

# Sahara Care Newsletter

Winter 2024

Reflections on the year



**Sahara Care**  
Pathways to Positive Outcomes

# Welcome

Welcome to Sahara Care's Winter newsletter. As we enter this new year, we want to take stock and bring you a review of the events, activities and developments from our assisted and supported living services in East London over the past 12 months. With this issue, we also want to highlight the significant value that our staff team brings to the service that we provide to the people that we support. The staff team are the backbone of our organisation and enable Sahara Care to make such a meaningful difference to the lives of others. Alan Betts, Director and Nominated Individual outlines this in his opening message.

## A note from Alan Betts, Director and Nominated Individual

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Sahara Care newsletter. As we close another year and look forward to the opportunities that are coming in 2025, I want to take time to reflect on the incredible work that has been achieved and express my heartfelt thanks to every member of our team.

2024 brought its fair share of challenges and successes and through it all, the dedication and resilience of our staff team shone brightly. The compassion and commitment each of our staff team has demonstrated in their roles has not only ensured the delivery of outstanding care, but has also enriched the lives of the people that we support. It is truly inspiring to see the impact of their effort day after day.

At the heart of everything we do is a shared commitment to the people that we support, ensuring their needs are met with dignity, respect and understanding. The care and support provided by our team this year has been nothing short of exceptional. Our staff have gone above and beyond to create environments where individuals can feel safe, valued and empowered to live their lives to the fullest.

Equally important is the support the staff teams have shown to one another as colleagues. Working in care is never without its challenges, but the strength and solidarity of our team has been a source of encouragement and motivation throughout the year. This spirit of collaboration and mutual support is something that makes our organisation truly special.

As we take this moment to look back, it is also important to look forward. A new year always brings with it opportunities to grow, learn and improve. I am confident that, together, we will continue to build on our achievements and rise to meet the challenges ahead. Our shared commitment to delivering the highest standard of care will remain our guiding light as we step into the future.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I would like to extend our warmest thanks to each of our staff for their hard work, dedication and the care that they bring to their roles every day.

Wishing everyone a bright and successful year ahead.



# Employee of the Quarter

We share news of employee rewards and recognition

Nijo started work at our Sahara Lodge & Gardens facility in November 2022 with no real experience in the care sector. Manager, Janette, was impressed with how he presented his skillset during the recruitment assessment and Nijo promptly joined the team and since then has exceeded Janette's expectation and proved to be a natural carer. No task is too small in his endeavours to offer person centred support and ensuring the environment of the service supports our residents' well-being and is a place where they love to live.

Nijo is dedicated to offering person centred support ensuring that our residents' choices are being met. He has built a special relationship with one of our residents who has complex autism. Nijo has been able to expand this resident's interests by taking him out in the community to social events both local and further afield, promoting inclusion and supporting the resident's ability to accept that change can be good.

Nijo loves to cook with our residents, baking cakes for birthdays, special occasions and preparing restaurant evenings with food from around the world. Nijo's ability to connect to our residents is evident in the way they respond to him. He is always able to engage and encourage the residents to take on tasks or learn new skills that they may normally shy away from.

We recently had a CQC inspection where Nijo was invited by an inspector to talk with him. Following their conversation the inspector reported that he was extremely impressed by Nijo's knowledge and understanding of the needs of our residents and the wider care sector, especially given that he has so recently started working in social care.

Nijo is a valued member of the Sahara Lodge and Gardens team, he is highly thought of by both staff and residents. The management team look forward to watching the progress this dynamic young man will make in his Sahara Care journey.



# Staff recognition in 2024

## Highlights from our staff reward programme



Priyanka, Senior Support Worker at Sahara Lodge & Gardens, won her award for her outstanding performance in supporting our residents to celebrate their cultural celebrations within the service and for her work on inclusion with our residents.

Priyanka's positive promotion of Sahara Care within the local community has ensured our place at the heart of the community. Priyanka works tirelessly organising events, making decorations, baking cakes and crocheting. Much of this work is in her own time ensuring residents can come together to celebrate the times of year that are important to them, whether this is Eid, Halloween, Holi, Ramadan, St George's day or Easter, Priyanka ensures that residents are aware of the events taking place and are included in all preparations.

There is no doubt that Priyanka goes above and beyond her everyday duties in enhancing the lives of the residents and ensuring that both the residents and the service is fully represented and involved in the local community on an equal footing. This reflects our values of Individuality and Choice.

Admire, Team Leader at our Sahara House service, provides an exemplary support system to the management team. She has volunteered for additional responsibility and duties, including being the central co-ordinator for family queries.

Admire is a key member of our people management team at Sahara House, striving at all times to keep a strong working bond between our team members. As part of the management team, she also meets regularly with our staff to discuss and implement actions to continually improve the service.

Admire has demonstrated that she is calm, collected and professional when dealing with emergency situations and has provided invaluable support to our service users, their families and our staff during such times. We would like to thank Admire for her complete dedication to her role.



Admire receiving her certificate.



