

OUTSTANDING

Voices



EXCLUSIVE

VIVALDI SOCIAL CARE - PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION
BARONESS NEUBERGER, DBE HOSTED A RECEPTION AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS - **PAGE 6**

LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE
SANJAY DHRONA - OS DIRECTOR OF DIRECTOR DIVERSITY, EQUALITY & INCLUSION REFLECTS ON THE LAUNCH OF THE LANGUAGE GUIDE. **PAGE 12**

The Outstanding Society

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Editor Notes



Alan Fry

Editor and Head of Operations

Welcome to the first issue of Outstanding Voices, our new magazine. We hope you like the updated design, which reflects our rebrand that will be introduced over the coming weeks.

Outstanding Voices is for everyone working across the Social Care sector. It exists to share, celebrate, and amplify outstanding practice, showcasing inspiring services, innovative approaches, and real voices from across the sector. By highlighting what excellence looks like in practice, we aim to encourage learning, reflection, and continuous improvement.

We want **Outstanding Voices** to be shaped by the real experiences of those working in Social Care, and we'd love you to be part of it.

Whether you have a success story to share, innovative practice to highlight, lessons learned, or achievements you're proud of, your voice truly matters.

By sharing your experiences, you can inspire others, support improvement across the sector, and help shape what outstanding care looks like in practice.

Membership of The OS is — and will always be — completely **free**, so please do encourage colleagues and peers to join us and add their voices to our growing community.

Please share this link for new members to join:
<https://theoutstandingsociety.co.uk/membership/>

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The OS - Partners Strategy Meeting

12th February 2026

HOWDEN



Accora
Ashfield
SERVICES



Camascope

nourish

rwk
goodman



SENTINEL PROCUREMENT SOLUTIONS
DRIVEN TO FULFILL PROMISES MADE

You will know that The Outstanding Society (The OS) exists to share and celebrate best practice across Adult Social Care. We are only able to do this thanks to the support of our valued partners, and we are committed to building strong, collaborative relationships as we work together to develop outstanding practice across the sector.

We were delighted that our lead partner, Howden Insurance, kindly hosted our recent Strategy Day at their London offices. It provided the perfect setting to unveil our new branding and share our plans and ambitions for the year ahead.

There was a real sense of momentum and positivity, as we reflected on everything The Outstanding Society achieved in 2025 and set our sights firmly on the year ahead.

Energy was high as we shared progress across key initiatives, including our continued involvement in the **Vivaldi Social Care** research programme, the growing influence of the **Social Care Nursing Advisory Councils (SCNAC's)**, and the expanding work of the **Out Standing Diversity Forum (OSDF)**.

Each of these streams has strengthened our collective voice and reinforced our commitment to raising standards across Adult Social Care.

Importantly, we also challenged and encouraged our partners to help shape the next phase of this journey, working collaboratively to build on the progress made and drive even greater impact in 2026.



Vivaldi Social Care Ground - Breaking Care Home Data Infrastructure at Parliamentary Reception



vivaldi SOCIAL CARE

Shaping social care through research

Launched in June 2020 at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, **Vivaldi Social Care** has become a groundbreaking research programme that continues to transform our understanding of infections and outbreaks in care homes.

Its first report was launched at a packed Parliamentary Reception that showcased its innovative data collection and demonstrated how evidence can reduce the impact of infections and outbreaks in care homes.

Vivaldi has established the first large-scale, safe and efficient data pipeline for care home research. This is done by linking routinely collected digital care records with health data.

Nearly 700 care homes are signed up, representing around 28,000 residents, creating a growing evidence base that is transforming how infections are understood, prevented and managed in social care. This work has significant implications for adult social care delivery, outcomes and evidence-led national policy making, aligning effectively with the Government's 10-Year Health Plan.

The Parliamentary Reception brought together care sector leaders, parliamentarians, regulators, policy

makers and those with lived experience of care to hear about Vivaldi's progress, impact and future ambitions.

Guest speaker **Neil O'Connor**, Deputy Director of Baroness Casey's Independent Commission on Adult Social Care, shared insights into the potential direction of social care policy.

By engaging directly with parliamentarians, the event aimed to inform debate and shape future policy discussions to further the health of care home residents through applying a health and social care approach.





I was delighted to host this event, which showed exactly how the transformation of social care is connected to our ability to learn systematically from people's real experiences. Initiatives like Vivaldi, which link high-quality data with the everyday realities of care homes, help shift the system towards transparency, dignity and evidence-driven improvement. This kind of work strengthens the foundations of social care, ensuring decisions are shaped by what truly matters - the well-being of those who live and work in care settings.

Baroness Neuberger, DBE



Vivaldi Social Care demonstrates how linked, high-quality social care data can be used to make real-world impacts for those living and working in care settings. This is the beginning of a structural change in social care where data is shared and analysed on a large scale to improve outcomes. With the NHS 10 Year Plan having been launched, Vivaldi offers to tick all three boxes regarding prevention, community and digitalisation, a matter close to our hearts and the Government's.

