

# COLTEN Chronicle

www.ColtenCare.co.uk

Spring 2015

## 'Colten Companions' perform a vital role

*Companionship is the watchword for the renamed social carer role in our homes.*

**'Colten Companions' sums up the focus on providing essential company and gentle, appropriate camaraderie for individual residents.**

The name has been chosen to more clearly differentiate the dedicated social carer role from that of our Healthcare Assistants.

A key task of Colten Companions is to spend time

with those residents who are unable to, or choose not to, join in with group activities.

Working closely with the Home Manager, Activity Organisers and colleagues, the Colten Companion provides stimulating one-to-one activities based on residents' choice.

Colten Care Activities Manager Jo London said: "The renamed role is a chance

to highlight the vital importance of companionship to those who might be considering a care home for themselves or because a loved one is isolated or feeling lonely.

"The aim is to encourage the physical and mental stimulation of residents who are unable to take an active

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### We back national Dignity Action Day



Residents, relatives and team members did their bit to support the national Dignity Action Day in February.

We held activities including themed tea parties, message boards and discussion groups to highlight the importance of respecting vulnerable people's dignity.

At The Aldbury in Poole, residents and visitors were invited to pin paper leaves on an indoor 'tree' with messages describing what dignity means to them.

Activities Organiser Bianca Turner said: "We

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### A celebration in pictures

A year in the life of Colten Care is portrayed in copies of a colourful photo book available in all our home foyers.

Designed as a pictorial record of 2014, the hardback books feature highlights from charity events, fundraising activities, awards evenings, excursions and community visits.

In the foreword, our Chief Executive Mark Aitchison

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PICTURE THIS. Avon Reach resident Romah Halcombe enjoys a look at the photobook with Sandra Baker, the Mudeford home's Reception Administrator.

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**COLTEN CARE**  
*'Cherishing You'*

Mark  
Aitchison,  
Chief  
Executive,  
Colten Care



# Denise champions dementia care

**Dementia Friends are people who have taken the time to learn a bit more about dementia and some of the small things we can all do to help those with the condition.**

Turning that understanding into action could mean basic courtesies such as helping someone to find the right bus or being patient at the supermarket checkout if the customer in front is taking longer to pay. After all, people with dementia still want to carry on going about their daily lives and feeling included in their local communities.

At Colten Care, we have committed to giving all our team the opportunity to become dementia friends if they wish.

One of those providing information sessions is Denise Arthur-Briskham, Home Manager at The Aldbury. Denise is a Dementia Champion and our representative on the Poole Dementia Action Group. At Poole Library, she has helped local shopkeepers raise their dementia awareness and also led courses at Winchelsea Special School and for sixth formers at Lytchett Minster School.

In Colten Care, Denise has already held dementia friend sessions with colleagues at The Aldbury and administrative staff from our office at Portman House, Ringwood.

Denise said: "Being a dementia friendly community means getting across the message that people with dementia should be met with understanding. People sometimes need a helping hand and often it is the small things that make a difference. At The Aldbury, we deliver a bespoke, completely tailored



service for every individual. I'm happy to share my experience with the other volunteers and with the community."

As well as Poole, Colten Care team members are actively supporting the creation of dementia friendly communities in Winchester, Lymington and East Dorset.

Tim Wookey, our Marketing Director, is Chairman of the Lymington Dementia Action Group (LDAG). He recently presented at a Dementia Friendly Hampshire conference where he explained how LDAG is working with more than 40 local businesses and aims to provide 20 information points along Lymington High Street for people living with dementia.

Vanda Baker, the new Home Manager at St Catherines View, is keen that the home continues to host meetings for dementia groups in Winchester. Vanda said: "It is an ideal place for groups to meet. We can offer the home as a community hub for dementia care."

## A time to flourish

**A warm welcome to our spring edition, which has a distinct careers-related theme. You'll find stories about the launch of our dedicated Colten Companions role, how we support our homes through recruitment activities, and a profile of our new HR Recruitment Partner, Sally Lucas.**

Finding and retaining the best people and helping them to flourish in the roles they have chosen is a great privilege. As we have grown and developed as a company, so has our need for more skills. That is why we put great store on recruitment, training, development and ensuring there are real opportunities for progression. For us, it is not only about recognition as a 'provider of choice' – it's just as important to be an 'employer of choice'.

