

Tomorrow's[®] Care

April/May 2026

A DESIGN MOMENT FOR SOCIAL CARE



England has a rare chance to redesign adult social care and what happens next will be critical, says Paul Burstow of SCIE.

Read more on page 14.

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TIME TO RETHINK AIR CARE: RUBBERMAID COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS LAUNCHES CIRCULAIR 90

Rubbermaid Commercial Products (RCP) has launched CirculAir 90, the next evolution of its popular TCell passive air freshening system that's designed to deliver uninterrupted performance.

Engineered for recyclability with a lower environmental footprint than its predecessor, CirculAir 90 was developed in direct response to growing demand for air care solutions that deliver reduced environmental footprint without compromising on performance.

Backed by independent testing and certifications, the launch is part of RCP's ongoing commitment to developing products designed to support businesses with reducing their environmental footprint, while maintaining the high standards of quality and reliability the brand is known for.

CERTIFIED RECYCLABILITY

Faced with regulatory change, responsible procurement practices and strict ESG policies, facilities managers are under increasing pressure to deliver improved sustainability.

CirculAir 90 has been specifically designed with these trends in mind. As a passive air care system that uses the natural flow of air to move fragrance around the room, both the dispenser and its refills are battery-free, reducing the raw materials used in their production. In fact, every component of this scented refill is made of the same material, so you can put it straight in the plastic recycling bin without any need to dismantle it.

The result is a smaller environmental footprint, with CirculAir 90 lowering resource usage by 36% and emitting 11% less greenhouse gas emissions across its entire lifecycle compared to TCell. Without compromising performance and by simply switching from TCell

to CirculAir 90, globally RCP is projected to save three tonnes of plastic and 4.9 tonnes of metals a year.

Those credentials are backed by third-party assessments and certification, including an ISO compliant third-party reviewed lifecycle assessment (LCA) in partnership with global climate consultancy South Pole, and a recyclability assessment by RecyClass (UK, EU, CH, NO & US). So, it's recyclability you can trust in practice, and at scale.

EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

The good news for facilities managers is that the improvements don't come at the cost of performance. Designed to be compatible with existing TCell dispensers, refills are available in six fresh scents (Blue Splash, Citrus Mix, Crystal Breeze, Fruit Crush, Polar Mist, Relaxing Spa), with varying intensities to match your facility's needs.

"For more than half a century, Rubbermaid Commercial Products has worked to deliver world-class products that meet the changing needs of our customers," said Sustainability and Communications Manager, Adriana Olaya Rodriguez.

"With sustainability front-of-mind, today those customers need tangible solutions that cut through the empty promises and greenwashing to deliver real results. With its third-party certification, we're proud to have developed a solution that's proven to reduce environmental footprint when compared to its predecessor, while delivering the same exceptional performance our customers rely on."

www.rubbermaid.eu/en/CirculAir-90



ANIMALS RACE ACROSS THE WORLD TO BELONG ATHERTON

Swiss Valais blacknose sheep, Chinese Silkie chickens, and Pygmy goats have been spotted in Atherton as Belong customers and the community have been playing host for special meet-and-greet sessions with animals from across the globe.

Tiny African Scops, Eurasian Eagle, and Harris's Hawk owls have also joined the fun at the Mealhouse Lane care village, with its older community petting their new companions, finding out all about them, and in some cases, taking on the role of looking after them.

The special sessions were arranged by the village's experience team as part of its vibrant activities programme which also invites the wider community to participate.

Mobile Farm Cheshire, and Owl Adventures were called upon to facilitate the animal assisted therapy, with Belong Atherton's

residents and tenants encouraged to try something new, forge fresh friendships, and enjoy a sense of camaraderie looking after their guests.

In addition, it proved to support the wellbeing of those living with dementia, with animal therapy providing the opportunity to socialise without the need to engage in conversation, meaning those with little or no verbal communication can also participate.

Catherine Appleby, Belong Atherton Experience Support Worker, said: "What amazing visits we have had. Our residents, tenants and Experience Days customers have especially loved the animals prancing around their home, the birds flying freely, and being able to hold and have cuddles with the smaller animals."

www.belong.org.uk



OVERNIGHT LOCK-IN RAISES MONEY FOR CHARITIES

A Care UK colleague has raised £500, donated across two crucial charities, after spending the night in a jail cell alongside nine other fundraisers.

Amy Thomas, a Senior Carer at Care UK's Llys Cyncoed, raised funds for the Forget-Me-Not Chorus and The Rescue Hotel for Dogs. She said: "I've always been a huge animal fan – I was a rescuer and always bringing home injured wildlife. My mum used to go nuts.

"And obviously, working in the care home, I see a lot of residents living with dementia and how it affects everybody around them too – like family, friends and carers."

Amy was 'arrested' and handcuffed with the other fundraisers, then put into an old police cell at Roath Police station for her stay. During the evening, Rt Hon the Lord Mayor of Cardiff Councillor Adrian Robson and his wife, Lady Mayoress Jayne Robson, visited the group and thanked them for their efforts. The two benefitting charities were the mayor's chosen charities for the year.

Amy said: "It's two worthy causes. Dementia affects so many people and in lots of different ways. Whether it's their memory, speech, behaviour; it impacts everybody differently. There's no cure,

so my job is about enabling residents to live fulfilling lives during their time at Llys Cyncoed."

Amy's initial fundraising efforts came to £250, which was then matched by Care UK to create a total donation of £500.

The Lord Mayor of Cardiff said: "The Lady Mayoress and I would like to thank Amy for being such a good sport and spending the night in prison. We are grateful to Care UK for match funding £250, which will really help my two nominated charities."

www.careuk.com/careers



THE CARE WORKERS' CHARITY RESPONDS TO THE KING'S FUND SOCIAL CARE 360 REPORT



The King's Fund Social Care 360 Report points to encouraging signs: falling vacancy rates, rising spending and more people receiving publicly funded care than at any point in the last decade. The Care Workers' Charity welcomes this progress. However, progress on paper does not always reflect reality. Behind every improving headline lies a workforce still being asked to give more than the system is prepared to give back.

The vacancy rate in adult social care has fallen from a pandemic high of over 10% to 7% in 2024/25. However, the report is unambiguous about what has driven it: a sharp increase in international recruitment, with around 235,000 overseas workers joining the sector since 2022. Meanwhile, the number of UK domestic workers has fallen by 85,000 since 2020/21. The domestic pipeline is not recovering, it is shrinking. With the government now proposing that workers who arrived on Health and Care visas wait 15 years for permanent residence, the sector faces a workforce that is simultaneously harder to recruit internationally and failing to attract people at home. That is not stability, it is structural fragility.

Median care worker pay in the independent sector stood at £12.00 per hour in March 2025, just 56p above the National Living Wage. Care workers employed by local authorities fared better at £13.55 per hour, but a £1.55 per hour disparity between sectors is itself a problem that demands attention. More troublingly, the King's Fund data shows that pay increases are now slowing: between March and December 2025, care worker pay increased by 1.7% less than the rise in the National Living Wage, the widest gap since 2019/20. Providers, squeezed by rising National Insurance contributions and inadequate fee increases from local authorities, are absorbing costs by limiting pay growth. The people absorbing that decision are care workers. A care worker with several years' experience now earns just 7p more per hour

than someone on their first day. That is what experience is worth in a system that has never properly valued it.

The government has legislated for the first ever Fair Pay Agreement in adult social care, backed by £500m of funding. The Care Workers' Charity has consistently called for this, and we welcome it unreservedly. However, the first agreement will not land until 2028, and the funding is non-ringfenced; meaning there is no guarantee it reaches care workers' pay packets. Every month between now and 2028 is another month of care workers deciding whether they can afford to stay in a sector they are passionate about. A Fair Pay Agreement that arrives after the people it was meant to retain have already left is not a victory. It is too little, too late.

Just 4% of the public cited social care as one of the most important issues facing the country in March 2025, unchanged from the previous year and a fraction of the 29% who cited the NHS. Without greater public understanding of what social care is, who delivers it and what is at stake if it fails, the urgency of reform will continue to be diluted. Awareness that does not grow is awareness that cannot drive change.

Karolina Gerlich, CEO of The Care Workers' Charity, said: "This report confirms what we see every day: a sector that is making progress, but on foundations that are not yet strong enough to hold. Falling vacancies are welcome. Rising pay is welcome. But when pay growth is slowing, when domestic recruitment is declining, and when the workers who kept this sector going through a pandemic now face a 15-year wait for the security they were promised, we cannot call this a success story.

"Care workers are not asking for gratitude. They are asking for a system that is honest about what they do, what it costs and what it is worth. The Fair Pay Agreement is a step in the right direction, but steps in the right direction do not help the care worker who cannot cover their bills this month, or the senior care worker who earns 7p more per hour than a colleague on their first day. We need pace, we need funding that is genuinely ringfenced, and we need political will that does not run out of steam before the people it is meant to help ever feel the difference."

www.thecareworkerscharity.org.uk



AAT HELPS COUNCILS STEP UP TO ADDRESS CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

As the government announces a £555m fund for children's social care reform, focusing on putting families first and providing early help, AAT is stepping up to help councils deliver in practice.

AAT's offer centres around disabled children, supporting them and their families to remain safe in their existing home. It improves outcomes for the children and their families, and reduces spending – even as the child grows into adulthood.