Professor Laura Shallcross MBE



The Vivaldi project is a groundbreaking study to help better track and understand how and why people move through the health and care system. As the regulator of health and care services, CQC sees first-hand the importance of joining up how people access health and care services. We believe that by better understanding how and why people move between services, we can drive change that improves the care people receive.

Chris Day, Director of Engagement, CQC

The Vivaldi team look forward to the expansion of the data pipeline and encourages further care provider participation.

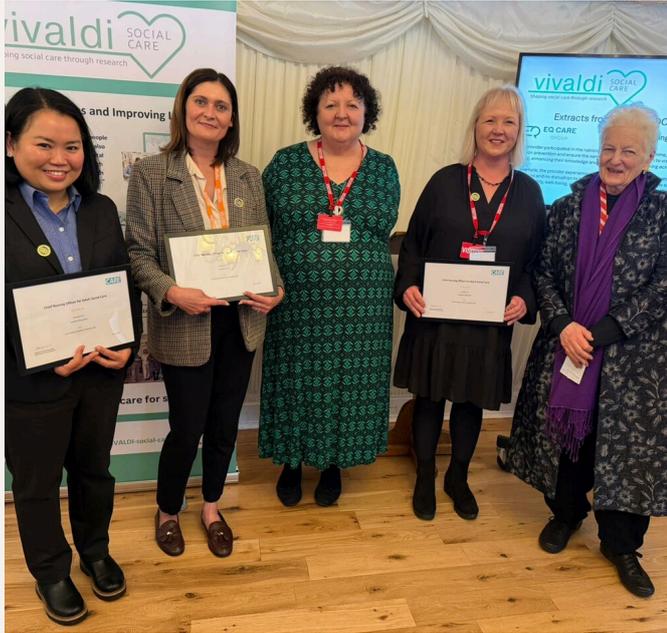
The team are also grateful to digital partners – **Person Centred Software**, **Camascope eMAR** and **Nourish Care** – and to **Care Vision**, who will collaborate with the team in 2026 as this work continues to grow.

Care providers looking to join this exciting project should contact the Vivaldi team at info@vivaldisocialcare.co.uk



Judy Smith OBE - Care Home Resident and advocate for Vivaldi Social Care

CHIEF NURSE ADULT SOCIAL CARE AWARDS



There are moments in Adult Social Care when we are reminded, very powerfully, of the extraordinary leadership, compassion and professionalism that exists across our sector. The recent presentation of three Gold Chief Nurse Awards **by Professor Deborah Sturdy CBE**, Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care, was one such moment.

At a special presentation during the Vivaldi Social Care Parliamentary reception, **Lianne Ford, Victoria Longstaff** and **Lowela Alcazaren** were each recognised with this prestigious national honour. The Gold Chief Nurse Award is reserved for those who demonstrate exceptional leadership, sustained impact and a commitment to improving care not only within their own services, but across the wider sector. It is a mark of excellence that reflects influence, integrity and the highest standards of professional practice.

Professor Sturdy has long championed the vital role of social care nurses and clinical leaders in shaping safe, effective and compassionate services.

In presenting these awards, she highlighted the importance of visible leadership, innovation and the courage to challenge the status quo in pursuit of better outcomes for people who draw on care.

For Lianne Ford, Victoria Longstaff and Lowela Alcazaren, the award recognises far more than individual achievement. It reflects years of dedication to strengthening teams, embedding robust clinical governance, and championing person-centred care in complex and evolving environments. Their work has demonstrated not only technical excellence, but also a deep understanding of the human impact of nursing leadership — ensuring dignity, safety and belonging remain at the heart of service delivery.

The significance of three Gold Awards being presented together should not be underestimated. It sends a clear message that adult social care nursing continues to raise its profile and influence nationally. At a time when the sector faces workforce pressures, regulatory change and growing complexity, celebrating visible role models is more important than ever.

These awards also shine a light on the broader contribution of nursing leadership within Adult Social Care. Strong clinical leaders are essential to building confidence, driving improvement and supporting multidisciplinary teams to thrive. By recognising excellence at this level, the Chief Nurse Awards reinforce the message that social care nursing is not secondary to healthcare — it is a distinct and vital profession in its own right.

For the wider sector, this celebration is both recognition and inspiration. It reminds us that outstanding practice is happening every day, often quietly and without fanfare. It also challenges us to continue investing in leadership development, inclusive cultures and innovation that supports the people we serve.

Congratulations to Lianne Ford, Victoria Longstaff and Lowela Alcazaren on this remarkable achievement. Their Gold Chief Nurse Awards are richly deserved and represent not only personal success, but a proud moment for Adult Social Care as a whole.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW PARTNERS

Accora



*Accora is delighted to become a supporter of **The Outstanding Society**, a community that champions excellence, leadership, and innovation in social care.*

Their focus on sharing best practice and celebrating what 'outstanding' truly looks like strongly aligns with our own mission-to support care providers with tools and insight that help people live well and move with confidence.

We're excited to be part of such a positive and forward-thinking network.



Accora provides profiling beds, pressure mattresses, and specialist seating for care homes, combining safety features, robust construction, and elegant aesthetics to support both residents and carers without compromising interior design.

We understand the need for equipment that is clinically effective, attractive, affordable, and adjustable, ensuring it precisely meets residents' clinical needs while remaining cost-effective and able to adapt to changing requirements.

