

Summer/Spring Edition



Welcome to the Summer and to our 2nd edition of our Newsletter, it gives me great pleasure to update you on what's been going on with Homecare.

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS & STAFF TRAINING

Homecare NI has embraced the new Induction Standards introduced by the Northern Ireland Social Care Council. We are certain that these standards will improve the quality of service delivered to our clients, and have been working tirelessly on the development of an induction and training programme for all care staff.

Homecare are committed to ensuring that staff of all ages and backgrounds have access to learning. We believe that learning will help our staff to meet the demands and challenges they face in delivering a high quality service, hence our continued commitment our programme of NVQ Level 2 and 3 for our care staff and a significant number of our management and co-ordinating staff have completed their Registered Managers Course NVQ Level 4 and will be attending a graduation ceremony in early September. This course has proved highly beneficial and we hope to extend this educational opportunity to all management staff in the near future.

## CONTINUOUS EXPANSION

Homecare has continued to grow and expand throughout 2007. The expansion of our services to HSE Dublin North East has proved a great success and we hope to develop our service provision further within this area. We have also recently been successful in being placed on the panel of Preferred Providers for the provision of High Quality Enhanced Home Support and Personal Care Services within Dublin Mid Leinster and hope to commence services there by the end of the year.

our expansion into the south of Ireland along with the registration and regulation of the care industry progresses, so too does the demands placed upon our administrative processes. In light of this, we have been working closely with Invest NI to develop a comprehensive Management Information System to allow us to grow effectively. We are hopeful that the MIS system will be in place in the near future and that it will greatly improve the quality of services provided to all our clients.

Business development has also continued within Health Trusts in NI, specifically within Homefirst Trust with our success in securing the recent tender for domiciliary services throughout the Trust.

## RECRUITMENT

The Homecare Quality Team has made significant progress in its pursuit of tangible quality improvements. Indeed the recommendations arising from the Quality Review have led to the development of two new posts, Training and Quality Manager and General Manager. The interviewing process is still underway and we are already impressed by the high standard of applicants. I look forward to advising you of the outcome!

## CAR DIVISION

We are pleased to welcome on board our new Car Fleet division. Within the team we have George Arbison, Fleet Manager, Ciaran Kerr and Colin Heely, Mechanics, and Mickey McCann, maintenance and company driver.



## Abseil

This year is the last time Marie Curie will be hosting their annual fund raising abseil down the BT Tower in Belfast.

Building on last year's huge success the list of daredevils increased considerably for this years event, which was held on the 19th May 2007:

Lisa McCourt (Finance Officer)  
Collette McGreevy (Operations Manager)  
Nichola Malloy (Locality Manager)  
Joanne McGuigan (Administration Assistant)  
Mairead Kerr (Administration Assistant)  
Linda Geraghty (Personnel Officer)  
George Harbinson (Fleet Manager)

Many thanks to all those who have contributed through sponsorship.

## Non Smoking

From the 30th April 2007, Homecare's head office and company vehicles have all become non smoking areas as a result of the introduction of new non smoking legislation in Northern Ireland.

No person is permitted to smoke anywhere inside the offices or in any of the company vehicles.

Signage has been erected in the office building and in all vehicles stating that smoking is not permitted.

Anyone found smoking anywhere inside the offices will be asked to leave and smoke at the designated area outside the main building. Wall mounted ash trays and bins have been provided for cigarette ends and rubbish.

Any person found to be in breach of the legislation will be subject to a fine.

## NEW UNIFORM FOR CARE STAFF

We are delighted to advise that following feedback from care staff, we are introducing a brand new uniform for care staff. You will see Lisa Finn, Care Assistant from Armagh who is modelling the new look.

The new uniform will consist of:

White tunic with black and orange pipping  
Black trousers  
Black flat shoes/black trainers/black boots  
ID Badge.

In the meantime, we will be making arrangements for the new tunics to be delivered to our staff. Our Care Assistants are a representation of our Company in the Community; we want our staff to look professional which in turn will lead to a professional attitude with our clients, respect for our Company and a professional image all round. We hope you like the new look!





ive, it has been a busy but exciting and challenging 6 months. Our  
at our Clients receive their scheduled calls delivered by friendly,

Our Office Operations team –

anager for Newry & Mourne, Sperrin Lakeland, Cavan & Monagh  
; Janine Smalls as Co-Ordinator Support Officer currently coveri