For a child with mobility issues, the usual scenario is that their carers carry them up and down the stairs. As they grow, or as their condition worsens, this can put both the child and their carers at risk of falling or suffering injury. Managing that risk usually involves a significant home adaptation, funded via the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). This takes time – assuming a suitable adaptation can be implemented.

Provision of AAT's Sella mobility stairclimbing wheelchair is a 'quick fix'. Most local authorities already have the Class 1 Medical Device so it can be prescribed to the child quickly and carers trained via AAT's pioneering re-issue programme. There is no capital funding required.

If one is not available in equipment stores, AAT can deliver within 10 working days of order.

Sella makes stairway navigation safe for child and carers. The child is secure and comfortable whilst being moved around the home. Their carer operates and has complete control of the transfer process, making stair navigation safer for them too.

Being a portable unit, Sella carries the child from the stairway on to destination. There is no need to expose the child to the risk of a transfer at the top of the stairs as would be inherent with a more expensive installed stairlift.

Paired with AAT's unique Universal Seat System, the stairclimber evolves with the child over time. The seat system incorporates adjustable lateral, hip and head supports.

Peter Wingrave, AAT Director, said: "Providing a stairclimber where appropriate identifies the risk earlier and prevents a problem from needlessly escalating – key elements of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care."

"Such investment in family help also improves the child's outcome and can reduce spending later on. We have numerous instances where our Sella has been provided as the short-term solution to manage risk, but the family has insisted on keeping it, even when a more long-term, and often more expensive, option is available."

www.aatgb.com/s-max-sella



ORBIS EDUCATION AND CARE OPENS EARLY YEARS PROVISION IN WALES

Orbis Education and Care has opened a new early years provision, The Meadows, at Summergil House, Presteigne, in Mid Wales.

The provision will cater for children aged between four and seven years who have complex needs associated with autism and has been designed with the early years curriculum in mind.

The Meadows is situated on the grounds of Summergil House, a well-established school which Orbis Education and Care has been running on the 18-acre site for nearly 20 years.

Officially opened by Orbis Education and Care CEO Andy Cresswell and Hilary Jones, Head of Service, Additional Needs at Herefordshire Council, the school will provide a bright and stimulating learning experience for its pupils, to inspire the children and encourage their development at this early stage of their educational journey.

Andy Cresswell, CEO of Orbis Education and Care, said at the official opening of The Meadows: "It is wonderful to add The

Meadows to our educational offering, especially as it's an early years provision.

"It is really great to be adding The Meadows to our educational portfolio in Mid Wales, which will really make a difference to these young children, many of whom will be taking their first steps into a formal educational setting."

The opening will lead to the creation of more than 20 new jobs, including teachers and learning support assistants.

Orbis Education and Care is a specialist provider of educational and residential support for people with complex needs

www.orbis-group.co.uk



ADDRESSING INEQUITY IN SOCIAL CARE

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has launched its Care Equity Evidence Hub – an online resource bringing together research, data, and practice evidence to address inequities in social care.

There are persistent differences in people's access to social care and support, their experiences of services, and the outcomes they achieve. Yet the evidence needed to understand and address these differences is often fragmented, difficult to find, and written in ways that limit its use in practice. These barriers prevent those shaping policy, commissioning, and practice decisions from using evidence meaningfully.

The Care Equity Evidence Hub responds to this challenge by consolidating and summarising reviewed and appraised evidence from across research, data, and practice. By presenting it in an accessible way and organising it around sector priorities, the Hub makes it easier to find and apply in real-world decision-making.

Evidence in the Hub is organised across six key themes: workforce, underserved populations, neighbourhood health,

financial inequities, geographical inequities, and the use of technology in care.

Gerard Crofton-Martin, Interim Chief Executive at SCIE, said: "No one should receive worse care, or miss out on care, because of who they are, where they live, or their circumstances. Yet inequities in social care remain a persistent and widely recognised challenge – from timely, personalised support that enables independence and dignity, to long waiting lists, high eligibility thresholds and unmet basic needs.

"The evidence on care equity has often been fragmented and difficult for social care professionals to access and apply. This creates a gap between what we know and what we can do.

"This new resource for the sector supports people to quickly find, understand, and apply evidence in ways that reflect the realities of practice.

"By helping us better understand where inequities occur, how they affect different communities and what approaches may

help address them, it takes us a step closer to creating a fairer system that responds to people's varied circumstances – and enables them to live fulfilling lives."

The Care Equity Evidence Hub was shaped through engagement with organisations and individuals across the social care sector—including policymakers, commissioners, providers, researchers, people who draw on care and support, and unpaid carers.

Patrick Wood, Chair of SCIE's Co-production Steering Group, who has served in an advisory role to the design and direction of the Hub, said: "The voices of people with lived experience have been central in shaping the Evidence Hub, and we have worked alongside professionals from a range of different backgrounds on an equitable basis to ensure that this resource will be useful for everyone concerned with social care."

www.scie.org.uk/insights/care-equity/evidence-hub

CAREMARK COMMUNITY CARE FUND TO SUPPORT LOCAL PROJECTS ACROSS THE UK

Homecare provider Caremark has launched its Community Care Fund 2026 – a new nationwide initiative designed to support local projects that bring communities together and make a positive difference to people's lives.

The Community Care Fund invites members of the public, community groups and local not-for-profit organisations to nominate projects in their area that they believe deserve funding. This could be anything from a local park in need of some plants, a pre-school looking to revamp its play area, a community centre wanting to update its kitchen facilities, or a local charity hoping to brighten up its space with a new lick of paint or buy supplies for an arts club, etc. Any initiative will be considered, provided it delivers a clear benefit to its local community.

With three individual grants of £3,000 each available, the fund aims to shine a spotlight on grassroots projects that create meaningful, lasting impact.

From the nominations received, one finalist will be shortlisted from each of Caremark's 12 UK regions. The 12 finalists will be put forward to a public vote via Caremark's website and social media channels to determine the overall winners. Three winning projects will receive a £3,000 grant each from the Caremark Community Care Fund 2026.

David Glover, CEO at Caremark, commented: "At Caremark, we see every day how powerful local projects can be in bringing people together and improving quality of life. The Community Care Fund is our way of recognising and empowering the ideas that can truly transform lives across the UK.

"It is also about giving communities a voice. We know there are many inspiring projects making a positive impact, often

quietly behind the scenes, and we want to hear about them. By opening the fund to public nominations, we hope people will put forward the projects they care about and help them access funding that can make a meaningful difference."

The deadline for nominations is midnight on 31 May 2026.

www.caremark.co.uk/community-care-fund



NEW PODCAST HELPS FAMILIES COPE WITH DEMENTIA



A new 10-part podcast series, entitled *Caring for the Carers*, has just been launched by author and Mindset coach Ged Roberts.

It has been specifically created to support and give guidance to anyone facing the emotional challenges of looking after, or caring for, a loved one who is suffering from the different stages of dementia.

The series, created, written and narrated by Ged Roberts, is freely available on all the major podcast platforms, as part of the Amazing Mindset Podcast Series, and also on YouTube on Ged's Amazing Mindset channel.

The podcast series is inspired by Ged's personal experience of his mother's own suffering in the last two years of her life.

Ged said: "There are many stages of Dementia, and this dreadful illness takes different forms in different people, but the one thing it has in common is that it causes stress, frustration, sadness, heartache,

and that awful feeling of helplessness in those who are caring for a loved one.

"The person who has dementia, however, is quite commonly totally unaware of the emotional distress that their illness is causing partners, spouses, family, and close friends.

"The series is designed to guide carers through the Mindset changes that we need to make in order to cope with the mental changes the person with dementia is enduring."

Some of the topics covered include communication, patience, calm and clarity, finding support, and looking after you the carer.

www.amazingmindset.co.uk

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN CARE

After a closely contested race and a record number of votes, we're excited to unveil the products and services you selected as the winners of the Tomorrow's Care Awards 2026.

FIRST PLACE

Leader in Adult Care Level 5 Apprenticeship
by Paragon Skills

Paragon Skills is a specialist, national training provider dedicated to the care sector, delivering apprenticeships that create lasting impact for individuals, employers, and the wider community. With over 20 years of experience and a 4.8* Trustpilot rating, Paragon Skills is recognised for its outstanding learner experience and measurable improvements in care quality, leadership capability, and workforce retention.

The Leader in Adult Care Level 5 Apprenticeship is designed for deputy and registered managers working in adult residential, domiciliary, or community-based care settings. It equips learners with the advanced leadership, management, and regulatory understanding needed to lead effective, person-centred services in line with CQC standards.

The programme focuses on embedding values-based culture, ensuring compliance, managing risk, developing teams, and driving continuous improvement within care organisations. Learners gain vital skills in governance, financial control, and business resilience, preparing them to deliver safe, compassionate, and sustainable care.

Delivered through Paragon Skills' award-winning blended learning model, the apprenticeship combines one-to-one coaching, sector-expert mentoring, and workplace

application to maximise impact. Each learner benefits from a dedicated Learning Mentor who supports their professional growth and ensures learning directly enhances day-to-day performance.

Spanning approximately 18 months plus end-point assessment, the programme culminates in the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership & Management for Adult Care, enabling progression to senior management roles and registration with professional bodies.

For care employers, this apprenticeship develops confident, competent leaders who drive high-quality care, empower teams, and embed sustainable excellence. Paragon Skills' sector focus, outstanding learner satisfaction, and proven results make this programme a benchmark for leadership development in adult social care.

