FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Grief Awareness Week: The care homes which keep caring after a resident's death

A charity's bereavement support programme and the impact it is having on grieving relatives is being highlighted ahead of National Grief Awareness Week (2-8 December).

Royal Star & Garter has been working with relatives to create its Supporting Your Bereavement Journey framework, which offers help to grieving loved ones at end-of-life, and in the immediate aftermath of losing a loved-one. The framework helps with practical guidance, emotional support, remembrance activities and family engagement. It also offers relatives the opportunity to maintain meaningful connections with Royal Star & Garter.

It is available to those whose loved ones were cared for at Royal Star & Garter's four Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe and Worthing. The charity provides loving, compassionate care and support to veterans and their families living with disability or dementia and also has services reaching out into the community including Day Care, Lunch Club and a national Telephone Friendship Service.



Figure 1Jayne praised the Reflective Garden and sculpture at its unveiling

Supporting Your Bereavement Journey also equips Royal Star & Garter staff with the skills and support needed to care compassionately for bereaved families and colleagues, while maintaining their own wellbeing.

The charity works with external organisations to help signpost relatives to effective bereavement support and offers a selection of books on grief to those affected by loss. Each Home has a postbox, where relatives can write letters to their lost loved ones on seeded note paper, which is later planted in its Reflective Gardens. Homes also invite bereaved relatives to join events and coffee mornings, encouraging them to remain part of the Royal Star & Garter family.

Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

To mark National Grief Awareness Week, each Royal Star & Garter Home is unveiling an armillary sphere in its Reflective Gardens. The sculptures are made of interlocking metal rings that represent the paths of stars, planets and the sun. They provide a peaceful place to remember lost loved ones and reflect on cherished memories. As a remembrance tribute it symbolises timelessness, eternal love, knowledge, and the enduring harmony of the universe.

The spheres have been unveiled in Solihull and High Wycombe, in dedications led by celebrant Major Louise Bates MBE. Relatives and loved ones are welcomed to spend time in these outdoor spaces to seek comfort, support and share in their grief. Identical sculptures will also be placed at the Surbiton and Worthing Homes.



Army veteran Major Louise Bates MBE led the dedication at the unveiling of the sculpture

The Solihull sphere was unveiled by Jane Mosley, whose father and father-in law lived at the Home before their deaths. She said afterwards: "The Reflective Garden and memorial sculpture is such a beautiful area to stop and remember all the family and friends who have left us. I think its lovely and I look forward to spending time here."

Major Louise Bates MBE, a recently retired Army Officer now working as a celebrant, said: "I'm grateful to be here to witness the unveiling of these armillary spheres and to say a few words. I hope that residents and relatives alike will come and use these beautiful spaces for some quiet reflection."

Supporting Your Bereavement Journey has been developed with the support of a significant grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.

Shirley Hall is Director of Care & Wellbeing at Royal Star & Garter. She said: "The death of a loved one is one of life's most difficult experiences, and we recognise the profound impact their loss has on family and friends. Supporting Your Bereavement Journey reflects our commitment to being there for relatives every step of the way, from helping them through end-of-life journey, to offering practical guidance after a

death, and continuing to welcome families back into our Homes in the months and years ahead. Grief does not end when a funeral is over, and we want everyone connected to Royal Star & Garter to know they will always remain part of our family."

Royal Star & Garter is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, the other services it offers to the veterans' community or to work for the charity, go to www.starandgarter.org

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About Royal Star & Garter

Founded in 1916, Royal Star & Garter provides care, support and friendship for veterans and their families so that they can live well. The charity delivers nursing and dementia care through Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe, and now in Worthing, having recently merged with the military charity Care for Veterans. It also offers a range of services reaching into the community, including Lunch Clubs, Day Care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

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Care with courage

Royal Star & Garter
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