Over the winter we have been busy embedding our new 'Cherishing You' Promise which is underpinned by five core Values: Friendly, Kind, Individual, Reassuring and Honest.

Having defined these with input from residents, relatives and staff, we then asked our team what the Values mean to them in practice. At the time of writing, we are preparing to put framed graphics, one for each Value, in all our homes. These visuals reflect the collective opinion of team members across our whole business.

The Promise and Values inform many elements of our newly refreshed website, [www.coltencare.co.uk](http://www.coltencare.co.uk), including some amazing photography taken in our homes. I encourage you to have a look. We thank all the relatives and residents who gave their consent to be featured. Three sample photos illustrate our pg 7 story 'Care home myths debunked'.

Also available at our homes are colourful photo books providing a pictorial record of life at Colten Care during 2014. See our pg 1 story 'A celebration in pictures'. The photo books really are a joy to flick through. As we move into spring and summer, we will again see the full buzz of events and activities around our homes, so ensuring some great material for next year's collection.

I hope you enjoy our spring *Chronicle*. As ever, if you have any feedback or know of a story we've missed, tell us at [enquiries@coltencare.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@coltencare.co.uk)

## Picture this

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writes: "There are so many happy faces. For me, it shows the fantastic bond between our teams and residents. You can see how we actively involve families, volunteers, community partners and other stakeholders."

Avon Reach Reception Administrator Sandra Baker said: "The picture books are proving very popular with residents and visitors. Everyone is picking them up and having a flick through. It's a fantastic way to illustrate a taste of life in our homes."

To look at our yearbook online, go to [www.coltencare.co.uk/photobook/index.html](http://www.coltencare.co.uk/photobook/index.html)

# £25k boost for charity

**Our homes raised nearly £25,000 for good causes in 2014.**

The figure means we have benefited charities by more than £110,000 in the past five years.

A range of organisations receive help from our policy of linking activities programmes with fundraising for charities, chosen by residents and team members.

Avon Reach in Mudeford, Dorset, was the home that raised the most money last year, with £3,746.

Funds went to help the Stroke Association, Sports Relief, RNLI, British Legion, Macmillan Cancer Support, Breast Cancer Campaign and Children in Need.

Colten Care Activities Manager Karen Burdon said: "It's entirely up to our residents which charities we support. Once the choice is made, we all get behind it. Team members like to take part in sponsored events, such as walks and bike rides, and we enable our residents to contribute directly in meaningful ways, such as making arts and crafts to sell at fundraising fetes."

To help the Stroke Association and, in particular, young stroke survivors, Avon Reach held a gala dinner and sold knitted teddy bears and paper



*DONATION. Stroke campaigner Claire Whitehouse (front) at Avon Reach in Mudeford. With their handmade teddy bears and paper flowers are resident Irene Brown (left to right), Activity Organiser Sandra Boulton and resident Betty Elvy.*

flower displays made by residents.

The money raised, more than £750, was presented to stroke campaigner Claire Whitehouse who suffered a stroke when she was just 19.

Claire said: "The residents are in a different age group but they still wanted to donate to help young stroke survivors. It blew me away when I first heard. I thought 'wow'. I couldn't believe it."

# Our new minibus takes to the road



*Staff and residents at The Aldbury, with driver Kevin Surgeon (back left) welcome the new £70,000 vehicle.*

Residents at our Bournemouth, Poole and Ferndown homes have begun travelling in greater style thanks to a new top-of-the-range minibus for excursions.

The £70,000 Mercedes Sprinter Landliner can seat up to nine passengers, as well as carry three wheelchairs.

It is earmarked for trips out from Canford Chase and The Aldbury in Poole, Amberwood House in Ferndown, Brook View in West Moors, Fernhill in Longham and Bournemouth's Avon Cliff.

The first resident to step aboard was former nurse Pam Legg, a resident at The Aldbury. "Absolutely lovely and very comfortable. I shall be looking forward to lots of trips out in this," said Pam.

