



Life behind the scenes in a care home

Matthew Airey, director of Wessex Care and chair of Wiltshire Care Partnership, is also national director of the Registered Nursing Home Association. With a wealth of experience in the care sector, he explains how they face the current challenges.

AS FOR everyone, 2020 proved to be an immense challenge which for us started very early in the year when we could see the pandemic spreading from China. I asked my eldest brother who has a mind for accurate facts and science, and time on his hands having

retired after 50 years at sea, to research what was happening and what the risk to our residents, community customers and our staff might be. His all to brief report made chilling reading and prompted us early to face the challenge of preparing for the relative unknown (referred to as business continuity planning).

Our key focus was how to keep everyone as safe as possible and within our BCP, we already had a pandemic response which required some alteration and has developed with time and experience but at least gave us somewhere to start.

So, priorities became: increased focus and



scrubs, so that our industrial washing system was available to all staff. We even had a food and essentials bank available before our health and social care teams received priority access to the supermarkets.

‘The Wessex Care family rallied to the cause’

We introduced enhanced isolation and podding techniques to protect residents from any potential outbreak ensuring they were well cared for by consistent staff in a controlled clean and safe environment while still able to have regular contact with their loved ones electronically. Along with this, we appointed a welfare and engagement lead, whose sole job was to ensure the continued support of regular contact between residents and family and to deliver, with our welfare team, daily engagement activities and experience for all our residents to keep their minds and bodies as active as possible.

To date we have supported more than 1300 contact visits across the range from electronically (Zoom) to more recently the use of indoor screened visiting pods. In addition

to what our welfare people provided in house we have delivered more than 200 engagement activities from yoga to a virtual tour of London, including more than 40 live music events.

In mid-March and as part of our strategic partnership with Wiltshire Council and the NHS, we were asked if we could change our rehabilitation service into a dedicated hospital discharge support unit to provide urgent patient flow from the hospital with Covid patients who needed close nursing to wellness or supporting with their end-of-life care. A team, led by our daughter and company operations director Jodie Scott, was set up to deliver this service, which they wanted operational before the easter weekend when the Covid-19 spike was expected to hit.

The Wessex Care family rallied to the cause as did our residents to ensure this service was safe, contained and fully operational ready to support the hospital before the easter weekend. This required staff and residents moving and a volunteer group of staff to work in the Covid+HDSU. Everyone, no matter their role, was so dedicated, professional and committed to

Above: The Wessex Care family – Jodie Scott, Matthew Airey, Pauline Airey and Christian Airey.

Previous page: The Wessex Care team on duty-dressed in full PPE, summer 2020.

implementation of our infection prevention and control strategies including increasing cleaning and decontamination routines, further updated training for all staff on IPC but also enhanced levels of personal protection equipment and the introduction of UV-C decontamination robot, the first time this type of decontamination has been delivered outside of a specialist environment like a hospital. Later, using specialist fogging machines and luminometers in our arsenal to decontaminate visiting areas and double check that our cleaning and decontamination process had worked.

Supporting our staff to protect themselves and thus protect our residents and community customers by ensuring adequate supplies of PPE, financially supporting self-isolation if they or their family were unwell in any way, joining the early testing pilots, providing free accommodation for those who wanted to move away from family and closer to work through to the change from uniforms to



making this work while ensuring the welfare and safety of our current residents was maintained.

‘We have lost personal friends and family’

The residents and their families were so supportive - many offering, so kindly, to help that one felt truly part of a community and not in an isolated and scary place. This was followed by other so generous support from the direct community, by our neighbours all coming out in front of our services to clap, to the free food and PPE that was made and delivered. A huge thank you to all of these wonderful people, you know who you are.

Here, I want to specially mention the Care Home Visitors charity whom we have worked with for many years. They changed, it seemed

overnight, what they do, as they could no longer directly visit, and began sending letters and cards to our residents and then provided us with a number of additional iPads to support residents maintaining contact with families and engagement in various online activities. Thank you so much, we know many residential care services across Wiltshire benefited from your support throughout this period and today.