Chairman, Terence Brown is pictured here presenting a recognition reward to Karen. Alongside her duties supporting our Managing Director, Karen has helped Sahara Care in producing compliance action plans, recruitment activities and liaising with suppliers. She demonstrates a common trait among our employees of being able to roll up her sleeves to get the job done.

# Charity

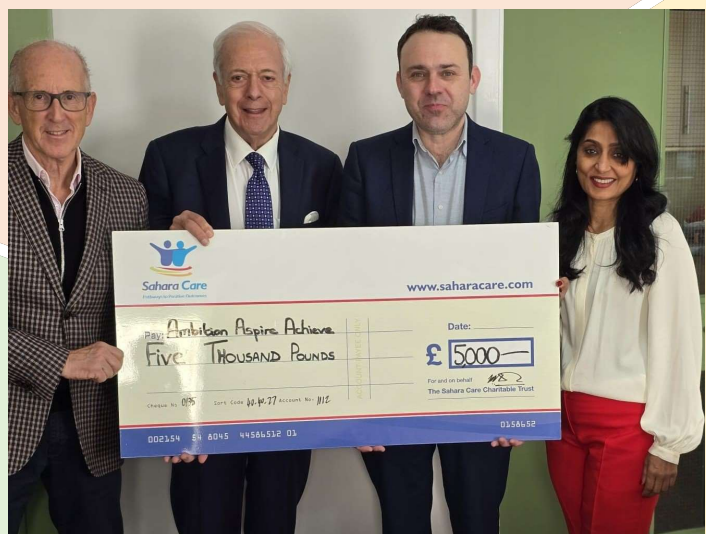
## Sahara Care continued to support local charities in 2024

Ambition, Aspire, Achieve (AAA) is a local charity that we hold dear and support on an on-going basis. Our Chairman, Terence Brown is one of the Patrons of the charity, who do great work to support the most disadvantaged young people in the Newham area. In late Spring, we attended the 7<sup>th</sup> annual benefit evening at the Brick Lane Music Hall. Vincent Hayes MBE and the cast put on a tremendous show and the charity raised over £17,000 on the evening. An incredible achievement by all involved, with all funds going to further the work ensuring that many vulnerable children will benefit from a whole range of opportunities and experiences. Terence and our Managing Director, Sharon Kaur had the pleasure of presenting a donation to Jonny Boux, Chief Executive of AAA and Christine Bowden, Chair of the Board of Trustees.



Pictured (L-R): Sharon Kaur, Christine Bowden, Terence Brown, Jonny Boux

We were also honoured to support the Kevin Jenkins OBE Newham Christmas Toy Appeal, run by Ambition, Aspire, Achieve (AAA) in partnership with the Newham Recorder. The appeal successfully completed its mission for the 47<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Jonny Boux, Chief Executive of AAA stated in an article in the Newham Recorder: "Times continue to be tough for many, but the support provided by businesses, local schools, community groups and a huge number of individuals have made a tremendous difference. We cannot thank them all enough for helping to make the appeal a success." Members of our Board had the pleasure of presenting a cheque to Jonny Boux of AAA in December.



Pictured (L-R): Chris Manhire, Terence Brown, Jonny Boux, Sharon Kaur

# Charity

## Sahara Care continued to support local charities in 2024

We enjoyed a super evening supporting the Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (BHRUT) as the lead sponsor for their annual fundraising gala. The charity supports two local hospital: King George Hospital in Ilford and Queen's Hospital in Romford. Whilst the NHS provides funding for core necessities, the charity funds projects that enhance the hospital experience for all. They do not subsidise the NHS but take the ideas, concerns and innovations from their staff, patients and families and turn their wish lists into reality – their aim is to make our hospitals even better.

The theme for this year's event was Moulin Rouge. It was a hugely entertaining evening raising vital funds to support our local hospitals.



Pictured (L-R seated) Sahara Care Board members: Chris Manhire, Terence Brown and Sharon Kaur



# Spotlight on Riaan

Riaan joined the Sahara Care maintenance team in 2024

Riaan has proved to be an asset to our maintenance team since he joined us in the early part of 2024. Initially based at our Sahara House service, he showed initiative from the moment he started with the team. He assesses the service daily and picks up on the urgent jobs that require completing, as well as tackling the larger, long term maintenance team projects.

He has also duly completed his induction training at our other services and so is now able to provide cover to all our services supporting the maintenance team when needed, including during out of hours and holiday cover.

Riaan shows compassion and patience when interacting with our service users and has built an excellent rapport with the people that we support in our services.



We have wonderful green spaces in our gardens in both the houses that make up Sahara House and Riaan has taken a particular interest in this space.

He worked tirelessly over the spring months to replace and rebuild the raised decking area in one of the gardens and has plans to work with the residents on our vegetable garden.

Riaan demonstrates a positive attitude in all his interactions and that is at the heart of the values we look for in our teams.

# Staff training and development

Staff development is another key value for Sahara Care and our teams have engaged in various courses, both internal and external over the past 12 months.