Jack and Charmaine Hamilton v

Janine Smalls, Co-Ordinator Support Officer and a new recruit to  
see Gina Haughey move on to new ventures, Gina was Co-ordin

anager and has responsibility for the following areas, North and

tor for North & West Belfast; Tracy Wood is Co-Ordinator for Ho  
and Ulster Community & Hospital Trust areas; and M

y Lucy Shanks who has recently been successful for Co-Ordinat  
hes who has just completed her degree in Business Studies and h

community are Irene Ashe (North & West Belfast); Lorraine Nug  
both the latter of whom have recently been promoted from Care A

client's needs and care staff's requirements come first; they travel from one end of the county  
dealing with any

As Operations Manager I have to say that I have a very dedicated, conscientious, and comm  
staffs' needs and deal professionally with our colleagues within the Trusts. All of this deman  
tives; being able to forward plan and yet deal with emergencies as

As Operations Manager I welcome the new domiciliary standards soon to be released which m  
(RQIA); standards will be of the highest quality with a big emphasis on Company Policies and  
The introduction of registration is welcomed as a measure of quality improvement indeed wi  
are fully committed to our standards already set at

Additionally under NISCC – Northern Ireland Social Care Council we also welcome the move  
in the sector are being acknowledged and the profile of the job and career being raise

### IHCP UPDA

With all of the ongoing issues within the Industry my role within IHCP (Independent Health  
lenges; 2006 / 2007 has seen an expansion of our membership within the NI Domiciliary care  
members. Through the formation of the Chief Executives / IHCP Group, IHCP has achieved re  
of strategic issues to be addressed has been agreed for 2007/2008. Indeed a very productive  
addressed being a fair price for Domiciliary care and recognition of the main issues affecting  
mitment has been made by the Ch

We will continue to promote the work on behalf of members through continued lobbying of th  
will intensify and resources and expertise will be focused on this requirement. Additionally th  
and relationships – this work



All in all a productive year and giving Homecare NI t

erations – Collette McGreevy

r team continue to work hard both during office hours and outside office hours (Emergency On Call service) courteous, helpful, caring and knowledgeable staff supported by our team of supervisors.

see below (include picture) are as follows:

man with Catherine McGrath as Co-Ordinator for Newry, Bessbrook and Camlough; Emma Taylor as Co-Ordinator for South Down and Sperrin as Philomena Loughran is on maternity leave – Congratulations Phil on baby who is Co-ordinator for Cavan & Monaghan.

the team Victoria Greenaway who has just returned from maternity leave – Congratulations Vicky on baby who is Co-ordinator support to the team and previously worked as a care assistant in the South Armagh area – Good Luck to Gina.

West Belfast, Homefirst, Armagh & Dungannon, Ulster Community Hospital Trust and Craigavon & Banbridge areas. Homefirst and has recently promoted from Supervisor; Erin Quinn is Co-Ordinator for Armagh & Dungannon area; Nora Donnelly is Co-Ordinator for Craigavon and Banbridge area;

or and will take on joint responsibility for the new Homefirst Day Services Contract – Well Done Lucy and she has decided to remain with us as Co-Ordinator Support Officer of which we are delighted.

ent (Newry & Mourne, Cavan & Monaghan); Felix Toner (Armagh, Craigavon & Banbridge) and Evelyn O'Connell (Assistant to Supervisor) and are doing an excellent job. This team are a dedicated group of individuals whose role is to cover the other covering early mornings to late night calls monitoring, supervising, supporting, mentoring and resolving client issues on the ground.

mitted team who strive to provide an excellent quality service to our clients; be supportive and manage our clients' needs; have excellent communication skills; being able to juggle many tasks without losing sight of the main objectives; and ensure that the Client's needs are first and foremost at all times.

means that all domiciliary agencies will be regulated by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) Procedures, Client confidentiality, safe recruitment, adult protection and medication amongst many others. Within Homecare NI we have always been very rigorous with our policies and procedures ensuring that staff operate to a high level which will assist greatly under the new regulations.

ment towards having staff recognised and regulated under a governing body; at last the care staff who work for us; this has given our staff the commitment and desire to complete their NVQ Level 2 and Level 3.

ATE – Collette McGreevy

and Care Providers) as Director and representative of Domiciliary Members provides us with many challenges. The independent sector and progression has been made with the establishment of the Special Interest Group for domiciliary care. Recognition as the main point of negotiation with the HPSS on behalf of the independent sector. A programme of work was held with the then Minister Mr Paul Goggins in November 2006 with one of the main issues being the rates for many private providers with regards to the varying rates across Northern Ireland; from this meeting a committee was set up to review the PWC report.

the New Minister, local MPs, MLAs and political party members. With the return of the assembly this work on the establishment of the new Trusts will be an important focus for IHCP in the securing of new partnerships and this work will continue throughout the coming year.

the opportunity to influence the decision makers from the forefront.

