

*Welcome to*

**Optimo  
Care Group**

*Pride*

**Awards  
2025**



# Welcome to Optimo Care Group

## *Pride Awards!*

It is with great excitement and immense pride that we present the **Second Optimo Care Group Pride Awards** – a celebration dedicated to honouring the outstanding individuals within our organisation who exemplify our core values and drive our mission forward.

At **Optimo Care Group**, our core values are the bedrock of everything we do. They are not just guiding principles, but the very **essence of our identity**. They inspire us to deliver **exceptional care**, foster a culture of **inclusivity**, and uphold the highest standards of **integrity** and **innovation**. Every day, our dedicated team members bring these values to life through their unwavering commitment and extraordinary efforts.

This year, we've faced **significant challenges**. We acknowledge that we haven't always delivered the **quality of service** we all aspire to, and we haven't always communicated or listened to our workforce as effectively as we should. We must, and we will, **do better on both counts**.

Concrete steps are already being taken to address these shortfalls including some critical appointments. I am thrilled to welcome to the group our new **Head of Learning & Development**, who will enhance our offering and ensure that we are truly **upskilling and supporting** our workforce. We also welcome our new **Head of Quality & Compliance**, alongside a now expanding team, who will be instrumental in **raising the bar** for the services we provide. And lastly, the appointment of our new **Head of Talent Acquisition** will help us adopt a more strategic approach to

growing our workforce — ensuring we bring in the **right people, at the right time**, to continue driving our mission forward.

**Despite the challenges we have faced**, the **Pride Awards** stand as a powerful reminder of the dedication, resilience, and excellence that continue to shine across our organisation. These awards are not only a recognition of **individual brilliance**, but also a celebration of the **collective spirit** that keeps us moving forward. It is through the outstanding efforts of our colleagues - especially during difficult times—that we continue to raise standards, deliver compassionate care and make a lasting difference in the lives we touch.

As you read through this brochure, you will discover **stories of inspiration and excellence** — stories that reflect the dedication, passion, and hard work that define the Optimo Care Group. Each nominee represents the **very best of who we are**, serving as a **beacon of our values** in action.

We are incredibly proud to acknowledge and celebrate these **remarkable individuals**. Their achievements are a source of inspiration for us all, and their stories remind us of the **power of dedication** and the impact of living our values every day.

Thank you for being part of this special occasion. Your support and commitment are integral to our shared success, and it is an honour to celebrate with you today.

**Congratulations to all our nominees and winners.**

Here's to celebrating excellence and embracing the values that make us truly exceptional.

**Warm regards,**  
Mark Hales  
Executive Chair



**1pm - Reception with Drinks  
& Canapés**

**2pm - Awards & Dinner Commence**

**5pm - Live Entertainment**

**8pm - Event Closes**

**9pm - Room Closes**

# Our Awards *Categories*

## Person Centred

*'Putting the individual at the heart of our service.'*

This award seeks to acknowledge and celebrate an individual's commitment to person centred care or services. Nominees in this category each had a demonstrable impact on the daily or working lives of others and showed a consistent focus on putting the individual at the heart of service delivery, fostering a culture of open communication, inclusion and trust.

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## Responsive

*'Well co-ordinated and planned services that deliver effective outcomes for individuals.'*

This award will recognise individuals who have demonstrated excellence in driving compassionate, responsive and collaborative approaches to enhance the quality and effectiveness of social care services (directly or indirectly). This category celebrates adaptable, empathetic and holistic practices that respond to the voices, needs and preferences of individuals to shape and deliver solutions and outcomes.

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## Innovation

*'Continuously developing and improving our services.'*

This award will be presented to the person who has shown exceptional creativity in identifying, developing, implementing or establishing a new approach to delivering care; a new administrative system or process; or a new way of working. This innovation must demonstrate tangible benefits for staff, the business or to the users of the service we provide.



# Our Awards Categories *cont.*

## Delight

*'Ensuring every individual service user is delighted by the care they receive.'*

Celebrating those who pride themselves in delivering excellent, high-quality services, this award recognises individuals who take personal responsibility for their actions, their role and their service to others, and are true ambassadors for their team and for the organisation – receiving outstanding client feedback and changing perceptions along the way.