<https://paragonskills.co.uk>

WHAT THEY SAID:

"We're absolutely delighted to receive this recognition for our Lead Adult Care Worker Level 5 Apprenticeship. It reflects the dedication of our team, employers and apprentices who work every day to raise standards in adult social care. Our pledge is to deliver an outstanding teaching and learning experience to every learner, every time, and this award highlights the impact of that commitment in developing confident, compassionate leaders for the care sector."

- James Swaffield, CEO, Paragon Skills

TOP FIVE

1. Leader in Adult Care Level 5 Apprenticeship
by Paragon Skills
2. Registered Manager Membership
by Skills for Care
3. Evondos
by Meds on Time
4. IQ:caremanager
by Unique IQ
5. EmployAbility
by Surrey Choices



SECOND PLACE

Registered Manager Membership
by Skills For Care

Skills for Care is the membership organisation for registered managers in England. This critical role involves ensuring that the highest quality care is provided to those who need it, and that staff are supported, confident, skilled, and valued.

We know from our close working relationships with registered managers that they find their role incredibly rewarding and varied, but it can often be challenging, complex, and isolating. That's why at Skills for Care, a key focus of our work is supporting them to feel confident and valued and develop the required skills and knowledge for this vital role.

Through registered manager membership, we help managers build best practice, stay up to date with sector developments, and connect with like-minded peers. It provides them with access to benefits that enhance their learning, development and wellbeing.

For £35 per year, registered managers can become members of our growing community, which helps to increase the professional recognition of the role and champions the values for delivering compassionate, person-centred care.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk

WHAT THEY SAID:

"Skills for Care is delighted to have been awarded second place in the 2026 Tomorrow's Care Awards for our registered manager membership offer. As the membership organisation for registered managers in England, we support managers to develop best practice and knowledge, stay up to date with sector developments and connect with peers across the sector. This recognition is an incredible achievement, and we would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who voted for us and continues to support the work we do."

- Tom Dancaaster, Membership Lead, Skills for Care

THIRD PLACE

Evondos
by Meds On Time

Evondos is a comprehensive automated medication-dispensing service designed to support independent living and streamline care delivery for home-based clients. Built around a medicine-dispensing robot combined with telecare and service support, the system ensures the right medication, in the correct dose, at the right time — with documented adherence rates of 99%.

Operating in over 600 home-care organisations across the Nordics and the Netherlands, Evondos has correctly dispensed over 100m medicine doses. The solution targets clients with polypharmacy, time critical medication or reduced ability to self-manage. The robot accepts pre-packed multi-dose pouches from a local community pharmacy, then dispenses at scheduled times. Users can receive visual and spoken audio prompts, allowing care teams to monitor remotely via a cloud-based dashboard or mobile.

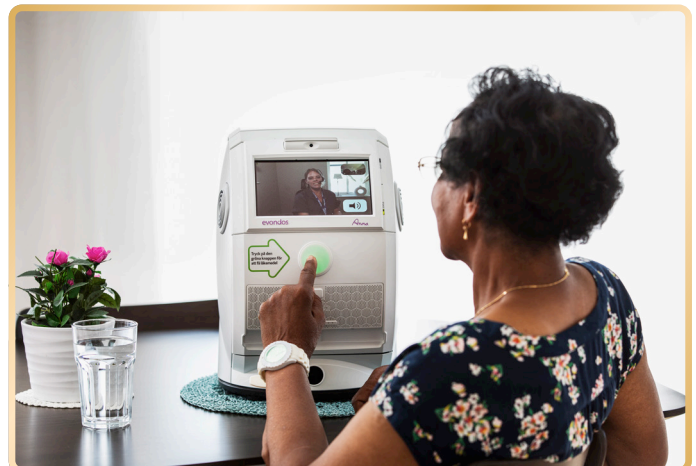
In practice, the benefits include improved medication safety, enhanced user independence, cost and travel-time savings for providers, and higher job satisfaction for care staff. Evondos is part of the D-MAT (digital medication adherence toolkit) curated by Meds on Time.

www.medsontime.tech

WHAT THEY SAID:

"We are incredibly proud to receive third place at the Tomorrow's Care Award. This recognition reflects our commitment to improving medication management and supporting care providers and care givers with our innovative solution. At Evondos, we believe better care comes from reliability, dignity, and technology that truly serves people. Thank you to our partners and teams whose dedication makes this progress possible, and inspires us to keep raising the standard every single day."

- Priti Patel, Director, Meds on Time



BUILT FOR SUCCESS

A new care home is not created on launch day. The most successful services are operationally built long before the first resident arrives, explains Chris Dean, Founder and Chief Procurement Officer at Procurement For Care.



Spend enough time around new care home openings and you start to notice something. The homes that feel calm in those early weeks rarely got there by accident. And the ones that feel like they are constantly catching up are seldom short of good people or good intent. More often, they are dealing with decisions that were made earlier, usually under pressure, that now need unpicking.

That is why I have come to think about new developments a little differently over the years. A care home does not really open when the first resident arrives. By that point, a lot of the important things have already been set in motion.

It starts much earlier, and often in ways that do not feel significant at the time. When suppliers are chosen. When budgets are first mapped out. When processes are kept loose 'just for now' to keep things moving. Those moments tend to pass quietly, but they shape how the home will actually run once it is full of people. You only really see the impact later, when teams are either able to get on with their day or are spending time working around things that were never quite set up properly.

In care, we are used to thinking about opening risk in fairly obvious terms. Recruitment, occupancy, compliance, cash flow. All of those matter. But what tends to sit underneath them is something less visible: operational drift.

"Too often, procurement is treated as a late-stage task, when in reality it plays a critical role in shaping cost control, compliance team confidence and resident experience from day one."

Nothing dramatic, just small things that are not quite clear, not quite aligned, not quite thought through. A supplier that is not quite right. A process that relies on someone remembering rather than a system supporting it. A budget that made sense at the time but does not quite hold up as things scale. Individually, they are manageable. Together, they create noise. And in a new home, noise is the last thing teams need.

Opening a service is intense enough. New colleagues are finding their rhythm. New residents are settling in. Families are forming their first impressions. When the operation around that is clear, people focus on care. When it is not, time is pulled into things that should have been straightforward.

Over time, I started describing this idea as a 'care home in a box'. Not because there is a standard way to do things, there is not. Every home is different. But the ones that open well tend to have something in common. The operational side has been



thought through in advance, rather than left to take shape once the doors are open.

That does not mean everything is perfect. It never is. But it does mean the basics are in place. The numbers make sense. The suppliers are right. The way of working is clear. From there, teams can build something that reflects the home, rather than constantly correcting it.

One area where this becomes particularly important is as occupancy builds. A home at 20% occupancy behaves very differently to one at 70%. Costs shift. Ordering patterns change. Pressures appear that were not obvious at the start. Without a clear view of what is happening, it is easy to find yourself reacting to spend rather than understanding it. Simple measures, such as looking at cost on a per resident basis, become valuable not as a finance exercise, but as a way of keeping the operation grounded as it grows.

Consistency plays a similar role. In the early weeks of a home, people are learning quickly. If products, processes and expectations are clear, that learning happens faster. If they are not, people create their own ways of getting things done. Those ways tend to stick. And once something becomes 'how we do things here', it is much harder to change.

For anyone planning a new development, the more useful question is not just about the opening date. It is about when the home actually starts working.

Because by the time the first resident arrives, the operation around them should already feel steady. Not perfect, but steady enough that the focus can stay where it belongs: on the people living there.

The strongest homes do not feel like they have just opened. They feel like they have already found their feet.

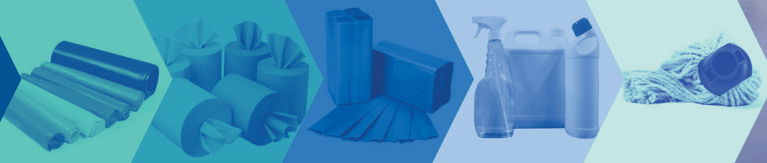
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A DESIGN MOMENT FOR SOCIAL CARE

England may be approaching a rare opportunity to redesign adult social care. Success will depend on how the sector responds, says Paul Burstow, Chair of the Board at the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE).



Adult social care in England has never had a clear national settlement. Unlike the NHS or other parts of the welfare state, it developed incrementally rather than through a single moment of design.

Louise Casey's speech at the Nuffield Trust Summit suggests that the country may be approaching such a moment now. Drawing on the first year of work by the Casey Commission, she described a system shaped by decades of partial reform but never fully aligned around purpose, responsibility or funding.

That may sound familiar. The need for reform has been widely recognised for many years. What feels different is that the conversation may now be shifting from whether reform is needed to how it might realistically be achieved.

Two developments help explain why this moment may matter. The first is the government's move towards a Fair Pay Agreement for the social care workforce. The second is the Casey Commission's examination of the system as a whole.

Neither guarantees reform. But together they create a rare opportunity to revisit the design of the system itself.

■ REFORM IN STAGES

Adult social care in England was never designed in the way the NHS or other parts of the welfare state were after the Second World War. Instead, it evolved gradually through a series of partial reforms.

The National Assistance Act 1948 replaced the Poor Law framework but retained many of its underlying assumptions. Social care remained largely a safety net, with access shaped by means-testing and by local interpretation of eligibility. Over time, the legal framework became increasingly fragmented as new duties and powers were added through successive pieces of legislation.