This last year has seen us all in the Wessex Care family deal with some great times, like the birth of several babies, and with some deeply sad times where we have lost residents and personal friends and family. But throughout, our amazing teams and individuals have held fast to their commitment to do whatever they can to protect their residents and community care customers. There have been tears and laughter despite this pandemic and a sense of comradeship and pride at what has been achieved. It has truly been a road from fear to pride.

In September, we prepared for winter with January to March being the highest

risk months. We have been preparing for a perfect possible storm of Covid, mixed with seasonal flu and with hospitals trying to get normal operational systems back up and running, also mixed with delivering substantial increased testing, an unprecedented vaccination programme and while also keeping everyone safe.

Massive challenges lie ahead for us and for our health and social care colleagues. But we are ready, we have done it once and we can and will do it again.

Thank you to each and every one of our amazing employees and to our residents and relatives for their fortitude, understanding and forbearance. Thank you to all our health and social care colleagues wherever you are and whatever you do - you are all amazing. Finally, a very special thank you to our community for your unwavering support, we promise to continue to be there for you as you have been there for us.

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The Wessex Care team with the Inivos UV-C decontamination machine.

London retirees are escaping the city for the country to add money to their pension pots

ACCORDING TO recent research by BlackRock, more than half (51%) of savers in defined contribution pension schemes in the UK are worried about their financial futures and think they do not have enough in their pension pots to enjoy a comfortable retirement.

However, London retirees can utilise the capital's high property prices by selling their home and buying out of London, allowing them to use the difference to top up their pension pot. Later living village Wadswick Green in Corsham is seeing such a surge of activity from buyers moving from London and the home counties as prices are much cheaper in Corsham compared with the city.

Apartments at Wadswick Green in Wiltshire start from £239,950, compared to the average selling price of a similar-sized flat in London of around £720,374, which would allow retirees to top up their pension pot by more

than £480,000 without them having to downsize.

Commenting on the surge of people moving to Wadswick Green from London and the Home Counties,

Sales adviser Debbie Fellows says: "The key driving factor for these buyers is price and escaping the M25. In comparison to London, prices are so much cheaper here, and residents can release equity from their current home and not have to put it straight back into property. It also means residents can have more room and "rightsized", meaning they can live more comfortably and have spare rooms for hobbies. Viewers are

surprised and delighted with the picture windows and balconies available in all apartments, many with amazing views of the surrounding countryside."

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- To find out more call 01225 220 948 or visit www.rangefordvillages.co.uk



Providing everyone with a place to call home

WESSEX CARE is a family-run group of residential care homes and domiciliary care services in Salisbury, Wiltshire with a distinctly different approach to looking after vulnerable adults.

We take pride in offering them a home in the real sense of the word – where everything is focused solely on their needs and where the care and support is everything they deserve, helping them to lead their everyday lives just as they wish.

Wessex Care is a trusted care provider who work closely with Wiltshire Council and the clinical commissioning group NHS funded intermediate and long-term care provision for those in need. We have space for private residents who require rehabilitation or longer-term nursing care.

We have care homes and centres at five locations across Salisbury that each look after up to 30 residents at any one time.

We cover a variety of care areas including mental health, elderly care, care of vulnerable adults and nursing care.

Our locations include Kimberly west and east care centres, Little Manor care centre,



Milford Manor care home (specialising in mental health) and Holmwood Residential Home.

We also have a community domiciliary care team.

- *Whether you or a loved one require nursing support, domiciliary care, residential care, mental health support or customised care, Wessex Care of Salisbury can help you decide the right path to take. Please contact our friendly and knowledgeable team on 01722 336933 or email us at info@wessexcare.com.*



Do not leave it too late to make your lasting powers of attorney

YOU MAY well have heard of lasting powers of attorney (LPAs) and thought to yourself "they sound like a good idea, I'll get around to making them one day", but what happens if you leave it too late?

If you don't make LPAs and subsequently lose mental capacity, it may be necessary for a friend or family member to make an application to the Court of Protection to be appointed as your deputy so that they can manage your finances and possibly your health affairs.

While making LPAs is a relatively swift, cost effective and straightforward process, obtaining a deputyship order involves a complex application which can take months to be processed and is often extremely expensive.

- *At Wansbroughs we can help with both LPAs and deputyship applications so whatever your circumstances, get in touch with us via wealth@wansbroughs.com.*