Team Leader at Sahara Parkside, Arnold, has established a comprehensive induction and probation training programme and takes the lead with all our new staff. We have been complemented by external parties on the level and detail of our induction programme. Feedback from our new starters also indicates that they have not previously experienced this level of training with other organisations and that it has given them the confidence to be successful in their role from Day One.

Arnold has also been instrumental in delivering manual handling training to our staff teams across all services. This training is vital to our daily interactions. It assists our staff to keep our residents and themselves safe.



Pictured (Centre)- Arnold demonstrating to staff manual handling techniques

Our training generally takes the form of classroom learning and practical exercise where staff work through practise sessions based on different scenarios.



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We are delighted to have also worked with North-East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT) who recently delivered Sepsis and Significant 7+ training to our staff. These sessions were tailored for services users with learning disabilities and gave our staff increased knowledge on how to identify, monitor and manage certain common conditions. Additional sessions are planned for 2025 as we build our partnership with the team at NELFT.



**CARE  
PROVIDERS'  
VOICE**



During 2024, we continued to work in partnership with Care Providers' Voice (CPV). CPV is a local organisation that represents social care providers and supports recruitment and workforce development in the care sector. They successfully collate resources and opportunities for care providers and we have enjoyed supporting their recruitment events and provider forums over the past 12 months. Through CPV, we have also taken the opportunity to support the Care Connector Network, which is a dedicated platform for the social care sector.

# Sahara Care Summer and Autumn Fetes

Residents, staff, family and friends enjoy wonderful afternoons raising money for charity

Each of our services held fetes over the summer and autumn months with the aim of bringing all our residents from our services together for an afternoon of celebration. Friends and family members joined us and with activities on the day, we raised money for the chosen charities of each service.



Our residents at Sahara Lodge and Gardens enjoyed some glorious weather for their garden fete. Staff manned the BBQ and we dusted off the karaoke machine with residents, family and staff eager to show off their singing skills.



Sahara Lodge and Gardens decided to hold a raffle on the day to raise much needed funds for the NSPCC. This was a great success and over £160 was raised for the charity.



Sahara House held an afternoon fete in our fabulous on-site gardens. Food and music from around the world was enjoyed by all who attended.



Residents enjoyed the fun and games and were thrilled with the prizes on offer.

Through our raffle, we raised over £115 in support of the Lennox Children's Cancer Charity.



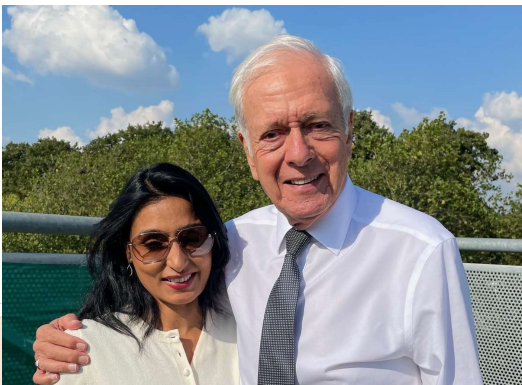
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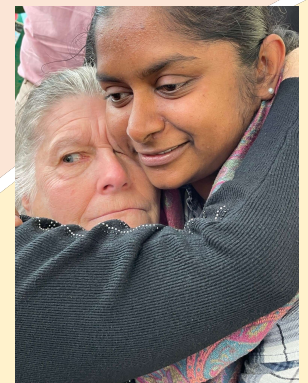


Sahara Parkside decided to hold a 'World Appreciation Day' to celebrate different cultures. The sun was shining again and so we headed to our roof garden and enjoyed music and food from around the world. Staff and residents enjoyed dressing in their national costume and preparing samples of their local delicacies.

Unmesh Desai, representative from City and East in the London Assembly, helped draw the raffle, with some wonderful prizes on offer.



Our Chairman, Terence Brown and Managing Director, Sharon Kaur (pictured) kindly provided top up funds which raised £200 for local charity Richard House Children's Hospice.



We are truly thankful for all the support that was given on the day by staff, residents and our supporters.



# Travel and trips

Our residents enjoyed various holidays and trips throughout the year

Our approach at Sahara Care is to encourage and support our service users to take control of their lives and the decisions that shape it. Developing life skills and confidence underpin the journey towards greater independence. Travel and experiencing new environments and places is a key foundation towards this goal. This year our residents experienced travel to new countries and also explored our own shores in pursuit of new experiences. We are busy planning our travel and trips for 2025!



Renee and Elaine enjoyed a cruise to Norway and took advantage of all that was on offer both on board and when on shore exploring this beautiful country.



Anna was delighted with her gift of a bottle of bubbly by the hotel on her trip to Spain. Anna does not drink and so she was very happy to share this with fellow guests.

# Travel and trips

Our residents enjoyed various holidays and trips throughout the year

Bernie, Renee, Siddika and Pauline from Sahara Lodge and Gardens enjoyed a late summer holiday to Cromer. They had wonderful weather and enjoyed spending time together experiencing all that beautiful Norfolk has to offer.



Natchu and Pauline enjoyed a day trip to the National Maritime museum.

The team at Sahara House enjoyed a day at a Pick Your Own Farm. The strawberries were a particular favourite!



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