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## Engagement

*'Providing opportunities for staff and service users to engage fully in the organisation.'*

Recognising individuals who have shown a clear commitment to creating a culture and environment of trust, inclusivity and collaboration – one in which everyone can participate, be heard and thrive. This award will be presented to the person who shows true leadership in this area and has had meaningful impact in improving relationships, driving partnerships and creating strong cross-team engagement.



# Our Awards Categories *cont.*

## Care Newcomer

*'Recognising new members of staff who have joined the organisation within the last 12 months.'*

This award will celebrate a colleague who has successfully transferred existing skills into their new role, and who has shown a clear understanding of their responsibilities in the care sector; the winner of the award will be aware of the choices available to service users, having successfully demonstrated delivery of these.

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## Team Member

*'Celebrating team members who best demonstrate a shared vision with the rest of their team.'*

The winner of this award will have demonstrated working to clear goals which ensure positive outcomes for service users, colleagues, or the wider organisation. They will have showcased positive working relationships, excellent communication skills, cooperation, mutual trust, and outstanding qualities which set them apart from others.

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## Leadership

*'Recognising managers who have demonstrated exceptional expertise in managing the complexities of their service (or department).'*

The winner of this award will have demonstrated working to clear goals which ensure positive outcomes for service users, colleagues, or the wider organisation. They will have showcased positive working relationships, excellent communication skills, cooperation, mutual trust, and outstanding qualities which exemplify their leadership skills.



# Our Awards Categories *cont.*

## Team

*'An award which celebrates teams which best demonstrate a shared vision and clear goals, and who take personal responsibility for the tasks that they do.'*

The winning team will foster excellent service quality, cooperation and mutual trust to enable effective service delivery. They will demonstrate their communication skills along with positive working relationships throughout the whole team, and will showcase successful team working along with outstanding qualities which set their team apart.

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## Employee of the Year

*'For recognition of being a true role model for others and a leading example of someone who upholds, represents and epitomises each of our PRIDE values.'*

This award will be presented to a colleague who delivers an excellent service to service users in honour of the dedication they have shown to their role, their willingness to go the extra mile, their unwavering commitment to providing a quality service, and for having a positive approach to learning new skills in order to even further improve the standard of service that they deliver.

Encapsulating many of the elements referred to in previous categories, the winner will epitomise the very heart of our PRIDE values and will always strive to support us in delivering a service to be proud of!



# Finalists

## Person Centred

*'Putting the individual at the heart of our service.'*

### Hollie Blanchard

#### Care Worker, Choices Homecare

Hollie received multiple nominations for the person centred category, all from family members, and each one demonstrating clear alignment with the categories purpose and principles; from making additional efforts to memorise family chronology, names and status, to possessing the emotional intelligence in how she approached working with a service user and all her family members, the nominations fully evidenced that Hollie genuinely delivers person centred care.

A service users family are quoted as saying that the impact of Hollie's support is best measured when she is not there, that 'when Hollie comes back, the sun comes out', and cited Hollie's positive attitude as 'there's always a reason, there's always a way', no matter what the difficulties are - highlighting Hollie as a true role model for this category.



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### JJ Barry

#### Support Worker, CFT Care

Our panel felt that nominations for JJ reflected a great example of perseverance and resilience to re-engage and engage to drive meaningful and tangible actions - 'to not give up where others have'.

JJ has demonstrated a real and genuine intention to not only learn about a service user in order to effectively deploy techniques which respond to the difficult behaviours shown but to really understand what makes an individual 'tick' whilst being mindful of the impact of past trauma to do so. It was felt that the way in which JJ also actively shared information with other colleagues in order to support a consistent and personalised service experience, was a great example of role-modelling person centred values to others. Great work JJ!



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### Abby Toye

#### Support Worker, CFT Care

A nomination received for Abby evidenced small but powerful changes that had resulted in a tangible reduction in incidents, both on the wellbeing of a service user and in 'fostering a culture of dignity and trust' across the service, which really resonated with our panel.

Abby's focus on inclusion, respect, trust, and dignity, combined with the impact she had on inspiring and 'uplifting' the service, more widely reflected a broader and very real application of what person centred really means. Well done Abby!