We are dedicated to supporting professionals in finding appropriate solutions for their clients through expert guidance, training, and education. Our clinical experts offer individual advice on a case-by-case basis, supporting clinical reasoning, justification for solutions, and management of clinical responsibilities.

We also deliver a wide range of free learning and development opportunities, including monthly webinars, modular courses, online clinical forums, interactive lunch and learn sessions, and in-person training options.

<https://accora.care/customers/care-homes>



Sentinel Procurement is proud to support the care industry by delivering specialist purchasing and supply chain solutions tailored to care homes, nursing homes, and other care providers.

They help organisations reduce costs, improve efficiency, and maintain high-quality standards through negotiated pricing, supplier management, and reliable access to essential goods and services.



In addition, they provide dedicated account management support, offering personalised guidance, regular reviews, and ongoing assistance to ensure providers maximise value and adapt to changing needs.

By streamlining procurement processes and offering sector-specific expertise, Sentinel Procurement enables care providers to focus more on delivering outstanding care while maintaining financial sustainability and compliance.



<https://sentinelonline.co.uk/>

King Charles III's New Year Honours List for 2026



Congratulations to our incredible social care leaders!

We're proud to celebrate three outstanding individuals who have been recognised in the King's New Year Honours List for their exceptional contributions to social care:

Your dedication, leadership, and passion for improving lives make a real difference every day. Thank you for everything you do to support people and communities across the UK.

✦ **Oonagh Smyth CBE**
CEO, Skills for Care

✦ **Anna Selby OBE**
Executive Director of Quality, HC-One

✦ **Susan Watson MBE**
Home Manager, Pytchley Court Care Home

Introducing the OSDF Language Guide: A Practical Gift for Inclusive Care



Diversity Forum

The festive season is well and truly over, but not for our dear friends and members of The Outstanding Society. We thought we owed you a little gift... one that is practical, thoughtful, and designed to help you support people with confidence and care.

Let's be honest - I am a cisgender, gay man with Indian heritage, born and raised in the UK, and even I find this confusing sometimes.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) can feel tough, complex, and overwhelming, especially if you're a small or independent provider without much experience supporting people who are part of the rainbow community. And language - the words we choose, the confidence with which we use them - matters deeply.

Yet it can be hard to know where to start.

If we're honest, much of the DE&I training available isn't great. It's repetitive, uninspired, and often fails to teach us anything new. It doesn't turn the dial forward - and at OSDF, we believe meaningful change must be practical, relevant, and centred on real experience.

Why We Created the Out Standing Diversity Forum

We created the OSDF to help members of The Outstanding Society - and the wider adult social care sector - meet the needs of LGBTQ+ team members and those they support.



Why It Matters

Care plans and recording are central to our work. The language we use - compassionate, clear, respectful - isn't just semantics. It is evidence of our values, our practice, and our quality.

Supporting people means placing them at the heart of the care they help us design. Using the right language is one of the most meaningful ways we can do that.

The landscape is ever-changing, and this guide is a starting point - but an important one. You can adapt it, build on it, and even create your own service-specific version. The key is that it helps people feel seen, safe, and respected.

Beginning the Conversation

At our roundtable at The Care Show in Birmingham, we started an important conversation:

What do services need to meaningfully support LGBTQ+ people, and how do we create resources that actually help rather than simply tick boxes?

Our goal was clear - to provide tangible tools, designed by LGBTQ+ people, that reflect the realities of care practice today. Resources that are relevant, usable, and supportive.

The First Output: The OSDF Language Guide

Our first output is the new Language Guide. Inspired by VIDA Healthcare's Vidasaurus and my work at The Close with our CLOSEtionary, we wanted to create something simple, practical, and impactful.

This guide is designed to help leaders train, support, and empower teams with a printable reference that supports confident, respectful communication - both about those we support, and with each other.

It can be used in supervisions, inductions, group training, and everyday practice.

How to Use the Guide

- Share it with your whole team
- Use it in supervisions and inductions
- Ask your residents and community if anything is missing
- Adapt it to reflect your people and your service
- Audit its impact on care plans and documentation

It is a tool for everyday practice - not a one-off exercise.

We Want to Hear from You

The guide is designed to support you, your service, and your people - but its impact grows when it is shared.

If you use it, adapt it, or see positive change because of it, please share your success stories with us.

We want to learn from you, celebrate progress, and showcase best practice across the sector.

As OS members -you're on the nice list -so you get it for free.

[CLICK HERE](#)

From Good to Outstanding: Presenting Evidence to the CQC That Tells Your Story

The Outstanding Society (The OS) began 2026 with an energising webinar focused on a challenge many providers recognise: how to present evidence to the CQC that clearly demonstrates not just compliance, but impact. Hosted by **Ruth French** (OS Director of Policy & Regulation), the session brought together Outstanding Society directors, guest speaker **Sarah Slater** (Home Instead Rugby), and **Rob Hargreaves** (Skills for Care), with hundreds of attendees joining live.

