

## Welcome to the latest edition of 'Optimo News'...

As the last 12 months unfolded, we continued to address the additional ongoing challenges, brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic... Early last year we introduced 'Smrt:Monitor' App, used for recording staff COVID testing and with continued emphasis on the need to follow current infection control and PPE guidelines, we've continued to work in what are still our 'New Normal' ways of operating, on a day to day basis.

Inside this issue you'll find details about the launch of our brand new service (below), information about a donation of surplus face visors to charity, our regular '...word from the Chief Exec, a welcome to two new 'Registered Managers' (along with a 'Welcome Back' to Michelle Francis at WarrenCare), as well as our 'Compliments Draw' winners and lots more news and information relating to all of our services. Our service users can also find details of how to go about setting up an extra care visit, or two, if this is something they may be interested in (or details to pass on, if they know someone else who may benefit from an extra helping hand). Staff can also find details of how to 'Recommend a Friend' and receive a £500 bonus too!

'Thanks Again' to all of our staff for their continued hard work and commitment and to our service users for their patience and understanding, should they have suffered any inconvenience due to visit times changing in relation to staff isolation or illness, since the coronavirus pandemic began.

We also send all of our staff, service users and other advocates our very best wishes for 2022!

Please continue reading, we hope you enjoy this newsletter...

*Thank You All!!!*

## Optimo Expands into Manchester - Introducing: Care With Choices!



'Care With Choices' is our brand new care service and we have ambitious plans to recruit dozens of people to join our expert care at home services throughout the Manchester area and beyond! This new service, based in our beautifully situated office location (in Scouthead, Saddleworth), specialises in providing a technology supported care at home service.



They offer two key service solutions, 24 hour short or long term, live-in care and bespoke care by the hour, as always our teams receive full training to provide outstanding care for all of our clients.

Olivia Rostron, proud to be Registered Manager of the service, said: "Right now, care at home services have never been more in demand. Hospitals are backed up and the news is full of the recruitment problem in social care. Well, we are on a mission to change things up and it starts with valuing our teams and clients above everything else!" Care with Choices offers state of the art technology to monitor care and support and peace of mind, real time digital reporting and medication management. Richard Walker, CEO of the Optimo Group, added, "we can offer an hour or two each week for a social trip or help around the home, or a trusted live-in care worker to offer professional care and support around the clock"...

Olivia is so excited to be Registered Manager and is looking forward to working with her team, providing safe, technology enhanced, effective services from this new location! (Pictured is our CEO, Richard Walker, along with Elaine Bradley-Smith, our Employee Engagement Officer.)

## Welcome to our new Registered Managers and Welcome Back Michelle!



**care with choices**  
expert home-based care

### Olivia Rostron:

Olivia is the Registered Manager of our brand new 'Care with Choices' service, see details on previous page. She has several years' experience within the health and social care industry and has worked in various roles such as; care worker, care (and turnaround) manager, individually, all of which have helped her to gain invaluable experience and expand her knowledge of the care sector throughout.



Olivia confirmed that she is 'very excited to be bringing these skills to the 'Optimo Care Group' and in particular, 'to a brand new service' and that she has been looking forward to the launch of 'Care with Choices' and being on a brand new journey with them'. Olivia has been working hard, alongside other team members, in order to bring everything together and is looking forward to the continued development of this fantastic new service and to meeting service users and working with her team, alike!



**Choices**

Specialist Community Care & Support

### Rebecca Smith – Choices Huddersfield & South Kirklees:

Rebecca has worked within the Health and social care sector for more than ten years now and has transferred her skills to various posts, including: Training related, palliative care, supervisory positions and more... She's looking forward to the chapter ahead with the team at Choices in South Kirklees and to working together to develop and grow this fabulous service further. We're really pleased to have you on board Rebecca!



### Michelle Francis:

Michelle worked for WarrenCare previously (since 1998) for more than twenty years, before taking the difficult decision to leave in May, last year. She is now delighted to have been given the opportunity to return to the company, in her new role as Senior Registered Manager.



**WarrenCare**  
Skilled care, your way

She is based at the WarrenCare office, working alongside Cath Johnson and the rest of the WarrenCare team. Welcome back, we wish you much luck upon your return Michelle!



