



This year's Care Home Open Day will be Saturday 21st April 2018 and will coincide with the Queen's Birthday and International Care Home Open Day

What is it? It is an opportunity to open the doors of your care home and invite the local community to come and see how good life can be when you live in a care home.

Why do we do it?

- To enable everyone to see for themselves that care homes are not 'islands of the old' but vibrant, engaging places to live and enjoy life.
- To demonstrate that supporting those that are unable to do everything for themselves can be both rewarding and fun.
- To encourage communities to see their local care home as an asset and those that live there as contributors to local life.

How did it come about? A few years ago a group of people at a meeting were bemoaning the 'bad news' stories about care homes that seem to litter the media. This led to a conversation about what we could do to change the outdated and poor perception of care settings as it had an impact on so many things. We felt that it contributed to a climate of fear amongst older people and it influenced public opinion to such an extent that recruiting staff became a challenge. The media rarely acknowledged the benefits of residential care or the vast range of opportunities that are routinely made available to residents.

The attendees at the meeting represented some of the major care provider groups in the UK and the leaders of 3 national representative bodies. Over a short period of time a working party evolved to explore how to address this issue. Representatives were signed up from all four UK nations and six care provider groups agreed to contribute to the funding. Chairmanship of the meetings was shared by the leaders of Care England, the National Care Forum (NCF) and the National Activity Providers Association (NAPA). Before long the first National Care Home Open Day was planned and homes were invited to open their doors for the first time on 20th June 2014.

A PR company was recruited and materials were produced to support the care homes to advertise what they would be doing on the day. A website was established that would allow the homes to post what they would be doing and for members of the public to research what home would be open in their area. National and local politicians were particularly targeted and invited to attend their local home as they were seen as key influencers. Overseas colleagues were contacted too and a few homes in Australia and South Africa joined in.

What happens now? Since then CHOD has become an established event in the UK care sector calendar. The website reflects many great stories of the events held in previous years. Each year now has a broad theme to stimulate innovative ideas and offer continuity across the nations. The 2018 topic is 'Linking Communities' and we are aiming to involve not just local communities in the UK but many countries around the world to make it a really significant day of celebrating care.

Who can take part? Any care home anywhere in the world. The more the better.

What do we need to do?

That's up to you. You can decide to host a special event on the day to invite guests to or you can just open your doors and encourage folk to see what you do on a day to day basis. You will definitely need to publicise the day locally through local media, posters etc. Make sure you log on to the website www.carehomeopenday.org.uk and post your information there. NAPA has linked their Annual Challenge competition to CHOD and you might want to look at www.napa-activities.co.uk for ideas for things to do and the chance to win a cash prize.