Ruth opened by acknowledging the current inspection landscape and how difficult it can feel to achieve Outstanding, particularly when inspections are less frequent, and the bar appears higher—especially in the Safe domain. The message was reassuring and practical: Outstanding is still achievable, and success comes from capturing and communicating what you do well, consistently.

A key theme throughout the webinar was making evidence gathering simple and inclusive. **Samantha Crawley** shared how her teams use the phrase “Tell us a story” to capture strong evidence without making it feel overly formal.

Staff across the service submit short examples describing what was happening, what they did, and what changed as a result. These stories become powerful case studies for families, learning, and inspection—supported by data that shows how information is analysed and turned into action through governance.

Lara Bywater added practical ideas for capturing outcomes when people don't communicate verbally, including photo timelines and personalised communication tools. While **Sanjay Dhrona** highlighted the importance of language and culture—encouraging teams to “Prove it”

by showing how quality statements are lived every day, not just written down.

Crucially, speakers stressed that evidence should come from everyone: care teams, kitchen, housekeeping, maintenance, and office staff.

In domiciliary care, **Sarah Slater** shared learning from achieving three consecutive Outstanding ratings.

Her advice was clear: be open, transparent, and responsive—inspectors know issues occur; what matters is how you learn and improve. She emphasised making the “voice of the person” visible through structured examples, professional feedback, and (where appropriate) storytelling through real-life outcomes.

The webinar closed with a reminder that Outstanding doesn't have to be expensive: many high-impact improvements are low-cost, rooted in communication, reflection, and meaningful evidence.

Upcoming joint sessions with Skills for Care will explore how strong regulation compliance builds confidence—whatever changes the CQC framework may bring.



SARAH SLATOR



ROB HARGREAVES

[Click here to view the recording](#)

Care Is Not a Role – It’s a Calling



SANJAY DHRONA

After ten years working in adult social care, navigating some of the most challenging periods our sector has faced, alongside moments of genuine pride, success and, at times, deep loss, I stepped away from a service that was incredibly special to me.

Leaving prompted an important question: where does that leave me, and will care ever truly leave me?

More importantly, do I want it to?

Rather than turning this into a therapy session, the transition encouraged reflection on what it really means to work in adult social care – not just as a provider or leader, but as a champion for people, values and dignity. The passion to deliver outstanding, inclusive care does not simply disappear when you hand back the keys. If anything, it evolves.

Continuing my work with The Outstanding Society and leading the Out Standing Diversity Forum has allowed me to remain deeply connected to the sector. It has created a space where learning from a decade on the frontline can be shared, challenged and used by teams facing similar realities.

Importantly, this work has grown through genuine co-production and inclusive practice. What we set out to deliver has been shaped by listening to people who draw on care, to staff, and to leaders who want to do better but may not always know where to start.

In January, we launched the OUT Standing Diversity Forum Language Guide, a free, downloadable resource available via The Outstanding Society website.

Language matters.

The words we use shape culture, signal belonging and can either open or close doors. This guide supports services to reflect on everyday language and build environments where everyone feels seen, respected and safe.

While I may no longer have a service with my name above the door, I am still working in adult social care. Perhaps now, I have the opportunity to support not just the 90 people I once directly served, but many more across the sector – and that feels like a privilege.

The Outstanding Society announce their topics for Care Show London

29th & 30th April 2026



The OS team are once again excited to be hosting a series of informal panel discussions in the **Learning Lounge**, bringing together **CQC representatives**, **Outstanding Society** CIC directors, and other inspiring speakers (to be announced soon).

Each session is built around the CQC key questions and quality statements, creating a relaxed space to explore what great practice really looks like in action. Rather than presentations, these conversations will focus on sharing learning, celebrating best practice, and hearing real examples from across health and social care.

Whether you're curious about what "Good" looks like, aiming for "Outstanding", or simply keen to learn from others, the Learning Lounge is a chance to listen, reflect, ask questions and be part of a supportive community focused on quality, improvement and pride in practice.

Wednesday 29th April

(Effective) Turning data into better lives: research and outcomes in social care

Jo Wallace, CQC

(Caring) Caring beyond compliance: how outstanding services empower people with dignity and choice

Debbie Ho, CQC

(Responsive) Outstanding ways to manage complaints and incidents: a secret look into the challenges we all face

(Safe) - Medicines management focus on complex medication and reporting

Simon Hill, CQC

(Safe) Hacked off: a live hack demonstration for the care sector

Thursday 30th April

(Effective) Hot weather planning: the complications of planning or extreme conditions and emergencies

Patricia Johnson, CQC

(Well-Led) Regulated, not restricted: innovation and risk

Jo Wallace, CQC

(Well - Led) From compliance to culture: what 'well-led' really means for nursing teams

Patricia Johnson, CQC

(Caring) Compassionate and CLEAR care plans: all the BEST ideas for outstanding care/support records across domiciliary, residential and LD and autism

Debbie Ho, CQC

(Well-Led) Pride in care: delivering person-centred support for LGBTQ+ communities

Rob Assall, CQC



29th & 30th April 2026

THE OUTSTANDING SOCIETY (OS) TEAM ARE DELIGHTED TO BE RETURNING TO CARE SHOW LONDON 2026!