The vehicle, which has been designed and specified with dementia care in mind, will join our four-strong minibus fleet. It is expected to clock up about 20,000 miles every year.

## Dignity Action Day

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had a wide range of thoughts including respect, privacy, having pride in yourself and being able to exercise choice. It was very much about everyone treating each other as the wonderful individuals we all are. Often it was about the small things rather than grand gestures. One message highlighted six 'Cs': care, compassion, courage, communication, competence and commitment."



*SPELLING IT OUT. Team members at The Aldbury dementia care home in Poole prepare their 'Digni-tree'. L-r are Bianca Turner, Activities Organiser, and Healthcare Assistants Jodie Sherwood and Megan Austin*

As well as constructing their 'digni-tree', the team at The

Aldbury held an afternoon tea party dubbed 'digni-tea'

where they discussed the idea of dignity with residents and families.

At Woodpeckers in Brockenhurst, team members constructed a similar dignity tree with paper leaves that residents and visitors wrote messages on. The home also held its own 'digni-tea' afternoon.

Dignity Action Day is a national initiative designed to involve health and social care workers and members of the public in upholding people's rights to dignity. It is led by the National Dignity Council.



# Careers in care

*Just the job – how we compete for the cream of the crop*

**How does a relatively small, family-owned care home provider compete with much bigger operators to find and keep the best staff in what is a very competitive marketplace?**

The question is top of the agenda for our Human Resources team. We asked our HR Director Andrew Arkinstall and first ever Recruitment Partner Sally Lucas to tell us what Colten Care does to support individual homes through recruitment and staff development.

"My role has a particular emphasis on clinical roles, so nurses and Heads of Care," says Sally. "I'm here to support and co-ordinate the whole recruitment process and develop consistencies across the group. That means everything from applications and how we manage CVs, through to interviews and employment offers.

"I'm looking at new ways of advertising and attracting candidates."

To raise awareness of what we can offer as an employer to potential recruits, Sally pointed to a range of activities. For example, we hold recruitment open days at homes that have a specific need for nursing or other healthcare assistance. The requirement could vary and involve weekends, specific shift patterns, full and part time, and so on.

Open days are typically promoted through banners outside homes and advertising in local newspapers. Interested candidates simply walk in without having to make an appointment. They can meet members of our HR team, take a tour of the home, and learn about



*Recruitment Partner Sally Lucas is looking at new ways of advertising and attracting candidates*

available roles. Recent open days have been held at homes including St Catherines View in Winchester, Brook View in West Moors and Fernhill in Longham. These three events alone attracted 46 visitors, many of whom have now applied for jobs with us.

Sally adds: "Recruitment can become a reactive activity where you only respond to a need when a vacancy comes up. It's far better to take a proactive approach and continually reach out to find the best candidates."

How then do we retain and develop people once they are in post?

Andrew says: "In our recruitment literature, we highlight the competitive rates of pay we offer, coupled with career progression opportunities.

"We currently invest around half a million pounds in staff training every year. That helps us to support people's



*HR Director Andrew Arkinstall: 'We currently invest around half a million pounds a year in staff training.'*

career development.

"In partnership with Bournemouth University, for example, we have developed a bespoke dementia training course designed to educate staff to



Jackie Seeborun is a prime example of a care professional who has gained successive promotions throughout her career with us.

As Home Manager of Court Lodge in Lymington, she is responsible for making sure all activities meet the highest of care standards.

Her nursing background

underpins her work every day.

"Being a nurse has always been my vocation," explains Jackie. "With that as my starting point, it is a privilege to apply my knowledge and skills to home management.

"My message to anyone considering a career in care is that it can bring you great

## Jackie's story

personal rewards. Whatever your specific role, when you know you have delivered the highest standard of care that you can, it is a feeling of great satisfaction."

In her native Mauritius, Jackie was a practice and dispensing nurse at a sugar cane factory that employed up to 4,000 people, and personally saved lives following emergencies such as cardiac arrests and road accidents. Her clinical strengths ranged from wound management to psychiatric nursing.