## VOLUNTARY WORK IN AFRICA

In the winter edition of our Newsletter we reported that Lisa McCourt had embarked on the experience of a lifetime, boarding a plane for the Singida Region of Tanzania where she spent four weeks working for Volunteer Africa. Here we interview Lisa to find out more about her experience.

Has your experience of Africa changed your attitude toward others?

I simply had no idea that such poverty and neglect existed. It really overwhelmed me for the initial part of my trip and at times I was unsure if I could complete the placement. But what gave me courage was the fact that the African people remained positive despite their hardship. I came back home determined to make the most of what I had and to enjoy life to the full.

What kind of voluntary work did you take part in during your stay in Africa?

The work I done differed dramatically depending on where we were staying. One week I would be building toilets for local communities and the next I would be working in orphanages, comforting the children and assisting in the day-to-day running.

Would you return to Africa?

Yes, I would like to return some day. I learnt so much from the experience and found it very rewarding. It is important to contribute something to improving the lives of others, no matter how small that contribution may be.

## GOODBYE MAIREAD

Having completed two years of a Business Studies degree with the University of Ulster, Mairead Kerr joined our team through a job placement scheme on 24 May 2006. Throughout her year with us Mairead has proved to be an invaluable member of the Support Housing team and it will be a great loss to the team when she returns to University on 19th September 2007. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mairead for her contribution to Housing and Support Services and to wish her continued success in her chosen career.

## EXPANSION

Homecare Housing continues to expand to meet the needs of vulnerable families in Northern Ireland. We have recently acquired new properties in Armagh, Dungannon, and Coalisland. Presently we are also working closely with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to expand our stock of one bedroom apartments.

Homecare Support Services are enjoying considerable success; so many of our service users can now look forward to a brighter, more positive future. One service user in particular has given the Belfast Support Team much cause for celebration. Made homeless at 16, Lorna moved between hostels until she was referred to our project just over two years ago. During her stay with Homecare Lorna has shown great courage in addressing the problems she faced as a consequence of long-term homelessness. Her confidence and ability has grown to such an extent that she has secured permanent employment with another provider of support services! We would like to congratulate Lorna on her achievements and wish her good luck in her new post.

If you have any queries regarding our Housing or Support Services please do not hesitate to contact Lynne McMordie, Support Services Manager, on 02837511333.

## WEDDING BELLS

On 31 August Homecare Housing and Support Services will enjoy its first ever wedding. Romance blossomed between Oliver Mackle and Lisa McCourt almost two years ago, although the two managed to keep it a secret for some time! They will be married at the Chapel of S.M.A Fathers, Drumantine, Newry, and will be holding their reception at the Ballymascanlon Hotel in Dundalk. We would like to take this opportunity to wish the happy couple a long and prosperous marriage.

## Homecare Ireland

We will be celebrating our 1 Year Anniversary in August so I would like to wish a Happy 1st Birthday to all in Homecare Ireland and also take this opportunity to express my gratitude to our hard working staff who, through their diligence, determination and dedication, have ensured tremendous success for Homecare in our 1st year. Their efforts are evidenced and rewarded in the fantastic feedback we continue to receive from our colleagues in the HSE and from our clients.

The client numbers are increasing in the areas of Cavan and Monaghan, which has resulted in the need for new Care Assistants. Our new team have completed their Induction training (photo above or below) and are now commencing their duties for our new clients.

We are currently revising our contracts to include service for the community in County Louth. Our aim is to be active there within the next few months, with a new and exciting team, so I'll keep you updated on our progress.

Since our last Newsletter we been short listed to provide care in the Dublin Mid-Leinster area on behalf of the HSE, testimony of course to our rapid expansion and prosperity. For the remainder of this year we will be working hard, tendering and presenting to the regional HSE offices; so hopefully by the next Newsletter we will have more updates on new up and coming areas.

Dympna Mackle  
Southern Ireland Manager

### Homecare Become New Sponsors of Armagh Ladies Football Club

Homecare are delighted to have become the main sponsors for both Armagh Ladies and Armagh Youth Football teams.

At a sponsorship night held recently at the Football Club, Gerald and Mairead Mackle, directors of Homecare, proudly presented the new football jerseys to the team and wished the players every success in the coming year.