This April's event brings exciting new additions, extended live sessions and even more opportunities for engagement across the sector.

We will be hosting a dedicated Care Village, giving our amazing partners a central hub around the OS Learning Lounge. This new layout is designed to create greater interaction, collaboration and energy across the event floor.

Following the huge success of October's live Coroner's Court, we're thrilled to announce another major live theatre event for 2026...

HACKED OFF!

A Live Hack Demonstration for the Care Sector In partnership with Howden Insurance

Join us for a powerful main-theatre session that lifts the lid on what really happens during a cyberattack on a care service.

A specialist cyber expert will perform a **live hack demonstration**, guiding the audience through the unfolding impact of a real-world breach—in **real time**.

This eye-opening event is designed to help care providers understand both the vulnerabilities and the essential steps required to protect their services.

Featuring:

- **James Rycroft** – Executive Director, Specialist Dementia Services, The Outstanding Society
- **Samantha Crawley** – Director of Leadership & Wellbeing, The Outstanding Society
- **Jonathan Taylor** – Divisional Director & Head of Corporate Risks, Health & Care, Howden
- Plus a **guest speaker** – an industry specialist whose identity must remain confidential for security reasons... but trust us, they are not to be missed.

Don't Miss This Session

A must-see demonstration for every care provider looking to strengthen their cyber resilience and safeguard the people they support.

GET YOUR FREE TICKET

Major incident response: What every care leader must know

Howden, invites you to register for their upcoming seminar - an in-person event exclusively for directors and senior leadership teams, on **25th February 2026**.



A senior care leader will also share their recent real-world experience of managing a major incident, bringing valuable insight and authenticity to the session.

Expect an engaging format with interactive elements throughout, and plenty of opportunity for Q&A to ensure your most pressing questions are addressed.

Whether you're in the care, specialist education or charity sector, this seminar is designed with your challenges in mind. With expert guidance and practical case studies, you'll leave prepared to protect your organisation's reputation, finances and future.

Date:

Wednesday 25th February 2026

Time:

13.30-18.30

Address:

**Etc Venues, 50-52 Chancery Lane,
London, WC2A 1HL**

Agenda

13.30-14.00 Registration

14.00-14.15 Welcome and scene setting

14.15-15.05 Legal map of possible investigations

15.05-15.30 Break

15.30-15.50 Mock interview with HSE

15.50-16.30 Managing the communications challenges of a sudden incident

16.30-17.10 Inside the incident: A care leader's perspective

17.10-17.20 Insurance coverage with Howden

17.20-17.30 Q&A

17.30-18.30 Networking drinks

Legal, PR and Insurance tactics to protect your people, reputation and bottom line

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK YOUR PLACE](#)

Proactive, Not Reactive: Setting the Tone for 2026

January has a way of revealing how quickly we slip into reactive working. After the Christmas period, many teams return to heightened pressure, immediate demands, and the sense that everything requires attention at once. It can feel less like a fresh start and more like trying to regain control.

At **Ashfield Services**, 2026 is about shifting that pattern. Not by denying the realities of health and social care, but by choosing to work proactively wherever possible.

Reactivity often begins with good intentions. A situation arises, action is needed quickly, and people respond with the time and information they have.

In our sector, this is sometimes unavoidable. The difficulty comes when constant response becomes the norm.

Living in a state of reaction can feel like firefighting. There is little space to reflect, limited opportunity to recognise progress, and rarely a sense of completion.

Over time, this can affect confidence, motivation, and well-being, leaving

people feeling perpetually one step behind, no matter how hard they work.

Proactivity shifts the focus. It is about preparation, anticipation, and creating the right conditions before pressure builds. It allows teams to respond with confidence rather than urgency.

In health and social care, proactivity underpins safe, stable practice. It influences how decisions are made under pressure and how supported people feel in their roles.

When teams have space to prepare, plan, and learn, the working environment feels calmer and more human.

Preparation changes how people experience their work. Staff who feel prepared are more likely to trust themselves and approach situations with clarity and assurance, even when demands are high. That confidence grows when training is ongoing, relevant, and rooted in real practice.

When learning reflects the reality of the role, it becomes a source of support rather than an added pressure.

Proactive training also protects well-being. It reduces



the feeling of constantly being on the back foot and replaces it with readiness. Instead of rushing to respond, staff can draw on knowledge and skills they already have.

Feeling skilled and supported sends a powerful message: that people are valued not just for what they do, but for how they grow.

Being proactive is not about perfection or control.

It is about care, foresight, and respect for the people doing the work.

<https://www.ashfieldservices.co.uk/>



LEADERSHIP AND GROWTH IN A CHANGING CARE MARKET

As the end of last year saw continued investment within UK health and social care, sector analysts and consultancies forecast further strong investment and sustained transaction activity from both overseas and UK investors. Operational trends suggest that occupancy remains strong, and that profitability and trading have generally improved, depending on location and provision.

Christie & Co predict a continuation of portfolio rationalisation among not-for-profit and smaller operators, with further exits and group consolidation expected through 2026. At the same time, the market remains competitive. Demand for beds continues, alongside innovation in service models, growth in high-acuity provision, and increasing adoption of technology.

