

Connections



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

Supporter newsletter
Summer 2021



About us



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

We provide loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

Our Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe offer outstanding residential and day care. We help those who have had the courage to serve our country to live happy, fulfilled lives.



In 2020, your support helped us to provide



48,700

days of residential care



over 9,000

physiotherapy and speech therapy sessions



1/3

of the dedicated military dementia care beds in England

Looking forward we will:

- Restart our day care service, when it is safe to do so
- Trial a project to reach veterans in their own homes
- Develop our care and support for younger veterans

Welcome to Connections...



...our Summer newsletter, sharing insight into life in our Homes.

Thank you for supporting us. As you will see from the chart opposite and the stories inside, your generosity enables us to help veterans and their partners to lead happy and fulfilling lives. We live and work as a family and you are very much part of that.

We are proud that we've been able to innovate to maintain the exceptional levels of care we offer during the pandemic. Staff have shown huge dedication in keeping residents safe, well and happy, including short periods of time living in the Homes to help minimise any exposure to local outbreaks.

Staff have kept life lively and interesting, with themed activities, gardening, art therapy and lots of musical events. We recognise how important visits from family are to our residents. When these weren't possible in the usual way, we built Covid-secure rooms and allowed face-to-face visits from one family member. We've also launched a relatives' website so they can keep up to date with their loved one's activities. We couldn't do all of this without your support.



Wishing you a safe, sunny summer,

Cally Madden, Editor

PS: Our photos reflect the government's guidance on safety at the time they were taken.

His Royal Highness Prince Philip

"We were deeply saddened to learn of the death of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Following his service in the Royal Navy during World War II, Prince Philip remained actively involved with the Armed Forces throughout his life.

It was our honour to welcome him to our former Richmond Home in 1972, where he opened an exhibition. Our deepest sympathies are with our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen, and the Royal Family."

- Major General Tim Tyler CB, Chair



Covid-19 Update

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I was so excited before seeing him and it was amazing to hold his hands.

Judi and Army veteran Alan are reunited

Residents, relatives and staff working together has helped us through the pandemic.

The extra mile

Vaccines have been a significant focus for us this year and will provide the greatest opportunity we have to help protect our residents and staff.

Residents have now received their second dose and almost 90% of our staff have also received their vaccines, which is well above the national average for care homes. When Ena, a 102-year-old WWII widow, received hers she said: “I’m honoured to be among the first to get the vaccine.”

Minister for Care, Helen Whately, had a virtual tour of our Solihull Home in February and commented: “I know that staff here have gone the extra mile throughout the pandemic and are now supporting the vaccine roll-out. I want to thank them for their incredible dedication and hard work.”





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I feel the Home did everything it possibly could for Mum and me. I couldn't ask for more.

Pauline lost her mum Betty in the pandemic

Welcoming visitors

Asking relatives to stay away in order to keep their loved ones safe has been hard for everyone, particularly for those residents living with dementia.

As soon as government guidance allowed, we began outdoor visits. Then, with winter approaching, we opened Covid-secure rooms. These state-of-the-art rooms were supported by a £100k grant from The Scheinberg Relief Fund.

As restrictions changed further, we created safe rooms within our Homes where residents could meet face to face and hold hands with a nominated relative.



Pat's husband Gerald said: "I was so happy to come into the Home after so long apart. Being able to hold Pat's hand means we are close together once more."

Time to reflect

On 23 March, the nation held a Day of Reflection to commemorate sacrifices and losses during the pandemic.

Residents and staff at our Homes planted cherry blossom trees and held a minute's silence to remember those who died.



Ade ties a ribbon to the cherry tree at Surbiton

Sadly, we lost residents at the height of the pandemic last spring and we wanted to remember them and acknowledge the impact on their families.

We talked to three relatives whose mothers died. Read their moving accounts on our website at: starandgarter.org/timetorelect

Staying connected

Keeping in touch with others, being positive and finding fun has helped us all through difficult times.

We support our residents to stay in regular contact with their loved ones and do all we can to facilitate that.

We have developed a dedicated website called Family Connections exclusively for relatives to use, which features photos, news and stories from the Homes. This provides an insight into the daily lives of our residents, which relatives really love to see, especially when visiting is limited or they live far away.

Relatives tell us they find it especially helpful to support conversations where a resident may not recall what they have been doing. Seeing the activities and menus is also appreciated. Flo's daughter Elaine said: "It's lovely to see all the pictures and I certainly feel more connected to Mum through them."

Family Connections has been supported by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust through their Removing Barriers to Family Life programme.



Our relatives' website helps loved ones stay in touch

Families see their loved ones enjoying activities. Here are Ade and Flo in Well-being Week



Creative activities. Neil's relatives enjoy seeing his baking skills

Reflecting the wider world. A 'day' at the Grand National and Joy won!



Celebrations



There's plenty to celebrate in a family with a long history like ours.

In January, we marked the 105th year since we were formally established as a charity. Our Chief Executive, Andy Cole, commented: "Since we were first formed, we have had the ethos of care with courage at our heart. 105 years later, as we live through another national crisis, we are still able to provide the very best care to our veterans."

