

Avante Care & Support

# NEWSLETTER

February 2023



Sporting Memories

Advent Calendar Winners

Christmas Across  
the Services

Avante Leadership  
Network

avante<sup>®</sup>  
care & support  
*'Everyone Matters'*™



# Looking Forward in 2023



**This newsletter gives me another opportunity to thank you for all your hard work in 2022. You should be very proud of all that you have done, and are doing to care for our residents and service users.**

In the last 12 months, we have made some excellent progress in meeting our four key goals of improving the quality of care we deliver, improving our financial performance, developing our services and developing our workforce.

This year we have had all our homes and services evaluated by the team at the Eden Alternative to assess how we are doing in implementing the Eden principles. The Eden Alternative is our philosophy of care and is based on the core belief that ageing should be a continued stage of development and growth, rather than a period of decline. Our aim through the Eden Alternative is to create communities where everyone has a vibrant and fulfilling life. We achieve this

through companionship, through giving as well as receiving care, and through variety and spontaneity in everyday life.

I'm delighted to say that every home and our home care service has now been evaluated, and each one has passed. In particular, I would like to mention Bexley Home Care, Court Regis and Northbourne Court who all achieved a Gold rating.

In addition, we have had a number of CQC monitoring visits and inspections which we have passed with flying colours. Chaucer House had a full inspection. When we acquired Chaucer House it was rated Requires Improvement but I am so pleased to say that CQC have now rated it as Good. This is the result of a lot of hard work in the home and by colleagues at Head Office and I want to thank everyone involved.

At the same time as improving our care, we are improving our finances. Occupancy has risen over the year and we are now using fewer agency staff. This has meant we have been able to make some in-year





enhancements like improving our bank holiday pay and increasing the value of the vouchers at Christmas.

In the next month or so, the Trustees will be meeting to agree the budget for 2023-24. I am pleased to say that despite increasing costs, we will be awarding a pay increase from 1 April. You will be hearing about how that affects you shortly.

Many of you will recall that in 2020 we purchased a piece of land in Westgate on Sea with the intention of building a new care home. The site already had planning permission for a 75 bed home, but we felt that the design was not going to enable us to deliver the kind of care we want to, and so we submitted a fresh application for a 70 beds. The space freed up by reducing the capacity has enabled us to improve the layout of the home and the communal facilities. After a lot of hard work behind the scenes, I am absolutely thrilled to say our application for planning permission has been granted. You can see artist impressions on the new home below. We are working now with a construction company to build what will be our first new build care home for ten years. This demonstrates our commitment to providing care for older people well into the future.

However, our homes are not our biggest asset. You are! We depend on each other – residents and service users depend on us, and we as colleagues depend on each other. Every colleague in Avante has a vital role to play in delivering our Vision - ‘communities where everyone has a vibrant and fulfilling life’. Everyone matters.

It is clear though that the cost of living crisis is affecting everyone, and many people are worried about their financial position. We want to be able to help where we can and so we will be rolling out financial wellness workshops in March, which will look at things like budgeting, investing and more. We are also planning to implement a salary advance scheme. Watch this space for more details!

Finally, thanks again for all your hard work and commitment, and I hope to see you when I visit our services.



Stuart Cross  
Avante Care & Support  
Managing Director



*Artist impressions courtesy of RDT Architects*  
[www.rdtarchitects.co.uk](http://www.rdtarchitects.co.uk)





# Sporting Memories Collaboration with Avante Care & Support

**It was all systems go for staff at Strood Sports Centre on Monday 10 October, when they opened the Sporting Memories Club. The Club is where older people can come together to talk about and remember sports, find friendships and have fun.**

Sporting Memories is a charity and social enterprise that uses the power of remembering and talking about sports and physical exercise to tackle dementia, depression and loneliness in older people.

Medway Council obtained £10,000 from Sport England to enable them to open the club, which will hold free sessions every Monday from 11am to 1pm.