Taken together, these conditions create both opportunity and pressure. Capital may be available and demand may be strong, but the ability of organisations to grow well, and to sustain quality while doing so, rests heavily on leadership.

At Bright Selection, we work with a wide range of care businesses at different stages of their journey, from investors entering the sector for the first time, to experienced providers launching new platforms. This includes supporting leadership teams across both acquisition-led growth and new-build development, where the demands on people, culture, and governance can differ markedly but are equally critical to success.

Across the sector, one theme emerges consistently: growth is rarely limited by ambition or funding, but by the capacity of leadership teams to evolve in step with the organisation.

Growth Changes the Nature of Leadership

As organisations expand, the nature of leadership changes, often more quickly than anticipated. What works well in a smaller, tightly managed setting does not always translate into a larger, more complex organisation.

In the early stages of growth, leaders are often close to day-to-day operations, personally solving problems and making rapid decisions. As portfolios expand and teams grow, leadership becomes less about direct intervention and more about setting direction, building capability, and creating the conditions for others to succeed.

One care group leader reflected on this shift simply:

“We realised that teams, personalities, and values are far more important than competencies alone. Leadership had to evolve as the organisation did.”

Jamie Braganza

Difficulties arise when leadership structures do not adapt to this transition. Individuals may be highly capable, committed, and experienced, yet find themselves stretched by the changing demands of the role. This is not a failure of effort or intent, but a mismatch between leadership approach and organisational phase.

Recruiting for the Organisation You Are Becoming

A common tendency, particularly in fast-moving markets, is to recruit based on what has worked previously, rather than what will be needed next. In a sector experiencing development, acquisition, and increasing regulatory complexity, this can lead to leadership teams that are well-suited to yesterday's challenges but less equipped for tomorrow's.

Early growth often benefits from leaders who are comfortable with ambiguity, pace, and hands-on problem-solving. Turnaround environments require leaders who can reset culture, challenge established behaviours, and rebuild confidence. Scaling organisations, by contrast, need leaders who can create structure, delegate effectively, and develop others, while maintaining focus on quality and values.



LEADERSHIP AND GROWTH IN A CHANGING CARE MARKET

.Recruitment decisions that are grounded in a clear understanding of where the organisation is heading are more likely to support sustainable growth.

Values, Authenticity, and the Experience of Growth

In a competitive market, values alignment is not simply a cultural consideration; it shapes reputation, retention, and long-term stability.

As organisations grow, they tell a story, consciously or not, about who they are and what they stand for. Leadership recruitment plays a central role in whether that story is coherent and credible.

For early-stage providers in particular, authenticity can be a defining strength. One founder described the importance of representing the organisation honestly to candidates:

“We were looking for somebody to represent us well, to tell our story. Even if people don’t join us, it matters that they leave the process feeling positive about who we are.”

Ash

This perspective reflects a broader truth across the sector. Recruitment is not only about selection; it is also about signalling values. How organisations engage with candidates, communicate expectations, and acknowledge the challenges of growth all contribute to trust.

Career Stage and Capacity for Growth

Another consideration that becomes increasingly relevant in growth and consolidation is career stage. Leadership roles in expanding organisations are demanding. They require energy, resilience, and a willingness to adapt as structures and expectations evolve.



Leadership as a Relational Role

As organisations become larger and more complex, leadership increasingly becomes a relational activity. The ability to build trust, communicate clearly, and bring people with you through change becomes central.

This is particularly important in a sector where teams are diverse, pressures are high, and change can provoke understandable anxiety. Leaders who are able to listen, explain, and engage are better placed to maintain momentum and morale, even in challenging circumstances.

Recruitment approaches that explore how candidates lead people, not just how they manage tasks, provide a more accurate picture of how they will perform in practice.

Leadership Recruitment as a Strategic Consideration

In a market forecast for continued investment and consolidation, leadership recruitment cannot remain reactive. It needs to be treated as a strategic consideration, aligned with growth plans, organisational values, and long-term sustainability.

Organisations that take a deliberate, reflective approach to leadership recruitment are better positioned to navigate competition, consolidation, and complexity, while continuing to deliver high-quality care.

<https://brightselection.co.uk/>



MOVE FROM INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TO PROACTIVE ACTION WITH NOURISH SAFETY



Nourish technology impacts one million people every day, across an array of services and specialisations.

We believe in order to achieve the shifts required of our sector we must build robust digital ecosystems, centred around the lived experience of the people utilising a service.

So, we can continue to develop solutions, improve outcomes and build for tomorrow together.

At **Nourish**, we understand quality care and support is a journey, not a destination. We developed our incident management platform, Nourish Safety, to reflect this reality.

Nourish Safety gives you a holistic, detailed tool to manage incidents, ensure compliance, and focus on what matters most, driving lasting improvements in care quality.

It seamlessly integrates with **Nourish Better Care** to make incident management an intuitive part of daily care and support workflows, turning compliance into a by-product of your processes, rather than a burden upon them.

Nourish Safety equips your service with clear, actionable insights to help you to redefine incidents as opportunities for positive change.

Lyndsay Atkinson-Swales, Director of Operations at St Anne's Community Services, shared a touching story of how Nourish Safety helps her team understand their community better and respond to their needs more effectively.