After coming to the UK, Jackie became Colten Care's first overseas 'Adaptation Nurse', registering with the Nursing and Midwifery Council here in 2000. Her first job with us was at Woodpeckers in Brockenhurst. She later worked at Avon Reach in Christchurch and Abbotts Barton in Winchester while studying for a degree in care management at Bournemouth University.

Before moving to Court Lodge in 2012, she was

Head of Care at our New Milton home, Kingfishers.

"I have learned such a lot from working in elderly people's care," says Jackie. "For me, it is all about integrating the care environment with compassion. Elderly people rely on us to make sure they are looked after.

"At the same time, I believe that if you work in care, you deserve to be well supported. As both a provider of choice and an employer of choice, Colten Care invests substantially in developing its teams. In my case, they have enabled me to continue my learning journey by supporting me through my degree.

"I now have the chance to pass on some of my skills by mentoring nurses and students, something that brings me added job satisfaction. We all work as a team, whether in clinical roles or not, respecting each other as individuals for what we contribute to the overall standard of care."

better understand what dementia is and how it impacts on the person living with it and their family.

"Also through our links with Bournemouth University, we have many student nurses working across our homes. This is a win-win relationship. The students receive essential work experience while bringing us fresh, current thinking. The result is a stronger all-round team focused on best practice in nursing."

All new recruits to Colten Care receive a detailed induction on day one followed by on-the-job training in all aspects of their role to guide them through the first three months. Regular training continues, tied to an annual appraisal.

Andrew says: "We want all our team

members to develop their careers. As well as promotion to more senior positions, there are many ways to move across into different job roles in other areas of the business. Another way is through our in-house apprenticeship scheme. Where appropriate, this enables you to learn while you earn and gain a recognised qualification from a local college. When you have completed the programme, we continue to support you through the next steps in your career."

### Some ways we recruit and retain:

- Using CV databases to search proactively for candidates.
- Company-wide recruitment management system that quickly and efficiently helps us access a pool of

candidates for vacancies as they arise.

- Strengthening relationships with colleges and universities so we can engage candidates earlier in their careers and discuss professional development.
- Resources and information on a new recruitment website we are currently developing.
- Building our new Promise and Values into our recruitment literature so people understand our way of working and our focus on the individual.
- Around £0.5 million invested annually in ongoing training initiatives. These include customer care training, an in-house apprenticeship scheme, and dementia awareness training.

## Colten companions' vital role

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part in the activities calendar within the home.

"Colten Companions will offer a variety of creative activities and pastimes tailored to individual needs.

"The Home Manager, Head of Care and Activity Organisers in each home will all help with this.

"It's all about improving the quality of life of all residents who live in a Colten Care home, whatever their personal needs."

Colten Companions will be specifically helped in their role of providing activities for individual residents through training and mentoring from Activity Organisers.

Jo added: "Putting companionship at the very heart of our social care in this explicit way reflects our core values as a care provider and employer.

"It's a prime example of us championing the individual and ensuring they are at the forefront of what we do every day."

● To learn how Colten Care supports its homes through recruitment, please see our feature on pages 4 and 5.



Reflecting our focus on careers in this issue of the Chronicle, we caught up with our new Recruitment Partner Sally Lucas to ask some searching questions.

**Name:** Sally Lucas

**Age:** 40

**Job title and brief description of role:** HR Recruitment Partner. This is a new post for Colten Care which involves managing the end-to-end recruitment and selection processes.

**Career history:** I've spent 15 years in recruitment, 13 of those at Ageas Retail where I recruited people for various operational and support roles. They included high-volume, fast-paced call centre jobs as well as specialist roles including marketing, IT, compliance and risk management. I also ran dedicated



assessment centres for managers. As I've worked in multi-media campaign management and advertising, I feel I can bring lots of experience and expertise to Colten Care.

**Q:** Who was your first childhood hero?

**A:** Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn – I went to Hampton Court aged 10 and have loved the Tudors ever since.