We are also celebrating our first cohort of Registered Nursing Associates who are now fully qualified. Karen, Fiona and Leena are able to take on some responsibilities which previously lay with Nurses.

Finally, our Director of Care, Pauline Shaw OBE, recently celebrated 20 years with us. She joined Royal Star & Garter in 2001, when we were based in Richmond. Pauline has helped oversee some of the biggest transformations in our history, including developing three new state-of-the-art Homes, and an award-winning dementia care model.



Left: Resident Margaret contemplating our 105-year history
Right: Pauline and daughter Alex outside the Richmond Home
Below: Our new Registered Nursing Associates



Caring for couples

We're proud that we can care for couples, so that they don't face the heartbreak of being separated after a life lived together.

Army veteran Neil remembers the first time he saw Betty. "I used to go along and help with a judo class," he explained. "I walked in one evening and there was Betty. I went over to say hello. And things took off from there."

The couple have been married for 52 years and live at our High Wycombe Home. Neil said: "It means a lot that we are still here together, many years later, hand in hand."



Sue and Harry celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary at our Solihull Home in August 2020.



They met in 1947, after WWII veteran Harry left the Navy. They say knowing that when one dies the other will be cared for gives them comfort. "We've been married 70 years, we don't want to be apart," said Sue.



Rosemary met Army veteran Bob at work. They married in 1982.

The couple now live at our Surbiton Home. Rosemary said: "I've always lived with somebody I love. We've been married nearly 40 years, and together a lot longer. Now, I feel lucky to be together with Bob at Royal Star & Garter."

Words from our Homes

We asked residents and staff: 'What do you hope the summer brings?'



Lights out



We offer care around the clock, so what is life like after dark in our Homes?

“The biggest difference between day and night care is the gentler pace,” said Surbiton Lead Healthcare Assistant (HCA) Janine, below, with Bet. “We haven’t got mealtimes and everything else to fit around. If a resident wants a snack, the fridge is always well stocked.”



That slower pace means she spends quality time with the residents who are unable to sleep: “We go by what the resident wants. If it’s company, we will sit with them and talk. If they’re upset, we will comfort them. We can sing songs, do a jigsaw. We could listen to music, watch TV, or look at their life stories and memory boxes. It’s very much resident-led.”

High Wycombe Lead HCA Nicky agreed: “One of the best bits about working nights is spending that quality time with residents. You can stay with them without interruptions. You help settle them down and you make them feel safe and secure.”

For High Wycombe Nurse Jen (below, with Joan), the quieter night shifts give her the opportunity to learn more about residents: “I get to know more about





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I have a chance to really get to know residents. And the team are wonderful, we pull in the same direction.

Trish, Nurse



them, their background, and their interests. At night, there's a deeper interaction with residents.”



Staff wear pyjamas to encourage residents to prepare for the night-time routine. Explaining why this is especially helpful for residents living with dementia, Nicky

(below, with Gladys) said: “It helps give the resident a sense of time. Sometimes they can struggle to distinguish between night and day, but when they see you wearing pyjamas they know it's night-time.”

Despite the slower pace, the teams hit the ground running at the start of each night shift. Solihull Nurse Trish (above, with Maggie) said: “The first thing I do is make sure everyone is OK. I ask them what time they'd like their medication so I can manage my time better.”



The late shift also brings unexpected benefits for Trish: “Our residents love their soap operas!” she said. “They're always telling me what's happening, so I'm kept abreast of what's going on even though I don't watch them myself.”

One thing they all have to overcome is tiredness. Trish said: “It gets to everybody at some point. When it happens you get up, you get moving and chat to colleagues. Your body does get used to it!”

And they all agree to having a special bond with their nightshift colleagues. Trish sums it up: “We're like a second family, and that's important because in lockdown we've not been able to see our wider families. So, we've been supporting each other as well as our residents.”



Our dementia care

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We are not just about delivering care, we're here to make every day meaningful.

Beccy, Dementia Care Lead

As national demand for dementia care increases, staff explain what makes our award-winning care so special.

“We have a dedicated team that treats all our residents as individuals, with personalised care,” explains Beccy, High Wycombe Dementia Care Lead (DCL).

Kirsty, DCL at Solihull, agrees, explaining why we excel at dementia care: “The facilities are brilliant and staff are passionate, it's so much more than just a job to us. Everything we do is person-centred. We get to know residents individually.” Surbiton Care Manager, Yasmin,



adds: “We treat people living with dementia with the same compassion as those living with other conditions. I'm a huge advocate of focussing on what residents can do, not what they can't, so we can promote their independence, and maintain their dignity and well-being.”

Keeping active

Our Homes host dozens of activities each week, most adapted for residents living with dementia. The lockdown has posed challenges, especially in dementia care. Kirsty said: “We're really lucky to have facilities and resources which allow us to provide activities on an individual level. We can help people feel stimulated and valued.”