<https://nourishcare.com/>



Camascope

As we start settling into 2026, the **Camascope** team remains focused on what matters most to care providers: keeping service users safe through reliable medication management, reducing administrative pressure, and implementing processes that genuinely support day-to-day care delivery.

The new year is a great time to explore practical ways to strengthen medication management moving forward.

If you're looking to refine the way your medication is managed this year, we're hosting a free webinar on the **18th March 2026 at 11am UK time**.

Designed for care providers at any stage of their digital journey, the session will share how eMAR can support safer care, improve oversight and ease the demands on care teams.

Whether you're new to eMAR or already using digital systems, there'll be useful insights and real-world examples to take away.

If you're curious about how digital tools could support your team with safer medication management this year, we'd love to chat and share what's possible - register for our webinar below.

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK YOUR PLACE](#)

Looking ahead, we're also excited to be exhibiting at the Care Show London this April.

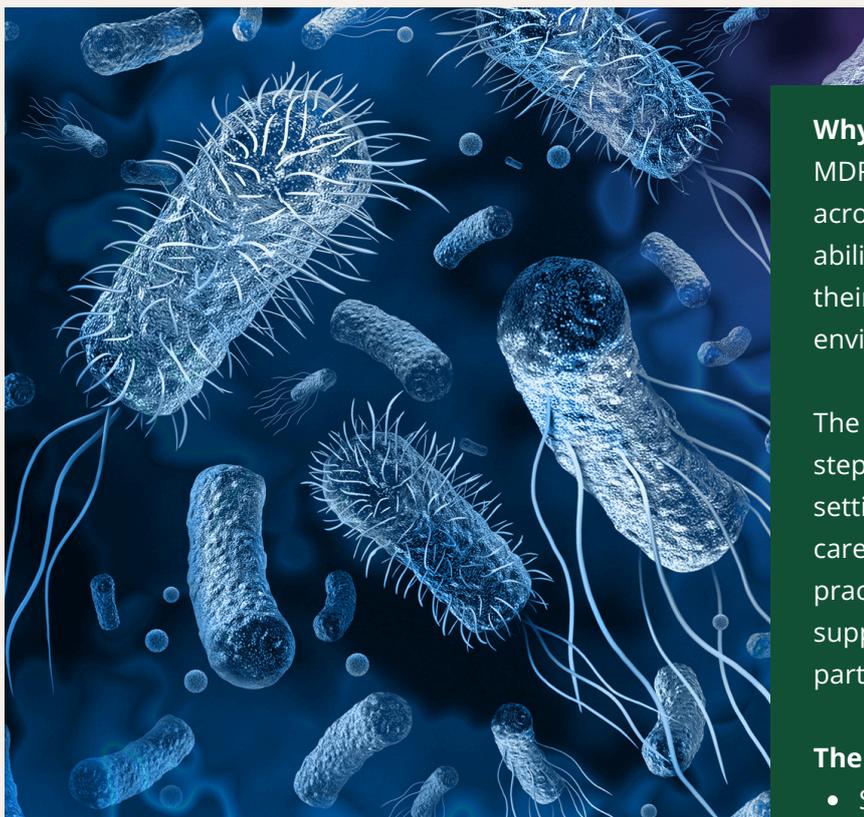
Come and visit us at stand D20 to meet the team, see Camascope in action, and chat about how we support care providers across the sector.



We'd love to see you there!

<https://www.camascope.com/>

NEW MDRO GUIDANCE PUBLISHED FOR THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE SECTOR IN ENGLAND



What's happening

New national guidance on multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs) for the Adult Social Care (ASC) sector in England has been published. This guidance provides updated, evidence-based infection prevention and control (IPC) recommendations for managing MDROs such as:

- **Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus** (MRSA)
- **Extended-Spectrum Beta-Lactamase-producing organisms** (ESBLs)
- **Carbapenemase Producing Enterobacterales** (CPE)
- **Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci** (VRE)

MDROs are pathogens that can cause infections which are difficult to treat because they do not respond to common treatments such as antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals, and antiparasitics.

With fewer treatment options available, infections caused by MDROs can lead to severe illness or death.

Why it's relevant

MDROs present an increasing challenge across health and social care due to their ability to cause hard-to-treat infections and their potential to spread in care environments.

The new guidance provides clear, practical steps to help staff and managers in ASC settings to protect individuals receiving care, visitors, and staff. It aligns ASC practice with national IPC standards and supports integrated working with NHS partners.

The impact

- Sets consistent national expectations for MDRO management across ASC settings
- Supports improved IPC practices, reducing the risk of outbreaks
- Helps organisations meet regulatory requirements and demonstrate safe care delivery
- Strengthens antimicrobial stewardship by preventing infections and reducing antibiotic exposure
- Enhances confidence among staff through accessible, actionable guidance tailored for ASC

Action required

Please share this guidance widely within your networks to ensure it reaches all relevant stakeholders in the ASC sector.