The Club was opened by Councillor Howard Doe, Deputy Leader of Medway Council, with sports centre staff and Avante Care & Support staff present to witness the benefits and enjoyment of exercise for older people. At the same time, residents from Court Regis, Amherst Court, and Pilgrims View had the opportunity to play badminton, table tennis, short mat bowls, and other games, including a sporting quiz.

Tea, coffee, and biscuits were provided throughout the morning to preserve everyone's energy levels. Every attendee received a Sporting Memories Kitbag, which contained an exercise guide, an activity log





book, a DVD with exercise videos and sporting reminiscence films; exercise equipment and a bag to store everything in.

Copies of 'Sporting Pink' news sheets were also included, containing historical sports news, including archive copies of articles on anti-apartheid protests when the South African team played Swansea; Pelé scored his 1,000th goal; Niki Lauda won his first World Championship; Mike Denness became England Cricket captain; Hugh Porter won the World Cycling Championship, along with many more sporting articles.

In the future there will also be the opportunity for residents to use the adapted gym equipment, the beautifully heated pools and sauna.

This facility will greatly benefit Avante Care & Support staff and residents in implementing Avante's Philosophy of care, the Eden Alternative, which aims to eliminate loneliness, helplessness and boredom.

There are over 130 Sporting memories Clubs in England, Scotland and Wales. We are exploring the possibility of finding Sporting Memories Clubs close to other Avante care homes.



# Avante Leadership Network

**The Executive Management Team and Managers joined on the 12th October at Brogdale Farm for an Away Day. Debbie Norman, Director of Finance started the day with Understanding Management Accounts.**

In this interactive, bite-sized session led by Debbie, participants received an overview to help improve their understanding of the different elements of management accounts. Debbie said, *“A true understanding of the accounts is crucial when it comes to monitoring performance and making important decisions about which direction your service moves in, how to enhance and maximise growth opportunities and which suppliers to work with.”*

## ***Culture change starts with knowing yourself***

**- The second session was led by Michael Jones, Management Consultant at Life Tools.**

When reflecting on culture, many leaders and managers think about how others must change. However, the first lesson about

meaningful culture change is that it starts with you, whether you are an executive leader, regional manager, home manager, business support manager, quality specialist, project manager or deputy manager.

Michael Jones provided an insight into the world of Predictive Index (PI), to help staff understand their individual PI Behavioural Profile and challenge his audience to take ownership and responsibility for their own personal change.

## ***The ‘M’ Word***

**- Chris Francis, Judith Lathey, Margaret Atiror & Donna Bailey**

Avante's workforce is largely made up of women. It is estimated that in the UK, one in three women are either currently going through, or have reached the menopause. In April 2022, the Fawcett Society published a report – Menopause and the Workplace – which polled 4,000 women aged 45-55, and concluded that 10% of women had left their job because of symptoms of menopause.





At Avante, we want to do all we can to improve employee wellbeing and retention. In this roundtable hosted by Veronica Anthony-David, we heard from colleagues who have personally experienced the Menopause, understand the impact it had on their health and careers, and looked at what we can do as male and female leaders, and as an organisation to better support colleagues who are affected by Menopause.

## ***The Leadership Challenge - Leading Cultural Change***

### **- Everyone Matters; Building a Culture of Inclusion**

Using a culture change tool, Veronica Anthony-David, Director of People & Organisation Development helped participants understand how changing organisational

culture is a deliberate and carefully thought through plan that affects all parts of the organisation.

Whilst imagining the future culture, participants worked in groups to explore how to create a culture of inclusion by design. Participants carefully identified a set of instrumental and symbolic levers which reinforce the needed culture attributes, and discussed how to implement these in practice.

The day concluded with an Orchard Tour around Brogdale Farm.





# ADVENT CALENDAR

2022

## 1st Place

**Thank you to everyone who supported Avante Care & Support's Advent Calendar 2022. It was a huge success!**

The response was fantastic, with 338 likes and just under 400 shares received on posts made from 1st – 24th December.