A more coherent framework did not emerge until the Law Commission's review of adult social care law, published in 2011. Many of its recommendations were implemented through the Care Act 2014, which consolidated decades of legislation into a single statute and placed the promotion of individual wellbeing at the centre of the system.

The Care Act created a framework that is more adaptable than is sometimes recognised. In effect, it operates like a balloon: the structure holds whether it is lightly inflated or filled more fully. The Act can support the constrained system that exists today, but it could equally accommodate a more ambitious settlement should government choose to expand entitlement, investment or prevention.

The legislation, therefore, provides the architecture for reform, even if the system operating within it remains limited.

Yet none of these reforms fully resolved the relationships between the system's key components: funding, workforce sustainability, entitlement, prevention and the balance of responsibility between national and local government.

Nor did they address the structural imbalance between health and social care. The NHS remains the dominant institution in the wider system. Part of that imbalance reflects scale and funding. But part of it reflects visibility. The NHS is a nationally recognised public institution, while social care is experienced as a complex set of local services whose boundaries and responsibilities are often unclear. The result is a system with strong statutory principles but persistent structural tensions.

The Casey Commission offers an opportunity to revisit those relationships. Not necessarily to produce an immediate comprehensive settlement, but to clarify how the system's different parts should align.

■ THE REFORM WE ALMOST HAD

This is not the first time social care has come close to structural reform. In 2011, the Dilnot Commission proposed a cap on lifetime care costs. The proposal was not radical. It did not create a National Care Service or fully collectivise funding. But it would have changed the system in one important way: it would have made the state's role more visible.

Care accounts would have tracked individuals' progress towards the cap. Self-funders would have come into earlier contact with local authorities. The means test and the public safety net



would have become more transparent. Over time, that visibility might have altered the politics of social care.

Instead, implementation was repeatedly delayed and eventually abandoned. Care accounts were never embedded. The cap was postponed, revised and finally scrapped. The system remained largely as it was: complex, uneven and often encountered only at moments of crisis.

Dilnot's lesson is not simply that reform is politically fragile. It is that reform requires administrative readiness, narrative coherence and sector alignment long before legislation is enacted.

■ THE CURRENT MOMENT

The Casey Commission begins its work in a political environment that is both constrained and consequential. Public understanding of social care remains limited. Fiscal pressures are acute. A general election will arrive within the next parliamentary cycle. In these conditions sweeping reform within the current Parliament appears unlikely.

Yet Casey's intervention matters because it recognises that the system is no longer operating within the assumptions under which it developed. People live longer with complex conditions. Expectations about independence and participation have changed. Workforce sustainability has become central to the system's future.

The proposed Fair Pay Agreement brings this challenge into sharper focus. By establishing nationally negotiated workforce standards, it places central government in a more visible position of responsibility for workforce conditions and their funding consequences.

Historically, pressures in social care have often been absorbed through local variation in commissioning and pay. National workforce standards reduce that flexibility. Over time, they increase pressure for alignment between workforce policy, funding settlements and commissioning practice.

That alignment will not occur automatically. It will have to be shaped.

Taken together, the Fair Pay Agreement and the Casey Commission create what might reasonably be described as a design moment for social care.

■ THE SECTOR'S ROLE

Government action alone will not determine whether this moment produces reform.

For many years, organisations across social care have argued powerfully for change. Providers have highlighted market fragility. Local authorities have described unsustainable financial pressures. Workforce organisations have made the case for fair pay. People who draw on care and support have spoken about inconsistency and lack of control. These arguments are legitimate and necessary.

But when government is presented with multiple overlapping demands, without clarity about sequencing, cost exposure or risk-sharing, incremental adjustment becomes the safer political course. Treasury caution increases. Ministers hesitate. Reform drifts.

If structural change is to be secured, the sector must increasingly complement advocacy with something else: shared design. That means being explicit about trade-offs. Reform involves choices between pace and affordability, national consistency and local flexibility, expanded entitlement and fiscal exposure.

Trade-offs are not a constraint on ambition. They are how ambition becomes politically adoptable.

This does not require unanimity across the sector. But it does require a form of system stewardship, recognising that the long-term health of the system depends on how its different components align.

■ VISIBILITY AND PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

One of the persistent challenges in social care is its low public salience. Many people encounter the system only when they or a family member face a crisis. The boundaries between health care and social care are poorly understood. The financial rules are opaque. There is no single institutional identity comparable to the NHS.

Polling suggests that while people value care for older and disabled people, social care rarely determines voting behaviour.

Structural changes may gradually alter this. If workforce standards are negotiated nationally, questions about how those standards are funded become more visible. If commissioning must align with workforce agreements, the relationship between national and local responsibility becomes clearer. Visibility alone will not produce reform. But without visibility, reform struggles to build constituency.

■ THE NEXT 18 MONTHS

For the Casey Commission, the coming period will involve gathering evidence and shaping recommendations.

For the sector, the next 18 months represent a moment of responsibility. The responsibility to clarify the problems government is being asked to solve. The responsibility to align workforce reform with funding and commissioning realities. The responsibility to develop credible economic and operational analysis capable of withstanding Treasury scrutiny.

The responsibility to work through difficult trade-offs before political decisions are required.

Reform will not emerge fully formed from a commission alone. Nor will it be secured through advocacy alone.

But Casey's intervention signals that the conversation about the future of social care has begun again. The Care Act already provides a framework capable of supporting that future – whether in its current constrained form or as the basis for a more ambitious settlement, should government choose to expand entitlement, investment or prevention.

What happens next will depend on how we in the sector choose to respond.

Paul Burstow is Chair of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE). He served as Minister of State for Care Services from 2010 to 2012 overseeing the drafting of the Care Act and was a Liberal Democrat MP from 1997 to 2015.

www.scie.org.uk

CLEANLINESS MATTERS

An expert at The British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICSc) explains the importance of quality cleaning in the care sector.

With nearly 500,000 residents and over 700,000 staff working across the 16,000 care homes in the UK, there is a vast number of people who are potentially at risk if appropriate cleaning standards are not consistently maintained. Care homes support some of the most vulnerable individuals in society, many of whom have compromised immune systems or underlying health conditions. As a result, maintaining high standards of cleanliness is not simply a matter of presentation, but one of fundamental health, safety, and dignity.

Issues can quickly arise if surfaces, equipment, or even simply hands are not cleaned correctly. Poor cleaning practices can allow harmful bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens to survive and spread, significantly increasing the risk of infection. In environments such as care homes, where residents live in close proximity and sometimes share facilities, infections can spread rapidly if preventative measures are not in place. Something as simple as inadequate hand hygiene can result in infections being carried across residents, staff, and visitors.

If care homes are not cleaned thoroughly and consistently, there can be direct and serious impacts on the health, esteem, and wellbeing of residents. Poor sanitation can contribute to outbreaks of illnesses such as norovirus, influenza, or many other preventable infections, which can be particularly dangerous for elderly or clinically vulnerable individuals. In severe cases, preventable infections can result in hospitalisation or even become life-threatening. Cleanliness also plays an important role in preserving residents' dignity, ensuring they live in environments that are hygienic, comfortable, and respectful of their needs.

Families place a great deal of trust in care homes, believing their loved ones will be cared for in facilities that are maintained to the highest standards. When those standards are not met, it can lead to a loss of confidence in the care provided and cause distress for both residents and their families. This makes effective cleaning procedures not only a professional responsibility, but a moral one as well.

“Maintaining high standards of cleanliness is not simply a matter of presentation, but one of fundamental health, safety, and dignity.”

A lack of understanding around the importance and quality of cleaning is often where problems begin. This is where the British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICSc) plays a vital role in supporting care environments. BICSc helps ensure staff follow correct cleaning practices by providing clear, standardised guidance and professional training. Through established training, staff have the necessary knowledge to carry out cleaning tasks safely, effectively, and to a professional standard.



By delivering structured training, BICSc gives staff a deeper understanding of why correct cleaning processes matter and how they contribute to a safer environment for everyone. Employees are more likely to follow procedures correctly when they understand the risks associated with poor practice to everyone involved and the benefits of maintaining those high standards.

BICSc skills training, such as BU12 – Cleaning toilet facilities, BU5 – Emptying and cleaning general waste bins, BU6 – Damp wiping of surfaces, and SU1 – Bodily fluids and sharp objects, equip cleaning professionals with the practical expertise to deliver services at industry-leading standards. By completing our training, staff not only enhance their skills but also minimise the risk of workplace incidents and the spread of infection, boosting both operational efficiency and the reputation of care facilities.

Additional high-impact courses from BICSc, Control of Cross-Contamination, Principles of Health & Safety, and Hand Hygiene Explained further empower staff to uphold best practice and elevate cleaning standards across all care environments. Investing in this tailored training not only safeguards health but also reinforces your facility's commitment to excellence.

With targeted, industry-recognised training, staff gain the confidence and competence required to consistently deliver high-quality cleaning. This ensures the safety and wellbeing of the 500,000 residents, 700,000 staff, and visitors, while differentiating your care home, out of the 16,000, as a trusted provider. Ultimately, investing in quality cleaning training is an investment in safety, dignity, and the commercial success of your care facility.

