Warwick next year and I'm really looking forward to seeing the finished result.'

Christine Asbury, Chief Executive, added: 'We're bringing many of the ideas that have already had a positive impact on health and wellbeing for people living with dementia into

Below: Former Woodside resident Val directs the ground-breaking ceremony at WCS Care's new Warwick home...



the design of our new home in Warwick, along with a host of new features such as circadian rhythm lighting.

'It's a really exciting time at WCS Care as we continue to push the boundaries of innovation and creativity in care to create plenty of opportunities for people to live life independently in a safe, enabling home.'

If you've got any questions about the new home or would like to work with us at WCS Care, visit www.wcs-care.co.uk/warwick for more information.



Below: An artist's impression of what the new Warwick home will look like...

Above: Invited guests included the Mayor of Warwick, a local councillor, and former Woodside staff...



News in brief

Photo competition-winning cards now on sale

Greetings cards featuring the top 20 images from our recent photo competition have gone on sale across WCS Care homes.

All money raised from the cards will go towards helping make every day well lived for residents including new activities and entertainment.

You can pick up the cards for £1 each and you'll find them on reception.



Above: First prize winner Sophie Cheshire's design is one of 20 on the cards



Right: Tracy Johnson, Director of Delivery

Introducing Tracy Johnson – our new Director of Delivery

Tracy Johnson is the latest new friendly face at WCS Care.

Joining the Executive Leadership Team as Director of Delivery, Tracy is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day care across the group, helping teams deliver our ambition of making every day well lived for residents.

Tracy is a qualified nurse and HR professional from Cheshire, and has almost 25 years of experience in the care sector, mostly in large care home groups.

Feel free to introduce yourself when you see her in your home.

Shopping that'll give residents plenty more reasons to smile

Did you know that you can help raise money towards making every day well lived for residents at WCS Care, just by shopping on Amazon?

And the best bit is, it won't cost you a penny more! We've just signed up with AmazonSmile – Amazon's charity website that donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases to your chosen charity.

Simply login in to your usual Amazon account (or sign up if you've not got one) through <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> and type 'Wcs Care Group Limited' in the search box to make us your charity of choice and shop as usual (T&Cs apply). *Thank you!*



Right: Another reason to smile while shopping online...

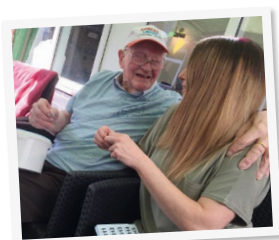
Looking for photos of the fun?

We have a number of ways for you to stay up-to-date with the fun and laughter as it happens across WCS Care homes:

Our Facebook page is packed full of everyday photos and stories. From residents preparing delicious desserts to giving their homes a Spring makeover, it's all there.

And we make sure we only use photos of people who have given written consent, while also assessing each photo to ensure residents' dignity and privacy are maintained at all times.

Simply visit www.facebook.com/wcscare to like, comment, and share with your friends and family.



Our Twitter page shows you what the wider WCS Care team is doing and highlights our work with partners.

To see our tweets, visit www.twitter.com/wcs_care where we share our latest stories.



Facebook in numbers



Over 1,254 page likes
*up to 31 May 2018



Reaching over **one million** people
from 01/01/17 to 31/5/18

Twitter in numbers



Over 752 followers
*as at 31 May 2018



Over 491 tweets
*as at 31 May 2018

2018 birthday milestones



Residents don't need much of an excuse for a celebration and there are too many to mention here, but we've made sure there's room for some landmark birthdays!

Former Matron's Secretary Molly marked her 105th birthday in June and invited friends and family to celebrate with her at her Castle Brook home.

Home Manager Louise joined some of the team to deliver a lovely bouquet of flowers from WCS Care, while Molly opened her card from the Queen.



105 YEARS OLD!



101 YEARS OLD!



Gardening and spending time outdoors are just some of the secrets to a happy 101 years, according to Dorothy who celebrated her milestone birthday at the Sycamores in June.