[Access the guidance here](#)

Event Directory



Over the following pages are upcoming events that reflect our commitment to sharing and celebrating best practice across Adult Social Care. If you would like your event to be considered for the next issue, please contact us at

comms@theoutstandingsociety.co.uk

Featured Event



April 29th & 30th

The OS Learning Lounge returns to ExCEL London, don't miss out on your FREE ticket.

[**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**](#)

Event Directory

Mouthcare Matters: Practical Prevention in Daily Care



24th February

Time: 10:00 – 11:30

ONLINE

This event, delivered with SW Regional NHSE dental leads and NICE colleagues, will introduce the essentials of maintaining good oral health for those we support.

It will outline how poor oral health affects overall wellbeing, including links to nutrition, hydration, and conditions such as Hospital- and Community-Acquired Pneumonia.

[**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**](#)

Major incident response: What every care leader must know .



25th February

IN PERSON

Howden, Alder Crisis Communications and Bevan Brittan invite you to register for their upcoming seminar - an in-person event exclusively for directors and senior leadership teams.

[**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**](#)

Starting your nursing career in social care: A practical 'how to' approach



25th February

Time: 10:00 – 11:30

ONLINE

This webinar, developed in partnership with the Royal College of Nursing, explores the opportunities for nursing careers in social care. You'll gain insight into roles within social care and why they matter and practical guidance on how to find vacancies and make successful applications plus much more.

[**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**](#)

Event Directory

Registered manager webinar: Navigating the CQC regulations



25th February

Time: 10:00 – 11:00

ONLINE

Building confidence in what you will need to evidence.

Behind the CQC assessment framework are its Fundamental Standards and Regulations.

This webinar focuses on practical ways to maintain compliance with these, giving confidence in times of change that your quality of care continues to meet expectations.

[**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**](#)

Social Care Research Conference

NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

5th March

Time: 09:00 - 17:00

IN PERSON

Social care needs research for informed decisions to improve lives for millions. Join us to make your voice heard!

This conference is dedicated to advancing NIHR-supported research in social care settings, with a unified mission to promote high-quality, inclusive, and impactful research focused squarely on improving health and wellbeing across the nation.

[**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**](#)

Refine the way your medication is managed this year.



18th March

ONLINE

Designed for care providers at any stage of their digital journey, the session will share how eMAR can support safer care, improve oversight and ease the demands on care teams.

Whether you're new to eMAR or already using digital systems, there'll be useful insights and real-world examples to take away.

[**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**](#)

Event Directory

Quarterly Insights with the CQC



The Outstanding Society

19th March

ONLINE

Chris Day returns to provide the latest update on progress at the CQC.

These sessions are always insightful and engaging.

Don't miss your opportunity to take part – click below to reserve your free place.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



The Outstanding Society

If you have an event you would like to share, please contact:

comms@theoutstandingsociety.co.uk

Inspiring Outstanding Through Shared Experience

**SHARE YOUR
INNOVATIONS &
BEST PRACTICE**

Across Adult Social Care, innovation and outstanding practice are happening every day — often quietly, within individual services and teams.

By sharing what works, whether it's a small improvement with big impact or a transformative new approach, we strengthen the whole sector.

We encourage you to share your innovations, learning and best practice so others can reflect, adapt and grow.

Together, by celebrating success and learning from one another, we can continue to raise standards, build confidence, and drive forward the quality of care for the people and communities we support.



The Outstanding Society

www.theoutstandingsociety.co.uk

Resources



Over the following pages are upcoming events that reflect our commitment to sharing and celebrating best practice across Adult Social Care.

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Featured Resources



Department
of Health &
Social Care

Do you want to understand more about local population needs and what services your local authority wants to commission?

Get Adult Social Care Data (GASCD) is a new, **free** digital service for CQC-registered care providers. Developed with input from providers, it gives you instant access to data and trends for your area, region and across England.

[CLICK TO FIND OUT MORE](#)

Resources

Join the nursing community



Stay informed and up to date with the latest news and developments in the nursing field by subscribing to our nursing newsletter.

Learn about new research, trends, and best practices to enhance your nursing career.

[CLICK TO FIND OUT MORE](#)

Claims defensibility podcast.



How care homes build claims defensibility and trust

Insurance claims can be stressful, but they don't have to be chaotic. What you need to do from the first hour after an incident, how to manage CQC scrutiny and the importance of staff training.

A must listen that offers practical steps to help care providers to reduce risk and protect your residents.

[CLICK TO FIND OUT MORE](#)

Championing leadership development opportunities for student and early career nurses and midwives around the world



The Nursing Now Challenge works with health employers as well as universities, colleges and individuals around the world to create leadership development opportunities for student and early-career nurses and midwives.

[CLICK TO FIND OUT MORE](#)

OUTSTANDING *Voices*

Our collective goal is to offer complimentary memberships, providing unrestricted access to our virtual events, newsletters, podcasts, and an array of valuable resources.



The Outstanding Society

This initiative strives to create an inclusive platform, ensuring that everyone can access information, celebrate innovation, and exchange invaluable best practices.

Please do encourage your colleagues, people you provide care to and their families to become a member.

Membership is **FREE** and will always be **FREE**.

Please share this link:

<https://theoutstandingsociety.co.uk/membership/>

OUTSTANDING

Voices

