



NEW STARTERS. Top row, from left: Abbiee Louise; Charlotte Hurford; Eva Predna Martins and Ewa Kowalczyk. Bottom row, from left: Ewelina Tilly; Jordon Ryan; Kerrie Cox and Kerry Price

TNA programme thrives despite Covid challenges

Our Trainee Nursing Associate (TNA) programme is going from strength to strength, despite work placements and face-to-face tuition being impacted by the pandemic.

The first cohort of team members on the two-year course have now qualified, while the second group have completed their first year and eight new starters have begun their initial stages.

The nationally recognised programme aims to bridge a skills gap between carers and registered nurses and leads to formal enrolment as a Registered Nursing Associate with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

The coming year will be one of consolidation of learning for our trailblazing TNAs. For those who want to, there is an opportunity to take the qualification further and follow an 18-month course to become a Registered General Nurse.

Like all our TNAs, Verena Thomas, Senior Care Lead at Wellington Grange

in Chichester, has been receiving tuition from Southampton Solent University, juggling intensive study with work and family commitments.

"I'm pleased and very proud to have qualified," said Verena, a mother-of-three. "I want to say a big thank you to Colten Care, my Home Manager and colleagues. They have given me so much support."

"I would definitely advise anyone who is pursuing a career in healthcare to go for it if they have the opportunity. It has been tough, especially in the last year with my children in lockdown and having to rearrange our TNA placements, so that instead of going out to community nursing, we have completed them within Colten Care. It has also been difficult to have all our university tuition delivered on Zoom rather than face to face, but it has been a brilliant course and the two years have gone by so quickly."

continued on p2 ▶

We have much to be proud of

**Elaine Farrer,
Operations
Director**



Welcome to **Talking Care**, highlighting the clinical side of our residents' care. We congratulate those colleagues who have completed their Nursing Associate training and wish those just starting out on the two-year course the very best of luck.

We report on the roll-out of a new app to help fill roster gaps, we update you on our latest end-of-life care strategy, and we celebrate our very own 'star apprentice' Anezka Uhlarikova after an amazing college award win.

With the benefit of companionship to wellbeing and quality of life widely recognised, we highlight how we are helping residents who are missing face-to-face contact with loved ones. Our residents are at the very heart of everything we do, with clinical, companionship and other team members supporting their emotional, physical and mental wellbeing.

As revealed in recent comments from residents and relatives, and in our latest survey of Home Managers and Clinical Leads, we have much to be proud of in how we have navigated the impact of Covid.

Hard work and professionalism across the whole team have put us in the best place, ready for the onset of summer and moving forward as and when the pandemic is over.

If you have any feedback on **Talking Care**, or would like to suggest an article, please tell us at ContactUs@ColtenCare.co.uk

'You only have one chance to get end-of-life care right'

We are launching a new training and guidance manual for staff all about delivering optimal end-of-life (EOL) care.

'Understanding EOL in a Colten Care home' is part of an evolving suite of training and supervisory EOL resources that we are developing in-house under our resident-focused 'All About Me' care ethos.

Quality Manager Jo Croft said: "The manual complements our ongoing approach, which includes advice such as thinking ahead, respecting the person's wishes and making sure you have good communications among the team, the person's family and their GP. We should anticipate and recognise how the person's health needs are changing, manage their symptoms well and holistically, and bring comfort to them in



medical and non-medical ways.

"At all times, it's about championing emotional intelligence. We also recognise that care doesn't end with death.

"We provide the dignity of a guard of

honour, we offer bereavement support to the family and we remember everyone who has passed away with our annual Celebration of Life event held across all our homes."

Our EOL suite has three tiers. The first is a sensitively shot video that everyone at the home, no matter their role, can watch.

The second involves resources for carers and those who have more direct contact with the person.

The third is specifically for nurses and includes advice on relieving symptoms and looking for signs of distress.

Hayley Geddes, Clinical Lead at St Catherines View in Winchester and a member of our end-of-life steering group, said: "You only have one chance to get it right with end-of-life care and we all feel passionate about that."

TNAs thrive

► *continued from p1*

In addition to qualifying, Verena was shortlisted for Solent University's Health Apprentice of the Year award.

She was one of just ten finalists in the category out of nearly 200 foundation degree students. Verena was congratulated on raising the profile of TNAs by course leader Mandy Lyons, who said: "It's a huge achievement to make the lecturers' top ten shortlist."

Our starters on this year's TNA programme are also receiving initial tuition via Zoom and undertaking their first placements in-home due to Covid restrictions.

Charlotte Hurford, Senior Care Lead at Court Lodge in Lymington, joined us ten years ago as a Healthcare Assistant and was promoted in 2019 after completing Level 2 and 3 healthcare qualifications.



FINALIST: Verena Thomas was shortlisted for Health Apprentice of the Year

Charlotte said: "I'm keen to get stuck in and learn new skills so I can progress further. I'm looking forward to the clinical side and would love to become an RGN."

Likewise, Kerrie Cox, Senior Care Lead at The Aldbury in Poole, said: "I'm really excited about starting something new. I've been mentally preparing for juggling everything in my life and learning as I go."

Both Charlotte and Kerrie appreciate the support they have received from Colten Care to enable them to start the TNA course.

Kerrie said: "I am so grateful for the confidence shown in me by my Home Manager, Clinical Lead, the senior nurses and other colleagues. I'm coming to the programme from a dementia care background but we all learn the same course content, bringing our different experiences."