# Finalists **Responsive**

*'Well coordinated and planned services that deliver effective outcomes for individuals.'*

## **Michelle Love**

### **Support Worker, CFT Care**

Michelle's nomination provided clear evidence of 'in the moment agility and responsiveness' to the needs of the service user on a minute by minute basis, almost anticipating need and adapting to it before it became evident and creating a 'safer, more stable and personalised' service which 'consistently prioritised dignity and choice'. Her nomination also quoted Michelle's approach as 'never reactive'.

With a collaborative approach to problem solving with family and professionals alike, Michelle ensures effective and agile services, and has a clear impact on mitigating risk and health issues before they happen. She has demonstrated effectiveness and responsiveness within her communication to, and engagement with the wider team, bringing 'clarity, calm and structure', as well as improving morale and confidence in service which further supports the delivery of quality care. Michelle – you should be proud!



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## **Hollie Blanchard**

### **Care Worker, Choices Homecare**

Demonstrating a strong aptitude for problem-solving and taking action, it was clear that Hollie possesses a level of empathy and responsiveness to the ever changing needs and behaviours of someone with dementia, adjusting her tone and manner to effectively adapt to these, evidencing genuine collaboration in supporting the service user to carry out day to day tasks, and going further by sharing her strategies and knowledge with others to help them to adopt a responsive approach to care.

The service user's family referred to Hollie as a 'gem', with the 'potential to be a great leader in the future', highlighting that Hollie's emotional and social support, and collaboration go beyond responding to the needs of the service user, to those of the wider family and friends; instilling a confidence and trust in the service provided such that allows the family to live 200 miles away whilst having peace of mind. A highly deserving finalist in this category...



# Finalists Innovation

*'Continuously developing and improving our services.'*

## Helen Cryan

### Quality & Improvement Manager, QA&C Team

Helen's nomination showed that she possesses a critical thinking mindset and a strong focus on continuous improvement; demonstrating an openness to applying ideas, as well as creativity in the application of innovation.

It was clear to the panel that Helen actively researches what is happening in the technical space to drive user-friendly, scalable solutions and innovations in the application of technology. This is to digitalise existing 'paper-based' products and tools, not just in her own professional area but supporting other services to embrace and apply more innovative solutions too; with tangible evidence of her innovative approach it was clear that Helen's approach supports the driving of meaningful improvements throughout the organisation. Well done Helen!



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## Stacey Whitefoot

### HR Advisor, People Operations

The panel felt that Stacey's nomination was a prime example of where innovation was subjective – it did not necessarily have to be glaring but was about whether the views of those receiving it deemed it to be innovative.

Stacey's approach to delivering services to her client group evidence the ability to tailor solutions in a practical, outcome focussed way which has built line manager confidence, knowledge and understanding – leading to better operational decision making, increased pro-active ownership of employee matters and improved operational oversight of people risk. Stacey is a very worthy finalist within this category...



# Finalists **Delight**

*'Ensuring every individual service user, other customers, commissioners and stakeholders are delighted by the service.'*

## **Ikechukwu Emmanuel Okolie (Iké)**

### **Support Worker, Stepping Stones Services**

The panel found that Iké's actions and service went beyond 'delight', delivering meaningful, positive and lasting results on the wellbeing of the service user. Tangible impact on service user wellbeing showed a settled and improved emotional stability, with family describing how 'at peace' they feel by the quality of care provided, and the approach adopted by him.

Additionally it was noted that Iké had enhanced the reputation of the service with external stakeholders, improved internal cohesion and engagement across the team, and actively promoted high service standards. A highly deserving finalist!



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## **Wendy Lewis**

### **Support Worker, CFT Care**

With words like 'uplifting', 'passion' and 'dedication', the panel were impressed by creative ways in which Wendy brings joy to day to day routines and in the way she has changed perceptions through her actions and words.

She is referred to as an 'anchor for both service users and her team', supporting the personal goals of her service user with 'dignity and grace' and providing assurance and advice to colleagues in a way which has strengthened the quality and reputation of the service as a whole. Wendy is a very worthy finalist in this category.



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## **Hollie Blanchard**

### **Care Worker, Choices Homecare**

Hollie received multiple nominations and the panel were particularly moved by the impact her care and approach had on the daughter of a service user who quoted 'Hollie reassures and inspires me every day'.