### Group Marketing Manager - Arun Rajput:

In addition, a warm welcome extends to Arun Rajput, who joined 'Optimo' as Group Marketing Manager towards the end of last year. He is responsible for planning and executing various marketing campaigns for the organisation and is excited to begin work on campaigns to recruit more care workers and to increase awareness of the 'Optimo' brand. He looks forward to working with all staff and teams across the Group!



*Welcome to ALL staff who have joined us over recent months!*

### Good Luck Leanne!



All of our 'Best Wishes' also go to Leanne Bertrand (Group Operations Director), who left the organisation recently to move on to pastures new. We want to send our thanks to Leanne for all her hard work and commitment to the 'Optimo Care Group', throughout the time she spent with us, which spanned almost 19 years.

*'Very best wishes Leanne and good luck for the future, from all of us at the Optimo Care Group!'*



## A word from the Chief Exec...

Welcome to this latest edition of 'Optimo News' and 'Thank You' to everyone for their continued Support, since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic.



I'd like to wish everyone a belated Happy New Year and welcome our new colleagues across the services, both community based and office. The continued resilience shown by our teams is amazing, through high staff absence periods, a longer than usual festive season and unprecedented market pressures. We have never seen such a tricky recruitment/retention environment combined with such a high demand for our services.

It's important therefore to acknowledge and thank our wonderful clients and service users during this period. When we have needed to adjust our service delivery, often at short notice, this has been understood and supported. This has helped us keep the overall services safe at times of real stretch.

Moving into 2022 I look forward to an improving situation, on all fronts. We have new initiatives planned, further enhancements to our technologies and processes and we will meet all our challenges head on!

Good luck everyone for 2022 and my very best wishes.

Richard

[richard.walker@optimocare.co.uk](mailto:richard.walker@optimocare.co.uk)



Find us on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter

## CQC Inspection - Town & Local Care:

Lyndsay Armitage (Registered Manager for our Town & Local Care Service in Calderdale), would like to say a huge 'THANK YOU' to ALL of her team, for their ongoing support and hard work over the last 18 months and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic!

'Town & Local Care' received some fantastic feedback from both staff and service users during their latest CQC inspection and were really pleased to announce that they have again been given an overall 'GOOD' rating (in ALL five areas rated: Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well Led).

(Their full report can be read by clicking on the CQC link on the Town & Local Care page within our 'Optimo' website: <https://optimocare.co.uk/> )



This is a fantastic result, thanks again and 'WELL DONE' to everyone involved!

We're also pleased to announce that Town & Local Care were successful in gaining a spot contract with the local council towards the end of last year and we wish them well as they welcome more service users and staff on board!

Lyndsay (pictured left) also manages our Choices Rotherham & Sheffield service, splitting her time between South & West Yorkshire, to enable her to run both services side by side...



## Introduction of a 'Brand New Rostering System to Choices Rotherham & Sheffield':

Supporting our PRIDE values and other related pledges, to support further digital innovation, we decided to introduce a brand new rostering system into 'Choices Rotherham & Sheffield' service! This new system, called 'Care Line Live', along with its own accompanying 'Carer Companion App', was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> November and replaced Webroster, the system still relied upon throughout the remainder of the organisation at this time. This new system will be used throughout our brand new 'Care With Choices' service too...

Amongst other beneficial functions and features, 'Care Line Live' supports a reduction in the amount of paperwork kept in a service user's home, staff entering notes directly into the system and there's easy access to tasks and other information within the accompanying 'Companion App' too... We are sure that this new venture will support us in our mission to continue providing an even more effective service to be proud of!

Thanks to all service users, their families and other advocates, who have so far reviewed us on <https://www.homecare.co.uk/>

We take all feedback very seriously as it assists us to improve our services further as we move into the future. Compliments received are also passed on to staff (where these can be identified), to enable them to receive a thank you in appreciation of a job well done!

Service users, their family or other advocates, can submit a review online (just go onto the Homecare.co.uk website above and search for your local service). Once on the website just tap on the 'submit a review' button to complete your review. **Alternatively you can complete a review card (they are free to post) and Homecare.co.uk will process them and add them to their website.**

Thanks again for all reviews received so far!