Surrounded by friends and family at her Leamington Spa home, the former tap factory machinist reminisced about her life before marking the special occasion with a delicious buffet.

And Care Co-ordinator Trish popped in with a special bouquet from WCS Care.



From zipwire to wing-walk, it's on Harry's bucket list!

A *bsailing down a tower, riding on a zipwire, and completing a wing-walk are just a few of the experiences on Harry's bucket list before he turns 90 at The Limes later this year.*

'I keep hearing people talking about having a bucket list and didn't really know what it involved but the more I learned about it, the more I wanted to do it – so I thought why not?'

'I'm particularly looking forward to the wing-walking if I can get that organised and I'm sure some of my family would volunteer to join in with me!'

There are a few more relaxing to-do's on Harry's list though including visiting a music and dance festival, Spring walks around the Cotswolds, and a repeat of something he did to celebrate his last big milestone.

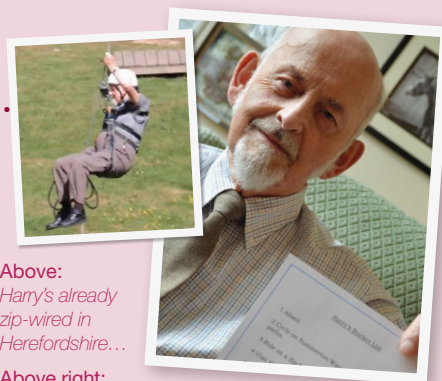
Harry added: *'We went on a steam train near Quorn at Leicester when I turned 80 and enjoyed a lovely meal with a bottle of wine*

or two and a cake. It was raining that day and the visibility was poor, so it would be good to do that again with better weather!'

And on his 70th birthday, Harry cycled up and down a hill in Snitterfield; a village near his home town of Stratford-upon-Avon.

Harry recalled: *'It was a particularly big hill, so I decided that each ride up represented ten years. I didn't want to lose count, so I put seven peas in my pocket – each time I got to the top, I dropped one of the peas until I had none left. It worked a treat!'*

Keep watching our Facebook page for news of how Harry's plans progress.



Above: Harry's already zip-wired in Herefordshire...

Above right: An abseil and steam railway trip are among his other to-do's...



Above: A family visit to Kiftsgate is also ticked off...

5 minutes with...

Ernest Smedley, resident at Attleborough Grange

Meeting the Queen is among the highlights so far for 84-year-old Ernest Smedley and we sent our PR Manager Stuart Goodwin to his Attleborough Grange home to find out more about his extraordinary life...



Above: Ernest proudly wears his MBE and long service medals at Attleborough Grange next to his son Phillip

Hello Ernest, thanks for talking to us. Could you tell us a little about you?

I was born in Gun Hill, Arley, and have lived there all of my life. I married my wife Connie in 1954 at Chilvers Coton Church after meeting her at a dance in Nuneaton.

I've got four brothers and we all worked down the local pit, Arley Colliery (which later became Daw Mill), along with my dad and grandad who was a foreman

– it was a very tough job but only a two-minute walk from home.

Have you always been a miner?

I spent around 18 years working at the coal face and building underground tunnels.

However, I first started working when I was 15 as a farm hand, doing everything from hand-milking cows to harvesting and general labouring, which I really enjoyed, and I think that's behind my continued love of the outdoors and gardening.

In 1964, I started working with the Police Specials where I spent over 30 wonderful years.

That sounds fantastic – what are your memories of your time with the Police Specials?

I've seen some interesting sights over the years. Sadly, there were some tragic moments that stick out during my time in the Specials, like being on duty during the Co-op hall disaster in Nuneaton – a magnificent ballroom that had seen the likes of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.

On New Year's Eve in 1965, four people lost their lives as party-goers got caught up in a crush on the stairwell. It's a day that will stay with me forever.