The panel felt that this evidenced that the 'delight' in the service provided expanded beyond the impact on the person directly receiving the care but was also positively impacting the quality of life of others. Well done Hollie!



# Finalists Engagement

*'Providing opportunities for staff, service users and other stakeholders to engage fully in the organisation.'*

## Harry Rogers

### Senior Support Worker, CFT Care

Impressed by the approach and efforts taken to make sure all voices (internally and externally) are heard, the panel felt that Harry's nomination showed strong collaboration skills and contributed to the development of workplace culture and shared accountability with both existing and new colleagues.

They found the fact that Harry's approach to championing regular feedback sessions, along with his ownership of engagement, had extended beyond the workplace resulting in strengthened partnerships with stakeholders and families, to be particularly notable. Good work Harry!



## Stacey Whitefoot

### HR Advisor, People Operations

Described as 'thoughtful and inclusive' Stacey's creativity and initiative, which she brings to the coaching and support elements of her role, have positioned her as a trusted partner.

Her developmental approach was described as 'patient' and the panel particularly liked how this had resulted in a tangible improvement in how operational leaders engaged fully, better understanding their role, people responsibilities, and management of the employee lifecycle as a whole – ultimately resulting in improved team engagement across the region. Well done Stacey!



## Kelly West

### Office Support Services, CFT Care

Kelly's nomination focused on her support to engage with and welcome new hires into the branch.

Kelly's team player attitude engages others around her and her willingness to step in and support, at a time when the branch faced some unprecedented challenges, helped to ensure that pressing resourcing requirements were supported effectively during this time. Good work Kelly!



# Finalists **Care Newcomer**

*'Recognising new members of staff who have joined the organisation within the last 12 months.'*

## **Sherin Mathews**

### **Support Worker, Abbeycare**

Sherin's attitude, tenacity and desire to learn clearly stood out, and when combined with the fact that she instilled 'excitement' in the clients of our service (just by being on shift), her nomination demonstrated a true embodiment of someone who was having immediate impact in the provision of care. Sherin, you should be proud!

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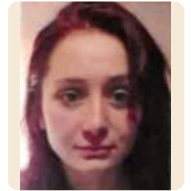


## **Asta Brazionyte**

### **Support Worker, Stepping Stones Services**

The panel were particularly impressed that Asta had built such a degree of trust with a service user's family in a very short period of time and that they referred to her as 'an advocate' for their daughter. It was clear that Asta has a confidence which did not let her 'newness' deter her from raising concerns, and that she was impactful in doing so.

A very deserving finalist in this category.



# Finalists **Team Member**

*'Celebrating team members who best demonstrate a shared vision with the rest of their team.'*

## **Emmanuel Oladoja**

### **PBS Practise Lead, CFT Care**

The impact Emmanuel had in supporting a line manager to drive team culture and behaviour was particularly impressive, and along with an impact on creating stability within a team, resulted in improved engagement and strengthened working relationships overall.

This, together with having a 'never give up' attitude, was highly commended by panel members. Good work Emmanuel!



## **Lyndsey Greenhalgh**

### **Administrator, ECM Team, Choices Homecare**

Working within a team that is often 'unseen' and which is also one in which team members are remote from each other, Lyndsey demonstrated strength in her communication skills and in the mentoring which was displayed. The way in which she has been able to use these skills to build confidence in others within a team environment, a task which isn't always easy, was particularly impressive. Great work Lyndsey...



## **Sara Fairhurst**

### **Deputy Group Finance Manager**

Sara is consistently referred to as the 'backbone' of the team and has displayed the fostering of productivity in others whilst maintaining her own. Enabling effective time management and prioritisation across the service, Sara has contributed to improving service quality throughout the department.

Particularly impressive was the way in which Sara integrated new members into the team, in a way which went beyond her remit and was not driven by hierarchy or title but by a desire to help new colleagues to be successful. Sara displayed herself as a true role model for this category – well done!