## Optimo Donates Surplus PPE to International Charity!



The Optimo Care Group accumulated more than 20,000 surplus face visors, as we progressed through the pandemic. This was in addition to a huge number retained (as staff continue to wear them in line with current policy and processes), for ongoing use whilst delivering care and support services to our service users at this time.

We arranged for these to be distributed and stored in one location and sought to donate them to somewhere where they would help and be put to good use.

We then came across a charity called 'Phoenix Resources', who work on lots of projects, both at home and abroad. We approached Phoenix about donating these visors, arranged transport for them and were pleased when they were delivered, ready for sending on to Djibouti in East Africa, where they will support important work there and help to keep people safe. Since this delivery, a further drop off of several boxes of visors has been delivered to Phoenix, for use to support further projects now taking place in Kenya.

Anyone interested in finding out more about what Phoenix do can check out their website: [www.phoenixresourcecentre.co.uk](http://www.phoenixresourcecentre.co.uk)

## COVID-19 – Update:

We continue to monitor the changing situation around us and Government guidance very closely to help us make the right decisions, throughout each stage of the current times. Focus continues to be on providing a safe and efficient service, whilst the health and safety of staff and service users always remains at the heart of our plans. Our 'Business Continuity Team' still meet regularly to agree and implement all necessary precautions required. This ensures policies, guidelines and processes continue to be managed effectively across the organisation, minimising risk to ensure the service we deliver remains as safe as it possibly can.

In addition, innovation and technology continue to support us and have helped us evolve quickly, in order to continue supporting all of our teams. 'OptimoConnect App' continues to support effective communication across the organisation, whilst 'Smrt:Monitor App' has also proved itself invaluable, to support with the recording and monitoring of staff testing and vaccine uptake. Meetings and training continue to take the virtual approach in many areas too, with some teams returning to the office where infection control and social distancing are still managed very carefully.

**Thank you to all service users for bearing with us if they've received any disruption to their service, intensified by increased staff shortages due to the 'Omicron' variant, throughout the last couple of months.**

## Hints & Tips for Service Users, to Help Them Stay Safe & Warm in Winter:

Age UK have lots of information to support people to stay safe and warm in winter, for all their hints & tips, see their website below:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/keep-well-this-winter/stay-healthy-in-winter/>

Service users and their family or other advocates can find lots of helpful suggestions and ideas, from wrapping up warm to keeping moving and eating healthily. Several extra layers (as opposed to one thick one), warm drinks, a warm meal, wearing a hat and keeping curtains closed when it's really cold, can all help to keep people warmer in cold winter months.

**Always remember to keep heaters and fires away from curtains, chairs and other furniture.**

## Support with Mental Health & Wellbeing:

If you or someone you know is feeling a little vulnerable right now and aren't sure who to turn to. Please find details of some organisations below, where anyone can find help and support. Please do check them out as they really may be able to help:

- **Hub of Hope:** People can go online at: <https://hubofhope.co.uk/> to find support services in their local area.
- **Mind:** [www.mind.org.uk/](http://www.mind.org.uk/) (Helpline - 0300 123 3393)
- [www.headstogether.org.uk](http://www.headstogether.org.uk) – Coordinated by the Duke & Duchess of Cambridge
- **Samaritans:** Dial: 116 123 Anyone can call, anytime from any phone, FREE, if they need to talk to someone. (Or visit: <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>)

**Or, Text:** FRONTLINE to 85258 at any time, you can check out their website <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/ourfrontline/>  
- Available to all frontline workers 24/7 to provide emotional support, by call or text (with trained volunteers) or online resources.

## Compliance - 'Round-up' for Staff:

**'OptimoConnect' App:** Please continue to check out updates received, as soon as you're able (and tap the 'I Understand' button to confirm when you have read). If you're unable to log in for any reason, please email [elaine.bradley-smith@optimocare.co.uk](mailto:elaine.bradley-smith@optimocare.co.uk).

**Smrt:Monitor App:** Continue to carry out weekly COVID tests and upload them (along with results) to Smrt:Monitor App, on a weekly basis. Let your line manager know if you're struggling to upload these for any reason.