The winner was determined with the highest number of likes and shares collectively received for both of the care home, home care, or head office posts (there were two posts per service location)

Prize money was rewarded as follows –

First place £150, Second Place £100 and Third Place £50

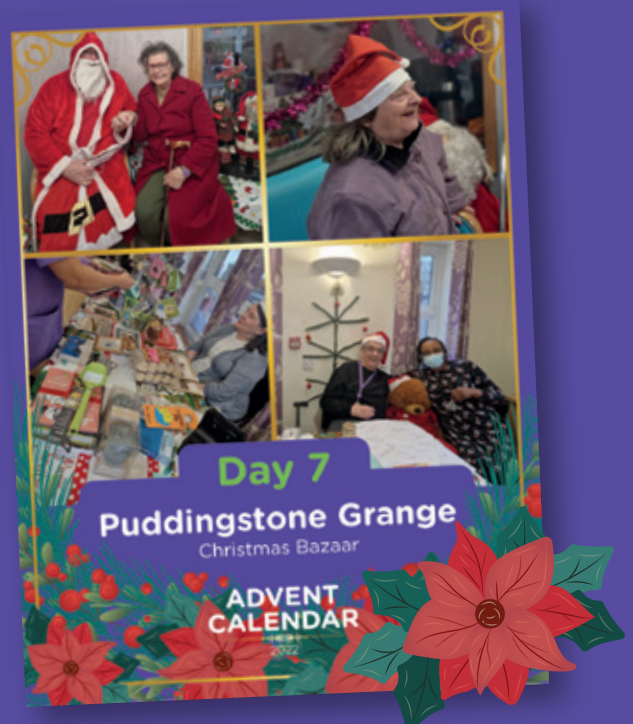
A huge round of applause must go to the following first-place winner and runners-up!



## 2nd Place



## 3rd Place







# Christmas Raffle Fundraiser

**Avante Care & Support staff raised an impressive £456 for the charitable fund, with their annual Christmas raffle draw.**

Avante Care & Support's annual Christmas raffle always attracts much interest during December due to its top prizes; all kindly donated by contractors, suppliers and stakeholders.

Prizes this year included two Air Purifiers worth over £350 each, luxury hampers from Fortnum & Mason, M&S and The Hamper Company, Galaxy Tab, Galaxy Ear Buds, fine wines, Champagne, vouchers, luxury chocolates and much more!

All money raised goes into Avante Care & Support's Charitable Fund; which provides extra activities and events for residents and service users. These are in addition to the usual activities and day trips that regularly take place across the services.



Avante Care & Support would like to say a huge thank you to the following suppliers who kindly donated prizes for the raffle – Frontier, Inspired Technologies, Digital Image Solutions, NSN, Quantec, East Kent Leaflets, Lawson Queay, Kefron, Minerva, EG Media and Blue Leaf.

Many thanks to everyone who supported this year's Christmas raffle, and a big well done to all prize winners!







Merry  
Christmas  
~ & ~  
Happy New Year



















# Riverdale Court Sparkle Café

**On Monday 9th January, residents and staff at Riverdale Court care home welcomed guests and celebrated the opening of the Sparkle café. The Sparkle café opened its doors with various home-cooked cakes, savouries, and a wide selection of hot and cold drinks.**

Staff and residents had been working on the café behind the scenes for several months, designing new signage, writing new menus, and recruiting staff and residents to help run the café.

Avante Care & Support's Managing Director, Stuart Cross, attended the opening day and cut the ribbon to officially open the Sparkle café.

Stuart thanked staff for their notable team effort and hard work and thanked residents Roger, Bill and Myra, who have all expressed an interest in helping run the café with staff.

The Sparkle café is open to all, Monday to Friday, 10 am - 3 pm, and can cater to all occasions, including a quick snack on the go or a leisurely lunch with friends.

The café has also teamed up with the 'Warm Welcome' campaign to provide a warm, safe place for those affected by the cost of living crisis. Among 3000 other registered organisations, the Sparkle café is offering a free, warm, welcoming space for the public this winter across the UK. The 'Warm Welcome' campaign was launched by the ChurchWorks Commission, working with several other key partners to support and champion the community response to the cost-of-living crisis.