**Q:** What would be your ideal holiday?

**A:** Rio de Janeiro to visit the Christ the Redeemer statue.

**Q:** What are you superstitious about?

**A:** I'm not.

**Q:** Who would you most like to be trapped in a lift with?

**A:** Oooo, David Beckham, he is lovely and I'd get great footie tips for the kids.

**Q:** Who do you most admire?

**A:** My Nan. She is the matriarch of our family and puts her family first in all things.

**Q:** What car do you drive?

**A:** Ford Focus.

**Q:** What makes you angry?

**A:** When things aren't fair. And bad drivers!

**Q:** What is your favourite smell?

**A:** Sea air, cut grass...the great outdoors!

**Q:** Cats or dogs?

**A:** Dogs (I have a lurcher called Indie).

**Q:** What is the first thing you do when you wake up in the morning?

**A:** Snooze the alarm at least four times.

**Q:** What is your earliest memory?

**A:** Thinking snow was cotton wool, taking my

wellies off and standing in it with bare feet (I cried)!

**Q:** Which TV/radio programme do you try never to miss?

**A:** I like American serial shows like 'Dexter' and 'Breaking Bad'.

**Q:** What is the best thing about your role?

**A:** The buzz, the variety and building relationships internally and externally.

**Q:** ...And what is the worst?

**A:** Not enough hours in the day.

**Q:** What would be your desert island luxury?

**A:** Mascara (I have to have eyes)!

**Q:** What do you wish you were good at?

**A:** Singing.

**Q:** What has been the crowning moment in your life to date?

**A:** My two kids, Shea, 10 and Anya, 8 – they are amazing.

**Q:** What is your favourite meal?

**A:** Indian cuisine.

**Q:** What would be your dream job?

**A:** Presenting a travel show on TV.

**Q:** If you could bring something extinct back to life what would it be?

**A:** T-Rex (I've always had a fascination for dinosaurs)!

# Care home myths debunked

**Lindsay Rees, our Senior Support Manager, has researched the most common myths people have about living in a care home.**



Having built up the list in discussion with our Home Managers and Heads of Care, Lindsay has been referring to it in talks with community groups involved in care.

Below are just a few myths and why, in a high-quality, professionally run home dedicated to the wellbeing of residents, they are not true.

We've posted Lindsay's complete 'top ten' myths online at [www.coltencares.co.uk/faq](http://www.coltencares.co.uk/faq)

## **I will lose my independence**

A good care home will strive to maintain and enhance a resident's independence at all times. Each resident has a detailed care plan that tells staff what they can do and what they need assistance

with. Beyond that, the principles of independence, individuality and choice should be evident 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## **I will have to get rid of all my furniture, pictures and books**

A new resident should be encouraged to make their room their own and personalise it with cherished items from home as much as possible. They are free to put pictures on the wall and to bring their own furniture and books should they wish.

## **I will not be able to have visitors whenever I choose**

You can have visitors whenever you wish. All good care homes have open visiting. The front door may be locked for security



reasons in the evening, but visitors are welcome to ring the doorbell – just like in your own home. Depending on the time of day, visitors can join residents to enjoy a pre-lunch sherry, afternoon tea or other snacks and meals. Birthday and anniversary parties are also popular occasions for residents and visitors to get together.

## **I will have to go to bed and get up when I am told to**



We all have our own rhythms and routines and, while there has to be some structure to the day and night, residents should be free to choose when they want to get up and when they go to bed. Whether night owls or early birds, all are welcome.

## **I will have no choice of food**

Food is essential to our wellbeing and quality of life. Residents should be involved in decisions about their diet



and be given the time to choose options in advance from a meals menu. Snacks should be readily available throughout the day and night. There should also be off-menu flexibility for special dietary needs.

## **I will not be able to go out to the shops, for a walk or for a pub lunch when I wish**

While safety is paramount, a good care home will always encourage independence and with the appropriate risk assessments in place, anything is possible. We have residents who walk out to the shops, or take a mobility scooter. Occasionally, someone may even have their own car. Residents often go out for lunch and dinner with their friends and relatives. For group outings, homes will provide minibus transport.

## Linden House is shortlisted for prestigious national design award

Linden House in Lymington has been shortlisted for a prestigious Pinders Healthcare Design award.

Being a finalist entailed a visit in February by a panel of judges ahead of a forthcoming announcement of an overall national winner.

The annual awards recognise excellence in the quality of design in all types of care-related property. Judges specifically examine how care objectives are achieved through innovation and current best practice.