Developing relationships

The pandemic has resulted in closer relationships between staff and residents. “We've had to rely on each other,” said Yasmin. Kirsty added: “I've seen relationships blossom, it's lovely to see.” It has also resulted in some unexpected developments. Kirsty continued: “I wouldn't have thought video calling would be suitable for someone living with dementia, but residents light up when they see their family on screen.”

Home from home

Despite the difficulties caused by Covid-19, staff count their blessings. Beccy said: “The Home is our residents' home, and it's a privilege for us to work here. They're an extended family.” Kirsty added: “I look after them in the way I'd like someone to look after my loved ones. We're part of their family.”



Our dementia care tips

Communicating

- Stand or sit at a person's eye level, smile, be relaxed and friendly
- Try to use open body language, don't have your arms crossed or hands on hips
- Use familiar, sentimental prompts, such as photographs, to help your conversation
- Listen to music or sing together
- All behaviour is communication so look at their body language and how they are expressing themselves physically, as well as listening to them

Calming

- Try using distraction techniques such as music to take their mind off a stressful situation
- Use a soft, calming voice and avoid raising it
- Check for triggers, such as stressful environments or noises
- Offer them soft materials and different textures to touch, which can be soothing

Empathising

- Explore the language of dementia: a person asking for their mother may actually be indicating that they need comforting
- Chat to them about home. This can provide an insight into what they may need to comfort them
- If someone asks for a deceased loved one, ask about them, rather than explaining that they are dead

Eating

- Invite them to help you prepare meals
- Stimulate their senses by looking at photos of food or recipes
- Mirroring: eat with them so they can copy your actions
- Check that the plate and the food are different colours and easily defined
- Try tempting them with a selection of finger foods rather than a large meal

Fundraising fun

Events information

To keep up to date with our events and places available, please visit:
starandgarter.org/events

Or contact Lauren, our Senior Community Fundraiser, on 07443 112317 or
community@starandgarter.org

With a spring in our step, we are looking forward to lots of exciting fundraising challenges ahead.

Reflect & Grow

We've been inspired by the Day of Reflection on 23 March to ask our supporters to Reflect & Grow with us.



Please join us by making a minimum £10 donation to support our veterans. You will receive sunflower seeds which you can plant or share while you take a moment to reflect on the past year. We will also send a fun activity pack for children. You can make

a donation as a gift to tell someone you are thinking of them.

Please visit our website for further details and to take part: starandgarter.org/reflect-and-grow

Fundraise your way

This year our supporters are planning ambitious challenges including hikes, walks and runs. Royal Signals soldiers Declan and Niten (below) and colleague Duncan recently ran 100 miles each in three days, raising £1,000 to support our vital work.

Do get in touch if you are planning something special or would like to join an organised event.



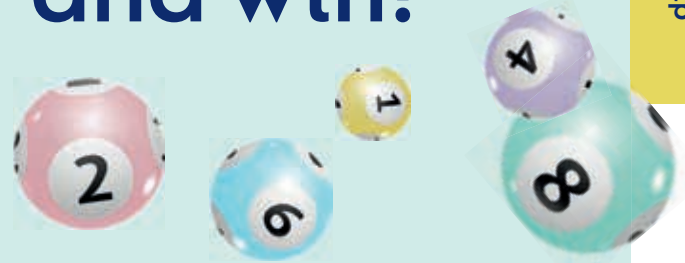
Donating safely



We can't do our work without your support. So we take the responsibility of keeping your details and donations safe seriously. Our Individual Giving Manager, Karen Grant-Bond, explains.

- We will only ever ask you to donate by phone, post, or online, so you will never receive a text message requesting a donation from us
- Once we receive a donation, we have detailed procedures for processing them, such as making sure two people open our post. Our procedures ensure that donations are taken effectively and accurately
- Giving online is so quick and easy, your information is processed securely and not stored, making it a safe way to give. We've seen more people start to give online than ever before
- We protect your data too. We have an Officer in-house who ensures that what we do follows the appropriate regulations. Everything we send out to you is checked against these rules to ensure that we comply
- If someone contacts you directly claiming to be from Royal Star & Garter or asks you to make a donation and you are not sure, then please check with us.

Support and win!



Watch out for our Star Lottery – coming soon.

We are just putting the finishing touches to our exciting new Lottery.

Every week, there's a chance to win:

1st prize of £20,000

2nd prize of £1,000

Ten runners-up prizes of £10

John Lewis vouchers

Caley Eldred, Director of Supporter Engagement, said: "Players will be directly supporting our work, because every ticket purchased will go towards funding exceptional care for our residents."

If you would like to register your interest in the Star Lottery, please email: supportercare@starandgarter.org

Here to help

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, we have followed all government guidelines in order to keep staff safe and this initially limited time spent in our Administrative Office. We would like to thank you for your patience while our responses have been taking longer. As we gradually support more staff back into our office, your donations will begin to be processed more quickly again. We can reassure you that all post continues to be kept safe and secure.

There are several ways to keep in touch.
Our friendly Supporter Care Team are always
on hand to help.

020 8481 7676

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

www.starandgarter.org/contact-us

supportercare@starandgarter.org



To help our planet and reduce costs,
we'd love to be in touch by email.

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