<https://training.bics.org.uk>



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*Survey conducted of 11,500 respondents in the US, UK, DE, FR, MX, CA, ES, SE, NL and PL, 2025. 54% of respondents reported experiencing barriers, without limitation, diagnosed or self-diagnosed physical/cognitive conditions, e.g. eczema, chronic pain, general anxiety, claustrophobia.

CRITICAL CLEANING POINTS

Washrooms, kitchens, bedside tables – how can care home cleaners ensure that these critical cleaning points are kept free of germs and contamination at all times? Liam Mynes from Tork manufacturer Essity considers the issue.

Care homes tend to be close-knit communities. They are places where large groups of people live closely together, many of whom are frail and vulnerable. It is therefore inevitable that the residents will experience more than their fair share of outbreaks.

High levels of seasonal flu and norovirus were reported in UK care homes this winter, for example, while several incidents of scabies, a highly contagious skin condition, also occurred.

These types of infections and viruses are usually relatively trivial for the general population. However, they can prove fatal for anyone who is vulnerable, elderly or immuno-suppressed. So, it is important to reduce the chances of infections taking hold and spreading in the care home.

This is where cleaning protocols come in. Thorough cleaning needs to take place in residential facilities to curb outbreaks and to keep all residents safe. However, there are some surfaces that are much more prone to contamination than others.

Washrooms, kitchens and bedside areas all have surfaces that are frequently touched which makes them critical cleaning points in a care home. Other key areas that need frequent attention include door handles, handrails, light switches, call bells and remote controls.

Surfaces such as overbed tables, bed rails and bedside cabinets need to be cleaned daily while it is important that any shared equipment such as hoists, wheelchairs, commodes and walking frames are cleaned and disinfected between each use.

All surfaces in the kitchens and dining areas need to be cleaned before and after each use, with floors needing a scrub at the end of each shift. And the bathrooms and toilets also require a thorough daily clean with particular attention being applied to the taps, flushes and dispensers.

Care home cleaners are currently having a tough time and this makes it a major challenge to adhere to such a gruelling schedule.

A recent study revealed that around half of all care homes in the UK are struggling to recruit new staff members with 14.8% of them claiming to face significant staffing issues. A combination of low pay and restrictions to overseas recruitments have recently made the sector less attractive to care home cleaners.

Meanwhile, staff shortages in other areas of the care home are forcing cleaners to take on extra tasks such as assisting with residents' meals, which puts further pressure on their own responsibilities. These issues are said to be having a direct impact on levels of cleanliness as well as general standards of resident care. So, what can be done to change this situation?

Care home cleaners need to be methodical in their approach, particularly when they are overstretched. They need to understand the importance of cleaning all equipment and surfaces in the right order to avoid the risk of recontamination. They should also be supplied with a clear checklist to ensure that no critical cleaning task is ever allowed to fall through the cracks.



Good training is vital if care home cleaners are able to fully understand the importance of proper cleaning and hygiene protocols. Research from Essity reveals that 58% of cleaning staff members in care homes say they find it challenging to follow all the required steps and tasks in cleaning guidelines. And 68% of employees claim they would like to receive better and more interactive training in hand hygiene.

Free from Essity is Tork Cleaning Training for Long Term Care Homes, an online module that creates a series of 'real world' scenarios for care home staff. It takes a step-by-step approach and guides them through the correct processes when cleaning. The training has been developed in collaboration with the Association for Healthcare Environment and can be customised to fit with local cleaning guidelines.

Care home cleaners also need to be equipped with the right products and systems to help them carry out cleaning easily and effectively. The use of colour coded systems can be a great

help because these enable cleaning to be carried out more methodically and keep the residents safe. For example, Tork Coloured Long-Lasting Cleaning Cloths allow operatives to use a different colour cloth for each area of the care home, helping to prevent the issue of cross-contamination between, say, the kitchens and the bathrooms.

A check-list is an invaluable aid to a care home cleaner as it will ensure that every task has been fulfilled and that no chore is unnecessarily repeated. However, keeping paper records can be time-consuming and inefficient while physical checklists could easily be lost or discarded.

“High levels of seasonal flu and norovirus were reported in UK care homes this winter, while several incidents of scabies – a highly contagious skin condition – also occurred.”

A digital record is therefore a good solution since it will facilitate record-keeping. Tork Vision Cleaning has a checklist function that allows the cleaner to tick off each task. Once a task is confirmed to have been completed this data is made visible to other team members and supervisors. This helps to ensure that no job is neglected or unnecessarily repeated.

Tork Vision Cleaning also creates a heatmap of all rooms and areas so that cleaners can check which ones are being used most frequently. This alerts them to situations in which an extra clean might be required and enables operatives to map out their daily cleaning routes more efficiently. And the system also allows staff members to check the refill status of soap and paper dispensers via a smartphone or tablet, enabling them to ensure that no dispensers run out of essential hygiene supplies.

Care home cleaners need to understand the importance of hand hygiene in order avoid spreading germs from one area to the next. Essity also offers a training module on hand hygiene in care homes.

Tork Clean Hands Training for Long Term Care Homes equips staff members with the day-to-day skills they require to secure hand hygiene. It has been developed with leading hygiene experts using the WHO My Four Moments for Hand Hygiene in a residential home environment. And the interactive simulation – which has been designed to make hand hygiene learning more inspiring – is available both online and in a virtual reality format.

Thorough cleaning is essential in a care home because it breaks the chain of infection and removes the dust, dirt and organic matter in which germs live and breed. Regular cleaning and vacuuming can significantly reduce the volume of micro-organisms.

Ensuring that no critical cleaning point is overlooked in the care home can be a hard task for the cleaner. But it can be achieved by taking a methodological approach, providing effective training and offering staff members the right products to be able to carry out an effective clean.

www.torkglobal.com





A SMART SHIFT

Gemma Christie, Business Account Manager at Miele Professional UK, explains how energy-efficient laundry systems help care homes reduce environmental impact while maintaining the highest hygiene standards.

Energy use in commercial laundries has always been high. Large loads, long cycles and the need for consistent hygiene standards mean that electricity and water consumption are built into the business model. But with rising costs and growing pressure to reduce emissions, the sector is starting to look more closely at how those resources are used, and where they can be saved.

Manufacturers are rethinking how machines handle moisture, heat and time. Operators are paying closer attention to programming and process. And together, these shifts are starting to reshape what energy efficiency looks like in practice.

■ SPIN SPEED IS DOING MORE OF THE HEAVY LIFTING

One of the most effective ways to reduce energy use in a laundry is to shorten the drying phase. That starts with how much water is removed during the wash. Machines with higher spin speeds can extract more moisture, which means less time, and less energy spent drying.

New generations of professional washers are pushing spin performance further than before. For instance, Miele's PWM 927, part of its Benchmark range, reaches a spin speed of 542G, which

is currently the highest in its class. Across the 27–35kg range, the BoostSpin 500G+ system ensures consistently high extraction, helping reduce drying times without compromising load capacity.

For laundries running multiple cycles a day, the impact is significant. Less moisture means faster drying, which means lower energy bills and quicker turnaround.

■ DRYING IS GETTING SMARTER TOO

Dryers have traditionally relied on fixed-time cycles, which can lead to over-drying, wasted energy and unnecessary wear on fabrics. Newer models are moving away from that. Instead, they use sensors to monitor residual moisture and adjust the cycle accordingly.

Systems that monitor both residual moisture and water conductivity can deliver more accurate drying results. This helps prevent over-drying, which wastes energy and causes unnecessary wear on fabrics. When combined with technology that reuses residual heat from previous cycles, these features can significantly reduce energy consumption while maintaining consistency.



These kinds of features are becoming more common across the sector. They reflect a broader shift towards precision, where machines respond to the actual condition of the load rather than relying on preset assumptions.

■ DESIGN MATTERS MORE THAN IT USED TO

Energy efficiency isn't just about what happens inside the drum. It's also about how machines are used. In high-throughput environments, small design details can make a noticeable difference to workflow and staff wellbeing.

Features that reduce physical strain or speed up loading and unloading help keep machines in use and reduce downtime. Some newer commercial models, have introduced automatic door mechanisms and ergonomic loading heights to support this. These features reflect a growing awareness of how design affects efficiency in practice.

Drum design is another area where subtle changes can have a cumulative impact. Modern laundry machinery is engineered to cushion fabrics during washing and drying, helping reduce wear and tear. For laundries handling sensitive textiles or working to extend garment life, that kind of protection can reduce the need for reprocessing – and by extension, energy use.

■ DATA AND PROGRAMMING IS BECOMING MORE PURPOSEFUL

No two laundries are the same, and the ability to tailor programmes to specific needs is increasingly important. Machines that allow operators to adjust temperature, water levels and holding times can help avoid overuse of energy and water.

Some systems now offer full customisation, letting users create their own programmes from scratch. That flexibility is particularly useful in environments with varied textile types or hygiene requirements, where a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work.

Digital oversight is still relatively new in the laundry sector, but it's growing. Software platforms like Miele MOVE Connect allow operators to monitor machine performance, track programme usage and review consumption data. For facilities with multiple machines or sites, that kind of visibility can help identify inefficiencies and improve decision-making.

It's not about micromanaging every cycle. It's about understanding how machines are used and where small changes could lead to meaningful energy savings.

■ A SHIFT IN MINDSET

The move towards energy-efficient laundry care is being shaped by better engineering, smarter design and more thoughtful use.