Meeting the Queen when I received my MBE for over 30 years with the Police Specials has to be my fondest memory. She is a very nice person, very pleasant to meet. She asked how long I'd been with the force. Unfortunately, I didn't get to spend very long with her and she didn't even offer me a cup of tea!

Getting the long-service award with the Specials was also a highlight for me. Not many Specials have the long-service Police medal; I think there's only one other person, in Atherstone (North Warwickshire) I believe.



Above: Ernest received his long service medal from the Police Specials...

5 minutes with...

Tracey Keeling, Caterer at Drayton Court



Hello Tracey, thanks for talking to us – could you tell us a little about you first of all?

I've lived in Nuneaton all of my life, growing up on Hollystitches Road before moving to Bucks Hill, where I've been since I got married – 30 years in May! I have two children, one is 28 and the other is 25. And I'm the middle sibling to an older brother and a younger sister.

My favourite childhood memory was going outside with the other children until 9 or 10 o'clock at night and playing 'tag' or 'kirby' on the green patch near my house – and then our mothers would come out and shout for us to come in for bed!

Have you always worked in care?

When I left college, I worked as a Chambermaid in Teignmouth before working in the kitchens at Bramcote Barracks during the miner's strike. It was quite interesting because we fed the officers who were policing the strikes.

I did mainly nights. One night, I was sat around the table and the radio came on by itself, which startled me. One of the

Above: Over the years, Tracey has shared plenty of laughter with Service Manager Shirley Randle...

chefs said: 'Don't worry, it's only Fred, he's coming to say hello!'. It turns out that the kitchen was haunted by a former US soldier who died in an accident at the barracks some time ago.

It was a bit daunting as I wasn't very old at the time. I remember thinking 'I don't want to go back there' and that's when I decided to move to the Eye View Hospital, now Leigh Village in Bedworth, and then to Drayton Court, where I've been for almost 32 years.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Making sure residents are happy and well-fed as well as getting to know what people like and don't like.

I really enjoy having the opportunity to make lots of cakes too, especially Victoria sponges! Residents really enjoy roast dinners and casseroles, which are another firm favourite of mine to make.

Have there been any moments in the last 32 years that have really stuck out for you?

Not long after moving to Drayton Court, we had to move out to change heating from oil to gas, so we took a lot of residents to Skegness on a trip, going to the beach and having a great time. Then during a refurbishment, we spent a lot of time in one of our Rugby homes, which was a lot of fun.

What would you say has changed here over the last 32 years?

It's all changed for the better over the last 30 years or so. The ambience of the home, the redecoration, new equipment in the kitchen – it all helps us create a great experience for residents. And there are plenty of stories to tell working with Shirley all these years... but I'll keep those for another time.

Get in touch:

Newlands, Whites Row,
Kenilworth, Warwickshire,
CV8 1HW
T 01926 864242
F 01926 864240
E info@wcs-care.co.uk



[/wcscare](https://www.facebook.com/wcscare) [@WCS_Care](https://twitter.com/WCS_Care)

Our homes:

Attleborough Grange	attleborough@wcs-care.co.uk	024 7638 3543
Castle Brook	castlebrook@wcs-care.co.uk	01926 353 160
Dewar Close	dewar@wcs-care.co.uk	01788 811 724
Drayton Court	drayton@wcs-care.co.uk	024 7639 2797
Drovers House	drovers@wcs-care.co.uk	01788 573 955
Fairfield	fairfield@wcs-care.co.uk	024 7631 1424
Four Ways	fourways@wcs-care.co.uk	01926 421 309
The Limes	limes@wcs-care.co.uk	01789 267 076
Mill Green	millgreen@wcs-care.co.uk	01788 552 366
Newlands	newlands@wcs-care.co.uk	01926 859 600
Sycamores	sycamores@wcs-care.co.uk	01926 420 964
Westlands	westlands@wcs-care.co.uk	01788 576 604