# Meet SJ

Not only is she a cracker (see what we did there?) she is the Director of Care Operations at Avante Care & Support and does a cracking job at it too (ok, we'll stop with the cracker jokes).

During December, SJ visited all of Avante's care services offering additional support to all the staff and this is why:

*"Every day, staff never fail to amaze and inspire me. And with that in mind, I want to ensure every staff member knows that I am proud of them and appreciate every single job they do."*

*During December, I went out to each home on a dedicated day to spend three hours doing whatever they would like me to do. I could wash floors, make cups of tea, I could help fold laundry or even stir a pot of something delicious in the kitchen."*

*Not only do I get to offer additional support to the teams, I get to spend extra time with our amazing staff at Avante."*

Well done SJ, you did just that and the staff loved it!



## Ladies Bowling with Amherst Court



## Pub Lunch for Parkview Residents



# A Heartfelt Poem

*"A poem written by the husband of our beloved Pamela who sadly passed away on the 13th of November.*

*It makes me very proud of the team when I read this, through the losses that we have to endure we give our residents and families the best experience of knowing their loved one is well cared for and loved."*

- Claire Saxby, Home Manager.

## A Home of Warmth

I had been looking after Pam for 5 years or more  
It took its toll on me that's for sure

I needed some sort of permanent relief  
To be free from tiredness, pain and grief

A home for Pam was the revelation  
Of this I was sure was my salvation

I spent many an hour searching the pages  
Of magazines and the likes which took ages

Finally found the place that fitted the bill  
And today I feel the same way still

Right from the start I could see  
It's the right place for Pam to be

The love and attention was simply the best  
Which put me so much more at rest

I thank the staff for the way they were  
For the best care that was given to her

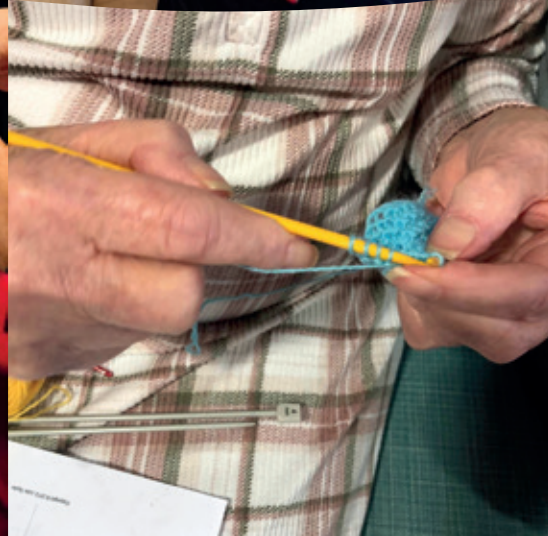
This place which I give the best review  
It is of course The Pilgrims View

Bless every single one of you  
For without your likes what would we do

Thank you so very much



Musical moment at Puddingstone Grange



Activities at Chaucer House



# Plenty of Cuddles

**Daphne, a resident at Pilgrims View mentioned to staff how she used to have a Guinea Pig as a pet.**

One of the domestic staff overheard this and brought in her own Guinea Pig for Daphne to hold and cuddle. Other residents soon joined in, holding and cuddling the lucky Guinea Pig who loved all the attention!





# Dodger the Dog

**Residents at Weybourne care home were treated to a special guest visit by Dodger the Dog over Christmas.**

Dodger made lots of new friends on his first visit to the home, spreading lots of Christmas cheer all around and to all of the residents who got a chance to pat him and hold him. After that, there were plenty of requests from residents for him to return soon! Thanks Dodger!



**Paper Mache with Bridge Haven**



**Amherst Court plant shopping**





# Celebrating the Lunar New Year

**Our care homes celebrated the Lunar New Year with styled decoration, food, music and plenty of fortune cookies!**

This year's festival was on 22 January, 2023, beginning the year of the Rabbit and ending the year of the Tiger.