Our six other new starters on the TNA course are: Abbie Louise, Abbotts Barton; Eva Predna Martins, Castle View; Ewa Kowalczyk, Fernhill; Ewelina Tilly and Jordon Ryan, both Linden House; and Kerry Price, Canford Chase.

Covid strengthens our team bonds

Having to manage Covid-19 has made us work even better as a team. This is one of the key findings from our latest survey of Home Managers and Clinical Leads.

Respondents to the 'Tell us what you really think' survey spoke of their pride in how homes have been coping with the pandemic impact.

They said they had been able to continue offering support and reassurance to residents at the same time as ensuring staff teams have the help they need too.

Internal communications have been 'concise, timely and informative' which, said respondents, has helped with Covid management and bolstered resilience.

Based on the survey feedback, we're already taking action on several fronts. On our response to Covid, we are developing new resources to increase



Gina Smith

the resilience of our managers and help them support all staff.

One opportunity was a 'resilience workshop' held in early December 2020 with polar explorer and round-the-world yachtsman Manley Hopkinson. He was the keynote speaker at our 2016 Nurses' Day conference and is an expert in motivational leadership and teamwork.

Gina Smith, Home Manager at Fernhill in Longham, said: "The workshop served as a good reminder of the importance of taking care of ourselves so we can

support our teams. There were useful tips such as taking a moment for conscious breathing when you feel under pressure, breaking down bigger situations into smaller, more bite-sized parts and, to paraphrase Manley's sailing language, setting our sails, facing the wind, holding on tight and remembering there is always hope on the other side."

We've gone on to engage with Liggy Webb, an award-winning, best-selling author and presenter who has delivered Zoom sessions to the extended support teams and Home Managers on building on our inner resilience, how to live well with uncertainty and leading wellbeing.

Andrew Arkinstall, Director of Human Resources, said: "Every session with Liggy offers up a wide-ranging buffet of ideas on how to bounce back from our current challenges."

What residents and their families said

Residents and relatives continue to praise our approach to care. Here are some recent comments:

"It's amazing what the team did to care for him. Dad needed 24/7 care, so having the peace of mind that nurses were on hand made all the difference." – Ewan Brown, whose dad Derek spent a year at Kingfishers in New Milton until he was well enough to return to the family home.

"I feel happy here. I am so comfortable. I have a very nice room and no worries. I've got lots more to do here than I would have at home." – Penny Cummins, resident at Wellington Grange.

"Mum participates in most of the activities and she comes onto Zoom smiling and engaging in conversation about her social life. It is amazing. In fact, on Zoom, she looks younger and younger every time." – Shaigh Hancock, son of Braemar Lodge resident Frances, who herself adds: **"The staff are very good and I am very grateful. Being registered for nursing is so important as it gives you peace of mind."**

More companions for better support

We have dramatically expanded our Companionship team to help maintain residents' mental and physical wellbeing and overall quality of life during lockdown.

Eighteen recruits have been leading group activities such as arts and music sessions and delivering meaningful and inspiring one-to-one time.

The new team members, including singers, musicians and teachers, supplement the

work of colleagues who continue to provide companionship, activities and experiences.

Together the team is providing our residents with an extra 469 hours of companionship opportunities each week.

The expansion is all about supporting residents and families given the constraints on care home visiting because of the pandemic.



JOY FOR JOYCE. Companionship team members help Joyce Male, a resident at Abbotts Barton in Winchester, celebrate her 100th birthday.

'Compassionate' and 'motivated' Anezka wins Apprentice of the Year award

One of our team members has been officially recognised for her success with a healthcare apprenticeship.

Anezka Uhlarikova, Healthcare Assistant at Abbots Barton in Winchester, was named Intermediate Apprentice of the Year at Havant & South Downs College.

Anezka's award reflected her ability to balance studies for a functional skills qualification while undertaking a care diploma and meeting all required apprenticeship standards.

In her citation, Anezka's assessor described her as 'an enthusiastic, motivated and committed learner', adding: "Anezka always puts



Anezka Uhlarikova with her award

100% into everything she does and has the desire and passion to learn, asking many questions to gain new knowledge. She has clearly wanted to learn and improve

her practice throughout the qualification. She is a kind, compassionate and empathic individual, dedicated to her role as a health care support worker."

New app fills the gap for booking extra staff shifts

Every care home in the world faces gaps on its staff roster. Whenever there is a shift that needs covering, we always try to be responsive to team members keen to pick up overtime. Traditionally, that means phone calls, emails and notices in staff rooms to find out who may be available.

Now, we are rolling out a dedicated app to co-ordinate shift booking digitally.

Catapult alerts our Nurses, Senior Care Leads and Healthcare Assistants to make them aware of relevant gaps on the roster in their home or other Colten ones nearby. As soon as they have the details, they simply click to accept if they want to do the shift.

The roll-out follows an evaluation of a two-month trial led by Operations Manager Peter Doyle across his homes cluster in Chichester, Winchester, Salisbury and North Dorset.

"It's a good use of technology," said Peter. "It saves a lot of phoning around



Alina Tibble, left, receives her cash prize from Abbots Barton Home Manager Dee Lovewell

to speak to individuals not on duty and waiting for a call back if they don't immediately pick up. It also helps us give our own team first refusal on shifts, so minimising the use of agency staff."

Two team members in Peter's cluster won a cash prize draw for being among the first to click on the app to accept a shift. They were Alina Tibble at Abbots Barton in Winchester and Bryan Laury at Wellington Grange in Chichester.