Professional machines are now expected to do more with less – less water, less energy, less time. And as the pressure to reduce costs and emissions continues to grow, that expectation is only likely to increase.

For commercial laundries, the question is no longer whether energy efficiency is possible. It's how quickly they can make it standard.

www.miele.co.uk

RECOGNITION MATTERS

Celebrating excellence safeguards the future, says Lorcan Mekitarian, Chair of the Cleaning & Hygiene Suppliers Association, as he explains why it's important to recognise those who uphold the principles of transparency and professionalism.



Recognition matters in every sector, but in the cleaning and hygiene industry it carries particular weight. Ours is an industry built on trust, reliability and often unseen dedication. When standards are met, environments are safe, compliant and welcoming. When they are not, the consequences are immediate and tangible. Because so much of the work takes place behind the scenes, recognising and celebrating excellence is not a luxury – it is essential.

The Cleaning & Hygiene Suppliers Association (CHSA) has long championed standards, integrity and ethical practice. With its new Awards for Excellence, it has taken that commitment a step further, creating a platform to celebrate the individuals and organisations who embody those values in action.

“Excellence is no longer abstract; it is described, assessed and, crucially, celebrated.”

The inaugural awards will be presented at the CHSA's annual Gala Ball on 18 June at Voco St John's in Solihull. Four awards will be made: Distributor of the Year (sponsored by Greyland), Manufacturer of the Year (sponsored by Nationwide Hygiene Group), Rising Star (sponsored by Harrison Wipes) and Outstanding Contribution (sponsored by Evans Vanodine). Each category has been carefully designed to reflect not only commercial success, but values, quality, sustainability and long-term commitment.

For our industry, awards like these perform a vital function: they define what 'good' looks like. By setting clear criteria – from maintaining standards and ethical practice to promoting sustainability best practice – we are articulating a benchmark. Excellence is no longer abstract; it is described, assessed and, crucially, celebrated.

Recognition also reinforces a culture of continuous improvement. In a market frequently driven by relentless price pressure, the gap between what a product claims to do and what it delivers can widen if vigilance slips. Publicly rewarding manufacturers and distributors who uphold standards sends a powerful signal that doing the right thing matters. It encourages others to examine their own practices and raise their game, strengthening the sector from within.

The Rising Star and Outstanding Contribution awards focus on individuals, recognising exceptional performance, rapid

development, leadership and sustained impact. In doing so, they underline an essential truth: standards are maintained not by systems alone, but by people. Talented, principled professionals translate specifications into practice, mentor colleagues, challenge complacency and drive innovation. Celebrating them helps attract and retain the next generation and demonstrates that commitment and professionalism are noticed.

Publicly rewarding manufacturers and distributors who uphold standards sends a powerful signal that doing the right thing matters.”

There is also a broader responsibility at play. An industry that benefits from collective standards and shared credibility must be willing to give something back. Creating opportunities to acknowledge contribution, encourage emerging talent and thank those who have gone above and beyond fosters pride and a sense of belonging. That culture of recognition strengthens resilience and supports collaboration across the supply chain.

Ultimately, celebrating excellence safeguards the future. It demonstrates that integrity, transparency and professionalism are defining characteristics of a credible industry. By recognising those who uphold these principles, we are strengthening the foundations on which trust, performance and true fitness for purpose depend.

<https://chsa.co.uk>





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ELEVATING AIR QUALITY

Mark Wintle, P-Wave Brand Manager at Robert Scott, explains how dry fragrance technology is transforming air care, delivering cleaner, safer and more consistent freshness for modern facilities.

Improving and maintaining air quality and freshness throughout a care facility is essential as it is one of the most important ways of guaranteeing a great first impression and creating a lasting and positive ambience. A pleasant fragrance can be powerfully emotive, setting the mood, creating a memorable experience, and signaling high standards of cleanliness and hygiene throughout premises.

With many years of experience in delivering efficient air-freshening solutions, we recommend dry fragrances rather than atomisers or aerosols. Dry fragrances are cleaner, safer, and produce a more consistent aroma for longer. This not only reduces health and environmental concerns but can also save money. As one of the UK's leading fragrance and air-freshening brands, that's why we are putting renewed emphasis onto our expanded active air freshener range.

MOVING AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL AIR-FRESHENING SYSTEMS

Aerosol sprays and conventional air fresheners have long been popular due to their low cost and ease of use. However, they present several challenges in professional settings. Aerosols can

be difficult to dispose of responsibly due to their pressurised contents, while their delivery method often leads to inconsistent fragrance levels and unnecessary waste.

In addition, many liquid-based systems release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and solvents, which may impact air quality and cause irritation in sensitive environments. The short, concentrated bursts typical of aerosols can also be overwhelming, particularly in healthcare and high-traffic spaces.

THE BENEFITS OF DRY FRAGRANCE TECHNOLOGY

P-Wave addresses these challenges through dry fragrance technology, which delivers a cleaner, safer, and more consistent solution. Unlike aerosols or atomisers, dry systems release fragrance gradually over time – typically up to 30 days – ensuring a steady and pleasant scent without sudden bursts.

Because the fragrance remains suspended in the air rather than falling as heavy particles, it provides more effective coverage and longer-lasting performance. With no propellants or solvents required, dry fragrance systems also produce very low VOC emissions, making them a safer choice for both people and the environment.

This approach eliminates issues such as residue or slippery surfaces, reducing maintenance while improving overall cleanliness.

P-WAVE'S ACTIVE AIR FRESHENER RANGE

P-Wave's active air freshener range is designed to meet the needs of modern facilities, combining performance, convenience, and sustainability. The range includes Easy Fresh, MyFresh, OurFresh-e, and the latest innovation, OurFresh 2.0.

OurFresh 2.0 is a professional, battery-operated system created for larger spaces such as care homes, reception areas, offices and hospitality settings. It delivers consistent fragrance for up to 30 days without aerosols, propellants, or solvents – providing a cleaner and more controlled solution.

With the ability to cover areas of up to 50m² and a higher fragrance load than many standard dispensers, it ensures a noticeable yet refined scent throughout the space.

DESIGNED FOR EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Ease of use is central to the design of P-Wave's systems. OurFresh 2.0 can be freestanding or wall-mounted, requiring no complex installation, and its modern design allows it to fit seamlessly into different environments.

Smart chip technology controls the fan to optimise fragrance delivery over time, maintaining consistent performance throughout the 30-day cycle. The refills are compatible across multiple devices in the range, simplifying maintenance and reducing waste.

Sustainability is also a key focus. Refills are recyclable (where facilities exist), made with recycled content, and contain no propellants or solvents. Combined with very low VOC emissions, this makes P-Wave's active air freshener range a responsible choice for businesses looking to reduce their environmental impact, while prioritising staff and visitor wellbeing.

www.p-wave.co.uk



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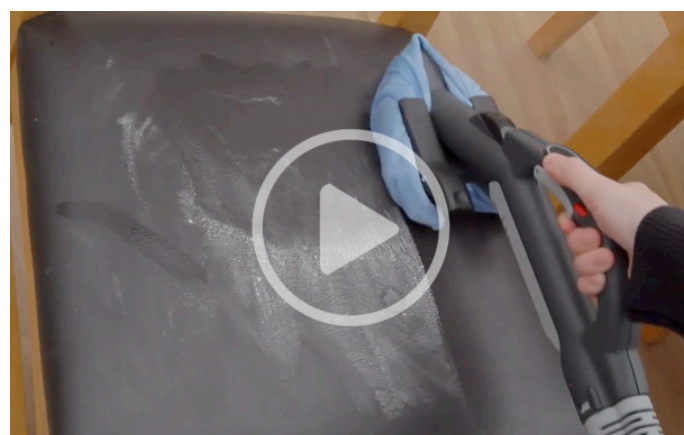


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POWER WITH RESPONSIBILITY

SEBO explains how its XP range of upright vacuum cleaners meet all the demands of modern care facilities, combining performance, design and low-noise operation with long-term reliability.

The XP range of upright vacuum cleaners from SEBO are ideal for the healthcare environment. They feature independently proven filtration, hygienic dirt disposal using sealable bags and are exceptionally quiet and light for operators to use. They are also durable and reliable.

With three brush widths available, the SEBO XP can clean any size of building and as they all use the same bags and filters, having a mix of machines works well.

To give optimum cleaning performance, the XP range harnesses the power of an on-board computer to measure performance on the floor and continuously adjust the floor head to the optimum cleaning height, completely automatically. The powerful brush action pulls the vacuum cleaner forward so that the pushing force required to manoeuvre it is close to zero, helping to make it light and easy to use for extended periods, but also giving deep cleaning performance. The integrated wand and hose mean that cleaning above the floor and reaching into awkward places is easy. Being able to work when flat lets the XP reach under furniture for more efficient and thorough cleaning. The computer can also advise when the bag needs changing, or when there is a blockage, and the multiple access points and cassette style brush roller make the XP easy to maintain.

“The XP range harnesses an on-board computer to continuously adjust for optimum cleaning performance, delivering deep, consistent results with minimal effort.”

Of course, once dirt is picked up, it is essential that it is retained in the vacuum cleaner and not released back into the air. The Health and Safety Executive states that we should never assume that any dust is safe and that all uncontrolled dusts are potentially hazardous. Virtually all the dust and dirt which is picked up by an XP vacuum cleaner is safely trapped in the high filtration bag, which can be sealed and hygienically disposed of. The filtration of the XP has been independently tested by the DMT Test Institute in Germany to filter 99.97% of particles of 0.3 micron. Above this particle size, the filtration level is very close to 100%.