# Finalists Leadership

*'Recognising managers who have demonstrated exceptional expertise in managing the complexities of their service (or department).'*

## George Cutbush

**PBS Team Leader, CFT Care**

Acting as a role model to others and providing a clear, demonstrable example of de-escalation techniques in such a way that the confidence, knowledge and skills of others were raised, resulted in a clear reduction in the application of physical interventions and demonstrated George as an effective leader – a very easy nomination for the panel to shortlist.



## Shivonne Butler

**Regional Director, Supported Living & Specialist Services**



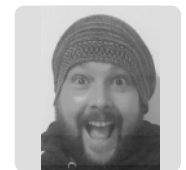
Demonstrating empathy and a willingness to listen and hear, Shivonne's nomination displayed credible and passionate leadership skills; it was felt that Shivonne role models what it means to be a leader for whom 'employee voice' is at the heart of their approach – Shivonne is a very worthy finalist in this category.

## Wayne Hutchinson

**PBS Team Leader, CFT Care**

The panel felt that throughout multiple nominations for Wayne, a common theme was evident – one in which people felt listened to and heard, and that their voice mattered.

They were particularly impressed by Wayne's ability to engage all stakeholders in a meaningful and authentic way, such that it has resulted in a positive impact on the quality of life of a service user (with a 'richer life' quoted), and that colleagues 'feel safe' being part of his team. A very worthy finalist!



# Finalists Team

*'An award which celebrates teams which best demonstrate a shared vision and clear goals, and who take personal responsibility for the tasks that they do.'*

## Pork Lane Team

### CFT Care



The Pork Lane Team nomination provided a clear example of a self-managing, autonomous team who possess a self-starter mentality, and who collectively strive to ensure a service user has a better quality of life.

Working with an individual who possessed high levels of inconsistency and predictability, the team have had meaningful impact on stabilising this behaviour by creating an environment of trust, safety and compassion, an environment which has been positively acknowledged by the family, and one in which each team member is able to thrive and support each other. Well done to all members of this team.

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## Grove House Team

### CFT Care



A team with shared values, which the panel felt 'set the standard', it was particularly noted that this teams reliability and flexibility, combined with a culture of mutual respect and support, had resulted in external acknowledgement of service quality which enhanced reputation and drove confidence in the provision of services. A great example of good teamwork!



# Finalists Employee of the Year

*'For recognition of being a true role model for others and a leading example of someone who upholds, represents and epitomises each of our PRIDE values.'*

## Hollie Blanchard

### Care Worker, Choices Homecare

The panel were blown away by the strength and power of the rationale in the nominations Hollie received for this category, combined with multiple nominations across other categories, they felt they really showed an individual who reflected the very heart of our PRIDE values – an individual who, time and time again, is acting with integrity, compassion, and honour.

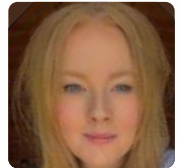
The panel noted that each nomination received for Hollie exemplified what 'great' looks like, and unanimously agreed that she is a notable and worthy finalist for this category. Well done Hollie.



## Levi Cornish

### Support Worker, CFT Care

Levi's nomination highlighted an awareness of inclusion and equality, one which evidenced a real understanding of voice and involvement, and which showed a genuine desire to put all stakeholders at the heart of activity in a way which was accessible to all. Meaningful and engaging, this recently 'brought joy' to each attendee of an event Levi led and delivered for over 60 people with complex needs, an incredible achievement in itself! The panel were particularly drawn to the statement that Levi is 'the definition of a service to be proud of' – a statement received by a well deserving finalist! Great work Levi.



# Our Vision

## A service to be proud of

We aim to deliver high quality person-centred services that exceed the expectations of service users, commissioners and other stakeholders.

We want our staff to be proud to work for the organisation and the role they play in delivering our services.

# Our Behaviours

- RESPONSIBILITY
- LEADERSHIP
- WORKING TOGETHER
- TRUST & RESPECT
- EXCELLENCE

# Our Values

## PERSON CENTRED

Putting the individual at the heart of our service

## RESPONSIVE

Well co-ordinated and planned services that deliver effective outcomes for individuals

## INNOVATIVE

Continuously developing and improving our services

## DELIGHT

Ensuring every individual service user, other customers, commissioners and stakeholders are delighted by the service

## ENGAGEMENT

Providing opportunities for staff, service users and other stakeholders to engage fully in the organisation