Homecare have provided a quality service to all the Northern Ireland Health Boards for the past 12 years and more recently have been awarded contracts with a number of Health Service Executive's in Southern Ireland delivering a 24 hour high quality caring domiciliary service for older people, physically disabled, those with mental health problems, children and those with learning disabilities. Homecare are at the forefront of their industry providing a quality service with a skilled workforce. In addition to domiciliary care, Homecare provide supported housing services throughout the province.

With a predominantly female staff, Homecare are delighted to become involved with the local ladies and youth football teams in Armagh. It is hoped that the teams will continue to wear the kit with pride and continue to produce excellent results.



On Monday 20th November 2006 a presentation was held in the Head Office of Homecare NI to acknowledge the achievements of Homecare NI Care Assistants who recently completed their NVQ Level 2 in Health & Social Care.

Mairead Mackle, Director of Homecare NI, presented the certificates while guest speaker, Noleen Smith, Head of School at Newry Institute, presented the 'NVQ Qualified' badges. Noleen commended the group, commenting: 'This is a very proud day for them. The achievement of NVQ in Health & Social Care is very significant at a time when the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Council are calling for registrations of all care workers'. This qualification means staff in possession of an NVQ in Health & Social Care will be qualified to register as approved Health and Social Care Workers in Northern Ireland. This is crucial to the professional development of the Health and Social Care sector and is the first step to a successful career to caring within the community.

Joan Boylan, Personnel and Training Manager paid tribute to the achievements of both staff and candidates and acknowledged the Institute's commitment to training within the Health & Social Care sector. Mairead Mackle, Director, endorsed the glowing comments and congratulated the Care Assistants on representing the company in such a professional manner.

The following Care Assistants were presented with their Certificates:

Coco Cong, Noleen Doran, Lorraine Faxton, Louise Harney, Rosemary Kennedy, Roseanne Mackin, Catriona McGeeny, Maxine McGuffin, Neringa Petrosiene, Sharon Taylor, Alma Vainutiene, Nikita Wang, Caroline Wilson, Irene Ashe, Evelyn Aston, Lesa Beattie, Frances Begley, Ingrida Cizauskiene, Sarah Irvine, Margaret Lawther, Colleen McDonnell, Sylvia Sakauskaite and Tracey Wood.

### Supervisors in the Community

At Homecare quality of service is paramount, hence the recruitment of additional Supervisors to aid further expansion of our business. These recent appointments ensure our superior standard of care for the community is maintained.

Felix Toner, who has recently been appointed as Supervisor, is very enthusiastic about the developments within Homecare and his new role;

"I really enjoy my new post as Supervisor, as I love working with people in the community, being able to assist them to live independently in their own homes. The job is very rewarding, as there's always a bit of craic and banter as we go about our daily tasks. Our clients tell me that they love to see our friendly faces at the door and it's great to know that we have contributed a little to their day.

As a Supervisor, I get the opportunity to support and assist our Care Assistants, to ensure our high quality standard of care is maintained at all times.

On a final note I would like to leave you with this little story of a lady who really made my day. I arrived one morning to complete my quarterly review, and as I looked through the window, I noticed her struggling with a needle and thread. As I came into the room she asked me to help her, as she was getting frustrated with her hands, as they weren't as steady as they used to be. Well I'm not much good at threading needles, but I thought I would give it a go. It took me a few minutes but eventually I did it, and as I turned to the lady, her face lit up with joy. I just couldn't believe how happy she was, it made me realise how important 'our' job is, as care workers, providing care in the community".

Felix Toner



“Care Assistant”

Two words that come together  
When you speak of someone dear.  
It is that special person  
If you call, they're always near.

You'll see that in a 'Care Assistant'  
Love comes from in their Heart.  
With loving hands and guidance  
They help each new day start.

Caring for the fragile soul,  
Giving day to day.  
They meet the needs of loved one's  
Spreading love along the way.

A gentle touch, a helping hand,  
A glow that makes you smile.  
Always near to comfort  
And go that extra mile.

They want no fame or glory,  
And it puts their mind at ease,  
To know they've helped a loved one  
Deal with Alzheimer's disease.

So show a little kindness  
To Care Assistants across this land.  
You may be the one someday  
Who needs a helping hand.

With Peace and Understanding,  
Throughout the ends of time.  
There's someone who will care for you  
And make your Spirit shine...

The Care Assistant.

Subject: Re. Roland  
I want to

Your carers have been attending

My brother, sister and I all feel  
fresh air coming through the door  
they have such a pleasant way of  
They are always professional

We know he has elderly confusion  
would have used in the past. Thank

You need to know how wonderful  
look after

It is so easy to complain these days  
receives whilst being allowed the  
re

Thank you so much