Care homes and other healthcare facilities have patients and residents who need rest and should not be disturbed so low noise levels are imperative when vacuuming. Although there are regulations limiting the sound power level that a vacuum cleaner can reach, subjectively the sound generated can still

be unpleasant, even where the vacuum cleaner meets the regulations. SEBO sound engineers have successfully muted the harsh frequencies to which the human ear is sensitive, making it suitable in many cases for daytime cleaning, and night time cleaning. Indeed, in any situation where low noise levels are important, the XP range is ideal.

“Independently tested to filter 99.97% of particles at 0.3 micron, the XP ensures that what’s collected stays contained.”

Last, but not least, at SEBO we believe that vacuum cleaners should be reliable, built to last, and should be easily repairable. Our vacuum cleaners are built using high-quality materials and components giving them a long service life using few replacement parts. Parts themselves are always available at reasonable cost and are identified with the material they are made from, so that they can be recycled easily when they are replaced.

For more information, please contact SEBO Sales on 01494 465533 or sales@sebo.co.uk.

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RETHINKING SAFEGUARDING

Peter Wingrave, Director at AAT, explains why true safeguarding goes beyond protection and how practical, cost-effective solutions can preserve normal family life for children with reduced mobility.

An often-overlooked element of safeguarding children is their wellbeing – ensuring healthy development and safe environments at home. It involves empowering children to engage with normal family life and routine.

For any child with reduced mobility, there comes a point where their – and family life – is disrupted, because of a fixture present in almost every home: the stairs.

AAT, the UK's specialist provider of stair navigation solutions to local authorities and the NHS, has developed a potential resolution, that prevents any disruption to the home, can remove the need for a major Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) adaptation, modification or re-housing.

It enables the child and their family to retain normality.

Further, AAT's proposal is cost-efficient. The core components not only answer the problem of giving the user and their family a safe environment at home, but also grow with the child to adulthood. When the original recipient no longer needs the S-Max, it can be prescribed to another child with little or no additional capital equipment cost.

Central is AAT's top-selling S-Max mobility wheelchair stairclimber. The core powerpack unit can be attached to a wheelchair or have an integral seat.

Add AAT's unique Universal Seat System, which adjusts to individual need, and the child can be safely transported as they develop from infancy into maturity.

The way S-Max works further enhances safety at home: it traverses the stairway and on to destination. It removes the risk of a transfer at the top of the stairs that is inevitable with a stairlift.

Normal family life continues with dignity and privacy.

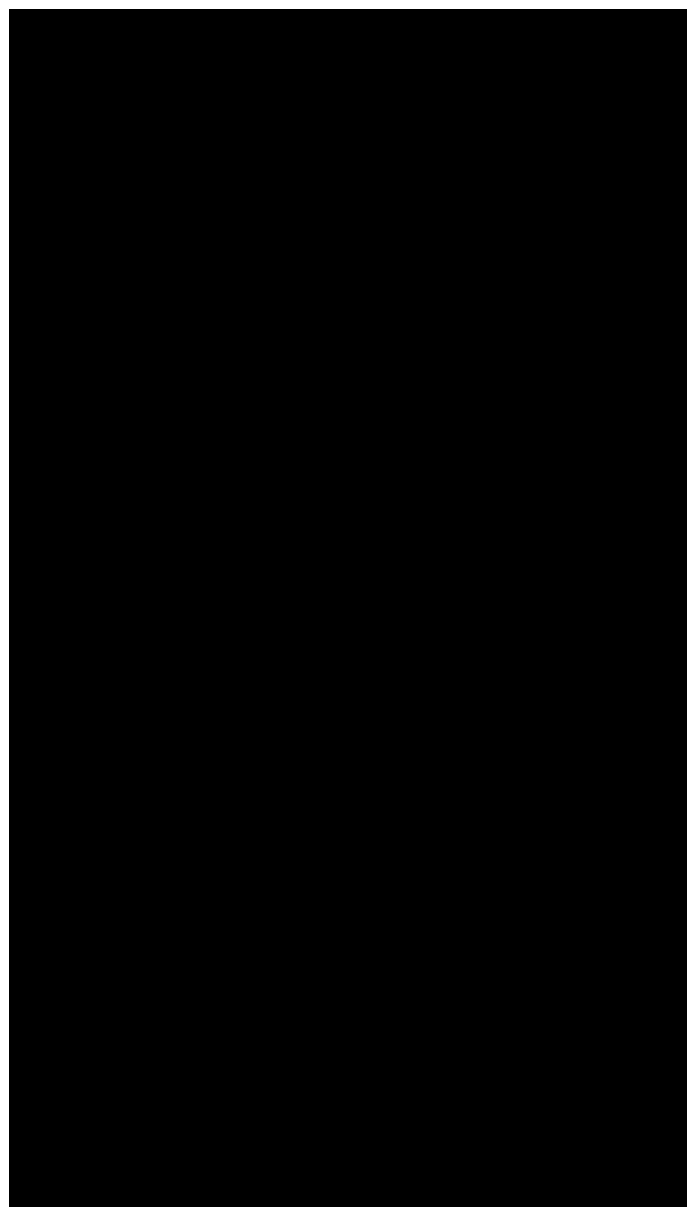
Two of the four key aspects of safeguarding children are promoting welfare: ensuring children have the best outcomes and are growing up in safe, effective circumstances, and early intervention: supporting children and families when problems emerge to prevent issues from escalating.

Difficulty managing stairs is one of the most common reasons why any family with a disabled member needs intervention and support. Where appropriate, S-Max is a time- and cost-effective means of preserving safety. We can support in PEOP assessment, service, deliver the S-Max and train the family in its safe operation

within two working weeks. If one is available in equipment Stores, it can be effected even faster.

The child is kept safe. Their – and their family's – wellbeing, mental health, dignity and privacy is protected.

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A GET OUT PLAN

Oliver Greening, Show Director of LIFTEX 2026, organised by the Lift and Escalator Industry Association (LEIA), outlines what care home operators need to know about their fire safety and evacuation responsibilities under the Building Safety Act.

The government introduced the Building Safety Act 2022, followed shortly by the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. Together, these measures aim to improve the safety of both new and existing buildings, ensuring that building services are designed, installed and maintained to the highest standards. They also have clear implications for how lifts are managed, placing responsibility on designated 'responsible persons' to ensure that lifts used for evacuation are properly maintained and fit for purpose.

While the legislation introduces additional requirements for higher-risk buildings, defined as those over 18 metres or seven storeys with at least two residential units, it also applies to lower-rise buildings where evacuation lifts are in place.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

If you are responsible for the lifts within your building, you are considered a 'duty holder', which brings specific legal obligations relating to lift safety and evacuation procedures. In practice, this means ensuring that all lift systems supporting emergency procedures are regularly inspected and maintained, and that fire safety measures – particularly those relating to lifts and landing doors – are properly managed. It also includes overseeing and documenting all lift-related work, inspections and modifications, reporting any safety incidents through the Mandatory Occurrence Reporting (MOR) system, and maintaining accurate, up-to-date records as part of the building's 'Golden Thread' of information.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVACUATION IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

Evacuations in care homes present unique challenges, largely due to the varying mobility needs of residents. Particular attention must therefore be given to evacuation lifts, which require specific maintenance regimes and regular testing to ensure they remain operational and ready for use in an emergency at all times.

Fire compartmentation is another critical consideration, as lift wells act as vertical fire compartments and must be kept clear of combustible materials, with fire-resistant elements such as landing doors properly maintained. In addition, every resident should have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) tailored to their individual needs, with these plans reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

NEXT STEPS

Taking a proactive approach is essential. Care home operators should review their lift maintenance arrangements to ensure they are working with a competent contractor, keeping detailed records of all inspections and works carried out. Evacuation lifts should be checked regularly, lift wells kept clear, and emergency communication systems tested to ensure reliability. It is also important to fully understand the function of each lift within the building. Evacuation lifts are designed with specific protections and operating features, while other lifts may include fire recall systems to remove them from service during an incident. Lifts intended for firefighter use are distinct again and should be inspected accordingly.

Robust documentation is equally important. Operators should begin compiling a comprehensive Fire and Emergency File (FEF), ensuring that all maintenance activities, safety checks and staff training related to evacuation procedures are clearly recorded and easily accessible.

By taking these steps, care home operators can better protect residents while ensuring compliance with their legal obligations. These topics will be explored further as part of the free seminar programme at LIFTEX 2026, the UK's only dedicated event for the lift and escalator industry, where care home managers can access expert advice and connect with specialist suppliers.

www.liftexshow.com



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Full video
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The new Procycle Recycling Bin is a modular recycling bin with a range of back panel designs to simplify your care home recycling needs and includes connectors to build your own multi-recycling stations. The design features apertures at the front of the bin to attach waste bags (bags not included), while the lid can be lifted for the disposal of larger items and removed for an open bin option.

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STRONGER TOGETHER

Sophia Feurtado-Jackson, Service User Engagement Manager at Exemplar Health Care, explores how cross-home friendships and peer leadership are strengthening wellbeing and community for people living in care.



Care homes are often described as close-knit communities, but over the past year, we've taken that idea further by breaking down the boundaries between them.