**Infection Control & PPE:** We must continue to follow 'ALL' current 'Infection Control and PPE' guidelines in line with company and Government policies and processes, to ensure we don't become complacent, during what are still challenging times.

Please find a reminder of some of the main points below (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Continue to wash hands with soap and water frequently & use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water isn't available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth (any part of your face), with unwashed hands.
- Continue to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Maintain social distancing measures where possible.
- Catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue and immediately dispose of into a bin (then wash hands).
- Always ensure you are wearing PPE in line with current company and government guidance and policies.

**If there is anything that you're unsure about, please contact your line manager for confirmation as soon as you're able.**

**Gifts & Legacies Policy (Reminder):** Always remember that staff are unable to accept a gift from a service user, their family or other representative, if the estimated value of the gift is more than £10 (they must never accept valuables belonging to a service user or any monetary gifts, regardless of their monetary value). Any gifts (up to the value of £10 and never beyond), must be reported to the office by the receiving member of staff as soon as possible, for Registered Managers will record details.

**Staying Safe in Winter:** Remember to wear appropriate footwear in winter weather (shoes with 'grippy' soles when it's icy/may be slippery outside) and approach any ramps head on (use hand and grab rails if present). Weather can change quickly, so always travel prepared with a drink/snack and keep a blanket in the car (wear warm clothes, ensure you take a coat). Keep a shovel and piece of carpet in the boot for in case of getting stuck in snow or ice. Always check you've sufficient petrol to keep warm, in case you get 'stuck' and keep your mobile phone fully charged (it's a good idea to keep a charging cable/power bank in the car).

Please take extra care whilst driving and on foot and report any issues you come across whilst you're out and about (i.e. Does a service user's drive need gritting? Have you got delayed/stuck in the snow?). Always keep the office informed & stay safe everyone!

## Staff Compliments & Draw Winners:

We continue to encourage service users, their families and other stakeholders to give us their feedback about the services we provide. We do this through staff & service user surveys, Homecare.co.uk reviews, our complaints & compliments process and more. This all helps to support us with continual improvement of the services we deliver, whilst allowing us to say thank you to our staff for the fantastic job they continue to do!

Staff who receive a compliment are entered into a draw for a chance of receiving a £25 shopping voucher. There's a draw for the North West including West Yorkshire and another for South Yorkshire services too, this enables everyone who has received a compliment to have a fair chance of being drawn out. Service users



who provide compliments (in respect of those drawn) receive a £25 voucher too, as a thank you for taking the time to let us have their feedback. Please continue reading and see this times draw winners below:

**From South Yorkshire services:**

- Michelle Kirk (TLC Barnsley), following receipt of a fantastic compliment from a service user.

**From Merseyside & West Yorkshire services:**

- Muhibal Islam (Town & Local Care), in relation to a fab compliment submitted by a service user's family.

In addition, we hold a draw for office based staff, these run quarterly, in line with community staff draws and give our staff and service users the opportunity to pass on their thanks to office based employees too. Everyone receiving a compliment goes into a draw giving them a chance of receiving a £25 voucher (Once again there are two of these office draws across our Group).

**This time's winners are:**

- Carol Booker (TLC Barnsley), who received some lovely comments within feedback received last year.
- Anthea Stuart (Choices – Wakefield & North Kirklees – who received some fantastic feedback from a member of her team.

# Congratulations & Best Wishes.

Retirement Wishes are sent to Ann Mockler of WarrenCare who retired on the weekend of her 65<sup>th</sup> birthday having worked with WarrenCare since 2003. We wish you a long and happy retirement Ann and send all of our best wishes!

Congratulations to Lyndsay Armitage and her Husband Jarred, following their wedding on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. All our best wishes go to both of you...



Many Happy Returns: Sharon Weaver (of our training team), celebrated her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in September... We send our very best wishes Sharon and hope you had a good day!

Congratulations to Sue Storey of TLC Barnsley, upon celebrating her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday last June! All our best wishes Sue, we hope you had a good birthday!

Joan Copley, Care Worker of our TLC Barnsley service, retired on 25<sup>th</sup> Jun after more than 12 years' service. We send Joan a massive 'Thankyou', for all her hard work, along with our very best wishes for a long and happy retirement... Happy Retirement Joan!