Judging panel chairman and Pinders



*Linden House includes many memory-stimulating features*

Director Jon Chapman said: "Our team of judges is made up of specialist care home architects and experienced providers, many of whom have won

Pinders awards in the past."

Linden House is a dedicated dementia care home which opened in April 2014. It reflects the latest principles in design for people with dementia. The home includes many themed spaces and features for therapeutic memory stimulation.

Two of our other dementia care homes have won Pinders awards in the past. These are St Catherines View in Winchester, which was named Best Specialist Dementia Facility in 2013, and The Aldbury in Poole, which won an award in 2004.

## Vanda's holistic approach

"I feel privileged to be leading such a wonderful home", says Vanda Baker as she settles into her appointment as Home Manager at St Catherines View in Winchester.

"I've had a lovely warm welcome and am already enjoying the opportunity to get to know all the residents and their families as well as my team members."

Vanda comes to St Catherines View with 20 years' career experience in older people's health and social care. She has worked in both the private and not-for-profit sectors and has previously managed a nursing/dementia care home on Hayling Island where she helped build extensive community links.

One of the top priorities in her new role is continue to bring the team together, embracing everyone's talents and skills. "I believe that only by developing strong teamwork can you bring about lasting continuity in care," she says.

Vanda has a relative with Alzheimer's

and says she knows the impact it can have on a family. "I do understand what relatives go through. We must ensure that when families entrust their loved one to us, we look at the experience in terms of both clinical and holistic care."

Another key aim for Vanda is to grow the home's community links so that more people can understand what makes St Catherines View a multi-award winning home.

Vanda lives in the South Hampshire village of Denmead and is married with two sons aged 12 and eight, who both participate in sport. She says: "Most weekends I am somewhere between football and rugby, but I love it".



## Juggling career and family

Pauline Ellis is a prime example of a determined professional who has juggled family life with forging ahead on a career.



Her route to becoming the new Head of Care at our Mudeford home, Avon Reach, has followed a steady progression from healthcare assistant to qualified nurse, mainly in the NHS.

The mum-of-three originally spent nine years as an orthopaedics assistant at Christchurch Hospital. Having always been interested in nursing, she decided to study to become an RGN. To do that, she first had to acquire the entry qualifications which she completed at the Bournemouth and Poole College.

She completed her degree in nursing while all three children were teenagers and started work at Royal Bournemouth Hospital.

She later had a district nursing post which involved designing packages of care and being the link between hospital discharge and community care. Pauline then spent time in domiciliary nursing before moving to the care home sector.

Avon Reach is familiar territory for the 'local lass' as she was born in nearby Bransgore and has lived in Christchurch for most of her life.

Pauline adds: "It's a family-run home that is very calming and comfortable and where the residents are happy. I'm glad to be with Colten Care as they support their staff. It's a company that does what it says.

"In my role I am involved in all aspects of making sure the home runs smoothly. It's a lot to learn but I'm thoroughly enjoying it."

Outside work, Pauline spends precious family time with her children and six grandchildren. "That is pleasure for me," she says.

## Care home as lifestyle choice

Helen Holden, the new Home Manager at Avon Cliff in Bournemouth, did her nurse training in Glasgow and has worked in a variety of roles since qualifying as an RGN. Her experience includes army nursing in the UK and Germany, orthopaedics, intensive therapy and elective surgery. She was a private patient manager at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust in London and became a registered home manager after moving into the care home sector in Dorset in 2004.

Helen said: "I've had a lovely warm welcome at Avon Cliff and am already enjoying the chance to get to know all the residents and their families as well as my team members.

"One of my main priorities is to grow the home's community links so that we can welcome more local people to come in and see for themselves what an outstanding home this is. I'll be going out and about to meet as many

individuals and organisations as I can.

Helen added: "I believe passionately that we should be making people positively want to come into care homes. They should be seen as a new beginning, a new chapter, not the end of anything.

"Good quality care can make the decision to move into a care home a lifestyle choice. Avon Cliff is a prime example of a home that delivers really outstanding care. I would like to build on the great work that is already going on. I want to be supportive towards the team, celebrating their achievements as we develop the home."