Each year in the Lunar Calendar is represented by one of the 12 Chinese zodiac animals. This year being the rabbit, symbolises longevity, peace and prosperity.

Staff and residents had a wonderful time, seeing family and friends and enjoying the celebrations!







# Meet Neha - The Apprentice!

## Neha won the Achiever Award at Avante Care & Support's Sparkle Awards

**Avante has over 40 apprentices studying for a range of qualifications in Health & Social Care, Hospitality and Business administration. To celebrate this year's National Apprenticeship Week on 6 - 12 February 2023, the People & Organisation Development team spoke to Neha Ramnathan about what it's like to be an apprentice.**

**What does your apprenticeship mean to you?**

Many people are not able to turn their passion into a career. This apprenticeship at Avante Care and Support, provides me with the right training, knowledge and experience to turn what I love doing the most into a rewarding career.

**Why did you decide to be an apprentice?**

I looked at the different options of developing a career in Care and I realised that undertaking relevant qualifications combined with practical care experience is necessary to be successful. On a personal note, I do not see this as just a job, but a real opportunity to care for the most vulnerable. Dementia is unfortunately a cruel condition and this apprenticeship not only gave me

the opportunity to kick start a career in Care, but also specialise in specific areas like 'Dementia Care' which is a great benefit unlike other opportunities out there.

**What course are you undertaking and where do you work?**

I am part of the wonderful (and the best) team at Northbourne Court care home in Sidcup. Following the completion of my Level 2 Diploma in March 2022, I have now commenced my Level 3 Diploma, which I will complete by end of September 2023.

The incredible support which I received from my colleagues, managers and the senior leadership team, coupled with incredibly knowledgeable and patient Trainers who guided me through the initial 18-month period, helped me to achieve my Level 2 Diploma. It is a full-on course and I have grown through the process.

**What are your career ambitions for the future?**

I would love to become a Home Manager in future and continue to grow further at Avante!



# #AmazingatAvante

## Support from Overseas

### From India to Kent

**Burhan Niyaz, originally from India, has joined the team at Bridge Haven as a Care & Support Assistant following a successful recruitment drive by Avante.**

Burhan was referred by his older brother who currently works as a Nurse in one of Avante's nursing homes, and he is now settling into a new way of life following a clear recruitment process, a robust visa application process and an intensive two-week induction programme.

According to Anita Easton, Home Manager at Bridge Haven, Burhan is already a core part of the team. She says *"Burhan has already established himself as a valued and dependable member of the team and I cannot imagine him not working here"*.

Veronica Anthony-David, Director of People & Organisation Development at Avante said *"With over 165,000 vacancies in health and social care, the ability to recruit talent from overseas provides us with a fantastic opportunity to fill vacancy gaps, strengthen our capabilities and ensure that our residents and service users continue to receive high quality care"*.

Burhan who is a university graduate said he decided to join Avante based on the feedback he received from his brother about Avante being a reputable organisation that offers very good training and career prospects. Burhan's passion for making a difference in the lives of vulnerable groups stemmed from being a carer for his frail granddad back in India. Burhan believes that

his current role enables him to give back to others and gives him a real sense of satisfaction.

The fantastic thing is that Burhan has a lot of relevant experience, having worked as a Medical Assistant in a local hospital in India for two years, where he dispensed medication as prescribed by the Doctor, checked and recorded vital signs, collected samples from patients and carried out diagnostic tests like ECG and blood glucose checks.

When asked about his thoughts regarding the UK, he says *"People have been welcoming and friendly and I feel at home"*.