Alison Durkin (Group Training Partner), celebrated her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday last year. Many happy returns Alison and all our best wishes from everyone!

Our very best wishes go to Dianne Moore, from our TLC Barnsley service, who celebrated her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in July... We hope you had a fab day Diane!!

Harry & Mary Robinson (service user and his wife from TLC Barnsley), upon celebrating their 70<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary earlier this year... Congratulations and all our best wishes go to both of them!

Congratulations to Vanessa Bailey of Town & Local Care who became a Grandma again, during July, to these beautiful twins, Nola and Nelly!

Congratulations and 40<sup>th</sup> birthday wishes went to Sally Denton (Group Compliance Manager), back in June... We, hope you enjoyed your day Sally!



Retirement Wishes go to Marion Orford of WarrenCare, who retired earlier this year, following 25 years' service – Thank you Marion and all our best wishes for a long and happy retirement!



All our wedding went to Rachel Rayton (nee Whittaker), upon her marriage last summer.

Congratulations Mr & Mrs Rayton, we wish you much future happiness...

Congratulations go to Rebekah (care worker, Barnsley) & her partner Brett, who were married on 5<sup>th</sup> June... All of our best wishes for a long and happy marriage go to both of you, from everyone at Optimo...



Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Wishes went to Jaleesa Cook on 1<sup>st</sup> November – We hope you had a fabulous day Jaleesa! We wish you many happy returns...



Congratulations to Sharon Gayford upon celebrating her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in the Autumn... We hope had a lovely time and enjoyed your day! 'Many Happy Returns'!

Many Happy Returns to Kath Day, upon celebrating her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday during October! All our best wishes from everyone, we hope you enjoyed your day!

Rebecca Smith, Registered Manager for Choices in South Kirklees, celebrated her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday during October. We hope you had a lovely day and wish you 'Many Happy Returns'!

Happy retirement to Elaine Kinsella, who retired from WarrenCare in October, after 24 years' service! All our best wishes for a long and happy retirement Elaine...

Congratulations went to Charlene Fisher (of TLC Barnsley) and her Partner in November, upon the arrival of their beautiful Daughter, Mia Rose... All our best wishes to all three of you!



Happy retirement! Retirement wishes also went to Gary Banks in October. We wish you all the best for a long and happy retirement Gary...

Wedding Congratulations! Go to one of our service users, Gladys Dunning (TLC Barnsley), who got married to her long term partner Kevin on the 18<sup>th</sup> September. Gladys and Kevin met in Skegness and have been together for 26 years... All our best wishes to both of you, we wish you many more happy years to come!

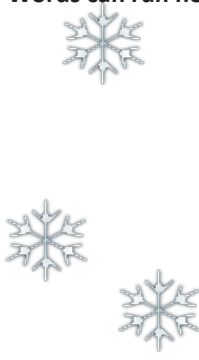


**If you would like to send congratulations to someone you know, please get in touch (see contact details on back page) and if we're able, we'll publish in the next edition of 'Optimo News'.**

# Just for Fun!!! - Can you find the words listed below in our seasonal 'Optimo' word search?

(Please note: Words can run horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forwards or backwards)

AUTUMN  
WINTER  
SPRING  
SUMMER  
FROST  
DEW



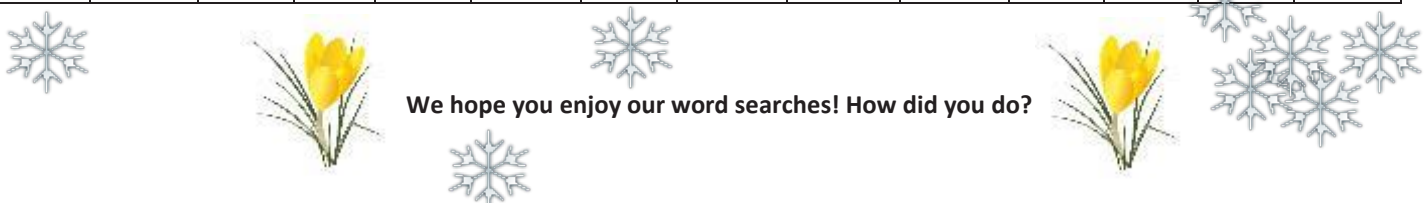
FOG  
FIRESIDE  
ICE  
SNOWDROP  
SEASONS  
TREES