In 2020, we partnered with the University of Leeds on an exploratory study into residents' experience of sexuality, intimacy, and relational wellbeing in long-term complex care settings. The research found that relational need, specifically 'authentic friendships', was the strongest theme to emerge across all interviews, highlighting the vital role of genuine and meaningful connections in people's lives.

By bringing people together from different care homes through shared activities and events, we've helped created new friendships, wider support networks, and a renewed sense of belonging. The impact has been clear – residents who once had limited social circles are now part of vibrant communities that extend beyond their own home, strengthening wellbeing, confidence, and quality of life.

■ A WARM WELCOME FROM THE START

For many, moving into a care home can be daunting. So not only do we ensure that new residents are supported by our multi-disciplinary teams throughout this transition, but existing residents also play a pivotal role in welcoming people and building connections from day one.

From the beginning of Alex's journey at Maypole Grove, she formed a friendship with Abi that has had a remarkable, lasting impact on them both.

Alex said: "Before I moved to Maypole Grove, Abi was so nice and told me about the care home. When I moved in, she gave me and my family a tour of the home and answered any questions. It's lovely to have a friend like Abi. She is a good listener, always helps me out, and is a great laugh."

Abi shares what the relationship means to her: "Having Alex move to Maypole Grove has changed me as a person. Her confidence and personality have already had an impact on me and had me doing things I never thought I would, such as singing on the karaoke at the social club."

■ CROSS-HOME CONNECTIONS

Meaningful connections are not only created within our homes but across them too.

Earlier this year, the team at Bennett Court brought together people from five other Exemplar Health Care homes for a 'speed meeting' event that supported people to build friendships in a fun and familiar environment.

The afternoon was filled with music, and the opportunity for residents from different homes to bond over shared interests, meaning many people left with new friendships they were excited to continue.

Leanne, from Quarryfields in Doncaster, shared: "It's been so fun. I've met so many new people and can't wait to stay in touch with Julie." And Julie, who lives at Willowbeck in Sheffield, added: "I love my home, but it's hard meeting new people. I really wanted to make new friends, and I've done that today."

PEER SUPPORT THROUGH SHARED LEADERSHIP

People supported in our homes also play an active role in shaping them too. Through our Service User Ambassador initiative, every home has at least one ambassador who helps welcome new residents, shares resident thoughts and feedback with the management team, contributes to colleague training, and leads on activities that matter to them.

These roles build confidence, help develop new skills, and – through the organisation-wide Service User Council that ambassadors sit on – encourage meaningful peer support across a wide network of residents working together to support each other.

This year, our Regional Service User Ambassadors have taken on a further leadership role by mentoring new ambassadors, developing their own projects, and sharing insights with both peers and senior colleagues at executive-level meetings.

WHY COMMUNITY MATTERS

For many people, including those who may have previously experienced a failed placement or have never lived in a care home before, creating a sense of belonging is a vital part of building trust and confidence.

Alongside compassionate and consistent care, peer support can often be an invaluable milestone for residents – the moment they begin to feel like themselves again and the home truly feels like theirs.

At Exemplar Health Care, we are committed to nurturing these communities.



By creating opportunities for friendship, encouraging peer leadership, and supporting people to contribute to both home and community life in ways that work for them, we help ensure that every person has the chance to live a fulfilling, connected life.

www.exemplarhc.com





ACTIVE CARE

Fitness is fundamental to the future of care, says Amrit Dhaliwal, Founder and CEO of Walfinch home care.



Fitness is almost an invisible factor in care. It's routinely neglected by many care providers, but neglecting it will not help clients and will affect whole nation's health.

If care is about maintaining good health, fitness should be a part of that. The World Health Organisation (WHO) states: "Regular physical activity is proven to help prevent and manage non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes and several cancers. It also helps to maintain a healthy body weight and can improve mental health, quality of life and wellbeing."

■ IT'S NOT ALWAYS 'JUST OLD AGE'

Many people, even without diagnosed conditions, resign themselves to limited lives because they attribute their inability to do things to ageing. Yet even minor improvements in fitness can prevent or even reverse symptoms, improving lives and saving the NHS money.

■ ENCOURAGING FITNESS IN CARE

Care that includes more activity and mobility can help roll back the effects of medical conditions, restore physical ability, help counter mental ill-health and increase wellbeing. Our clients who book an hour of care or more are offered activity of their choice, aided by their carers, such as gardening, or moving more around their home. Also, our offices run Thrive Clubs, local community activity sessions such as chair yoga, free of charge.

We have seen the results.

■ MARGARET RECOVERS HER LEGS

Walfinch franchisee Poojita Patel met new client Margaret, who had swollen, almost purple, legs. Poojita told me: "Within two weeks they were much better because we included 15 minutes of exercise, mobilisation and a tiny massage on each daily care visit." Margaret later said: "Since starting with Walfinch, the difference in my wellbeing has been incredible. I can actually see the shape of my legs again, and even my toes. That alone shows how much progress has been made with the right level of care and support."

"Regular physical activity is proven to help prevent and manage non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes and several cancers."

■ ACTIVITY HELPS SUE WALK AGAIN

Our client Sue left hospital unable to stand. As part of Sue's care, carer Hannah took her by wheelchair to the local Walfinch Thrive Club, which offers chair exercise. Within weeks Sue could walk again.

Sue told us: "It made a massive difference me. Now I have got stronger and can walk to the class on my own." Sue no longer



needs care, but knows that she can call on Walfinch's care again whenever needed, and tells others about how Walfinch's active care helped her recovery.

■ TACKLING COMMON CONDITIONS

Greater fitness can help tackle conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and dementia.

We are also raising awareness of osteoporosis, where the bones weaken and break easily. It affects over three million people in the UK, and half of women over 50 and a third of men over 60 will have a fracture due to osteoporosis. As care providers we commonly see the results.

However, exercise could slow down the loss of bone strength, or even improve it. That's why we are active in raising funds for the Royal Osteoporosis Society to help spread awareness,

and highlighting its free, online Bone Check, which gauges an individual's risk of osteoporosis.

■ THE BUSINESS CASE

This focus on fitness gets our service known locally. Clients whose physical and mental health improves as a result of active care, or going to Thrive Clubs, tell others. Local GPs and other health service providers get to know about it and are more likely to refer clients.

■ REDEFINING CARE

The message that care can include activity and socialising, which improves physical and mental health and overall wellness, redefines what care is about. Clients will benefit, as will care businesses, and the whole image of the care sector.

<https://walfinch.com>



GET THE MOVES

Sophie Dales from The Leeds United Foundation, who runs the exercise class at Weavers Court Care Home, explains why it's important to stay mobile and shares five armchair exercises that can improve strength and flexibility later in life.

As we get older, staying active is key to maintaining independence. However, traditional exercise often becomes more difficult due to reduced mobility, loss of muscle strength, and joint pain. The good news is that chair-based exercise is a great low-impact activity that helps older adults keep moving and build strength from the comfort of home.

WHY ARE MOBILITY AND STRENGTH SO IMPORTANT LATER IN LIFE?

As we age, walking and getting around can become more difficult, which can make everyday tasks feel overwhelming. That is why exercises that target mobility are important to help improve strength and flexibility. Regular exercise also supports overall health, helping to reduce the risk of age-related conditions such as osteoporosis and heart disease.

Ageing looks different for everyone, but for older adults over 60 who are already experiencing mobility issues and joint pain, strenuous exercises may not be feasible. That is why we encourage armchair exercise as a low-impact alternative that still effectively builds muscle strength, enhances flexibility, and gently raises their heart rate.

Research has shown that armchair exercises can help us as we age and assist in some of the everyday tasks and challenges that we may face later in life. Whether that's walking short distances, getting up and down stairs, or carrying heavier objects.

FIVE SEATED EXERCISES TO IMPROVE STRENGTH AND MOBILITY

Chest Stretch

1. Begin by sitting upright and forward in the chair so that your back is not supported by the chair.
2. Roll your shoulders back and down while extending your arms to the side.
3. In this position, gently push your chest forward until you feel a stretch across your chest.
4. Hold this for 5-10 seconds and release; you can repeat this five times.

Upper-Body Twist

1. Sit up straight, planting both feet firmly on the floor. Cross your arms across your chest, reaching for your shoulders.
2. Keeping your hips straight, carefully turn your upper body to the right as far as is safe and comfortable, and hold there for five seconds.
3. Repeat this for the left side to complete the set. You can repeat this set five times.

Hip Marching

1. Sit upright and forward in the chair so that your back is not leaning on the back of the chair. You can hold onto the sides



of the chair for extra support.

2. With your knees bent, lift one of your legs as high as comfortable, placing your foot back down in a controlled manner.
3. Repeat this for the other side to complete the set. You can repeat this set five times.

Ankle Stretch

1. Sitting upright and again holding the side of the chair for support, straighten your left leg, raising your foot off the floor. You can use a resistance band to support your foot if you are finding this tricky.
2. Once your leg is straight and raised, point your toes away from you before slowly bringing them back towards you. Repeat this twice.
3. For each foot, repeat five times.

Neck Rotation

1. Begin by sitting upright and relaxing your shoulders down, looking directly ahead.
2. Slowly twist your head towards your right shoulder as far as is safe to do so. Hold here for five seconds before slowly rotating back to the starting position.
3. Do the same on the left side to complete the set. Repeat the set five times.

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