# Career Progression Opportunities at Avante

## What roles can I progress into?

### A If you want to be a...

- > Care & Support Assistant
- > Home Carer
- > Activity & Wellbeing Coordinator
- > Kitchen Assistant
- > Domestic Assistant

### B If you want to be a...

- > Senior Care Lead
- > Field Care Supervisor
- > Care Coordinator
- > Administrator
- > Domestic Supervisor
- > Assistant Cook /Cook/Head Chef
- > Credit Controller
- > Trainee People Specialist/Talent Officer
- > Marketing Assistant
- > IT Technician
- > Purchase Ledger Clerk
- > Maintenance Technician
- > Payroll Officer

### C If you want to be a...

- > Deputy Homecare Manager
- > Nursing Associate
- > Compliance Officer
- > Quality Improvement Practitioner
- > People/Talent Specialist
- > Property Officer
- > Senior IT Technician
- > Assistant Payroll Manager

### D If you want to be a...

- > Registered Manager
- > Registered Nurse
- > Quality Assurance Auditor
- > Regional People Manager
- > Marketing Manager
- > Finance Manager
- > Property Manager
- > Health & Safety Manager
- > IT Manager
- > Payroll Manager

### E If you want to be a...

- > Regional Support Manager
- > Head of Home Care
- > Head of Marketing

### F If you want to be a...

- > Director of Care Operations
- > Director of Quality
- > Director of Finance
- > Director of People & Organisation Development
- > Director of Property & Development

### G If you want to be a...

- > Managing Director

.....then please contact the People & Organisation Development team by email at [people@avantecare.org.uk](mailto:people@avantecare.org.uk)



# The Board of Trustees Summary

The Board of Trustees met on 14 December 2022, below are some of the main points discussed:

The £50 vouchers for staff at Christmas had been well received

Puddingstone Grange was rated 'Good' by CQC

Career pathways are being developed



Trustees were assured that Avante had good planning in place to manage our homes in the event of power cuts.



Recruitment is improving with applicants being processed quicker. Home Care recruitment is still challenging

Covid booster programme in the services was confirmed as completed

Six of the seven overseas recruits have started. These new colleagues are from a number of different countries including Nigeria and India. All seven recruits have worked in care and will receive all Avante mandatory training. The next cohort is being engaged.



Trustees were very positive and gave good feedback on Avante's management of health and safety

Home Care - Transport for staff is being looked at with five electric bicycles to be purchased. These may be increased dependent on how successful they are.



Occupancy is good with self-funders ahead of budget



Social Care Reform - likely to be delayed until after the next election.

It was noted that Finbarr Murray, has stepped down as a Trustee



# Our Service Locations



## Bexley & Greenwich

- 1** Parkview care home  
105 Woolwich Road  
Bexleyheath, DA7 4LP  
Tel: 0208 3037889
- 2** Puddingstone Grange care home  
82 Plumstead Common Road  
Woolwich, SE18 3RD  
Tel: 0208 3170912
- 3** Northbourne Court care home  
Harland Avenue, Sidcup,  
DA15 7NU  
Tel: 0208 2699840
- 4** Riverdale Court care home  
17 Dovedale Close, Welling,  
DA16 3BU  
Tel: 0208 3179067
- 5** Weybourne care home  
1 Finchale Road, Abbey Wood,  
SE2 9AH  
Tel: 0208 3108674



## Kent

- 6** Amherst Court care home  
Palmerston Road, Chatham,  
Kent, ME4 6LU  
Tel: 01634 400009
- 7** Bridge Haven care home  
Conyngham Lane, Bridge,  
Kent, CT4 5JX  
Tel: 01227 831607
- 8** Chaucer House care home  
82 St Martins Hill, Littlebourne Road,  
Canterbury, CT1 1PS  
Tel: 01227 671985
- 9** Court Regis care home  
Middletune Avenue, Sittingbourne,  
Kent, ME10 2HT  
Tel: 01795 423485
- 10** Pilgrims View care home  
Roberts Road, Snodland,  
Kent, ME6 5HL  
Tel: 01634 241906
- 11** Home Care and Support  
De Gelsey House, 1 Jubilee Way,  
Faversham, Kent, ME13 8GD  
Tel: 01795 597454
- 12** Avante Care & Support Head Office  
De Gelsey House, 1 Jubilee Way,  
Faversham, Kent, ME13 8GD  
Tel: 01795 597400

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'Everyone Matters'™

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