BULBS  
SUNSHINE  
SHOWERS  
DECEMBER  
JANUARY  
LEAVES

FEBRUARY  
MARCH  
HARE  
PANCAKES  
DAFFODIL  
CROCUS

J	A	N	U	A	R	Y	B	C	F	O	L	Z	W	
Y	U	B	D	A	F	F	O	D	I	L	E	V	M	
N	T	P	O	F	I	F	E	B	R	U	A	R	Y	
B	U	L	B	S	C	S	F	C	R	E	O	V	N	R
K	M	X	U	G	H	S	N	O	S	A	E	S	E	
S	N	O	W	D	R	O	P	H	I	L	S	E	M	
U	I	E	I	Q	S	S	W	D	D	V	L	D	M	
N	D	F	N	G	I	E	K	E	E	J	E	E	U	
S	P	R	T	S	T	K	U	C	R	O	C	U	S	
H	L	N	E	F	V	A	B	E	R	S	N	O	P	
I	C	E	R	A	P	C	A	M	A	R	C	H	R	
N	G	O	F	D	A	N	E	B	E	F	X	A	I	
E	S	U	L	K	E	A	I	E	P	T	Y	R	N	
T	R	E	E	S	W	P	Z	R	M	D	A	E	G	



We hope you enjoy our word searches! How did you do?

## Did You Know? Staff Can Recommend A Friend And Receive £500!

£500

**Do you know any fellow Care Workers, friends, or family, who may be interested in a career in care?**

If so and you are a current staff member, please ask them to scan the QR code or forward them the link below, to click on and submit their application. Please ask them to ensure they select the correct office and state who has recommended them within the application form. They must also confirm at their interview that 'YOU' recommended them.

<https://optimo.itm8.eu/link/1129>



Please note that all recommendations must be stated up front, for you to qualify for this bonus.

Once the person recommended has completed their probationary period you will receive £500, paid Directly, into your wages. Why not make your recommendations now and start earning yourself an extra bonus!

**Remember: There is no limit on how many friends you can recommend.**

If you are a service user and someone you know is interested in working in care, please call your local office number and let us know, we will be happy to get in touch with them for a chat.

(Subject to our usual terms & conditions and please note that the 'Optimo Care Group' reserve the right to withdraw promotional offers at any time.)

### Service Enquiries

## Do You (or Someone You Know) Need an Extra Helping Hand?

Please do get in touch and find out what's available if you think you or someone you know may benefit from an extra helping hand. Our friendly teams will be happy to have a chat and discuss your needs. We can give you a tailored quote to enable you to make a fully informed decision and then, if you wish, we can look at setting up a care package (or just a couple of extra care visits), to suit your individual needs.

**We are able to offer help with: Personal Care, Meal Preparation, Medication Assistance, Home Respite/Sitting Service whilst family go out, Assisting service users to go out, Shopping, Domestic help, and much more...**

See our websites for more details (& contact information): We can set up services for new clients or simply add additional care visits to an existing package (Why not ask next time you call the office?). If you're interested, we'll do our very best to help!

*What a Service User's Family Said: "Very satisfied with the care for my Mum, she is treated with dignity and respect. They have kept Mum safe, always wearing PPE before entry during this pandemic"*

For contact details, check out our websites below:

For TLC Homecare, Town & Local Care, Choices Homecare, WarrenCare - <https://optimocare.co.uk/>

For Care with Choices: <https://carewithchoices.co.uk/>

Please Note:

- Our newsletters are now available in large print (text only) format or by email, please feel welcome to request if you would like to receive by either of these methods.
- Service Users and their next of kin can sign up to receive newsletters and other updates from us online.
- For enquiries relating to this newsletter, please email: [elaine.bradley-smith@optimocare.co.uk](mailto:elaine.bradley-smith@optimocare.co.uk)

**With All Our Best Wishes for the Year Ahead!**

**Our Vision: '...to deliver a service to be proud of'**

**Our Values: Person Centred - Responsive - Innovative - Delight – Engage**