

Our vision is a world where all care homes are great places to live, die, visit and work.

**Once you have mastered time you will understand how true it is that most people overestimate what they can accomplish in a year – and underestimate what they can achieve in a decade!**

Anthony Robbins

**Care homes across the UK face a number of challenges and competing demands. People are now entering care homes when they are older, with complex and multiple conditions, and increasingly high levels of cognitive impairment. Yet staffing levels, status and pay remain largely unchanged. The health and social care system is also subject to upheaval and sustained funding cuts.**

Care homes suffer from a poor public image, with workforce recruitment and retention difficulties commonplace. For older people and their families the move to a care home is often perceived as the end of the line and associated with failure and fear, rather than finding the care and support needed to continue to lead as fulfilling a life as possible in the changed circumstances of advanced old age.

My Home Life has developed with these particular challenges in mind.

## About the “Ten Years On” Briefing Series

My Home Life began in 2006 as a small project to synthesise the literature on best practice in care homes. Since then it has grown into a social movement to promote quality of life for those who are living, dying, visiting and working in care homes for older people. Over the past decade My Home Life has developed an international reputation for facilitating positive culture change and enabling care homes to both professionalise and articulate their expertise.

Last year we took stock, evaluating My Home Life’s impact,

reflecting on the considerable learning that has been amassed, and refreshing and strengthening the evidence base. Over the course of 2016 we will be sharing our learning through a series of monthly briefing papers. This introductory briefing provides an overview of our work and approach used in My Home Life.

## What We Do

**The core work of My Home Life includes:**

- Research and practice development, with a particular emphasis on collaborative action research, facilitated through the development and use of creative and inclusive methods
- Developing educational and practice resources, and creating the conditions for their translation and use
- Leadership support to enable care home managers to empower staff and to foster relationship-centred cultures within their care homes
- Community development to strengthen relationships between care homes and their local communities
- Engaging and influencing at national level through stakeholder engagement and social action, highlighting the implications of systemic failure to properly value care in policy or in wider society and evidencing the need to afford staff the time, space, resources and recognition required if they are to flourish in increasingly complex environments.



## Our Approach

### Developing best practice together

We identify and share best practice, properly valuing the expertise of those who live, die, visit and work in care homes, as well as the knowledge generated through research. Achieving quality in care homes requires a collaborative approach. We work together with organisations that reflect the interests of care home providers, commissioners, regulators, care home residents and relatives, and those interested in education, research and practice development to envision, co-create and embed new ways of working to better meet the needs of older people, relatives and staff.

### Focusing on relationships

We highlight the importance of positive relationships between older people, relatives and staff, and between care homes and their local communities including professionals working in health, social care and housing. Relationship-centred practice sits at the heart of everything we do. It recognises that the quality of life of older people living in care homes, relatives and staff are all crucial to practice development. This relational capacity also calls attention to our collective responsibilities to meet needs for care competently.

### Being Appreciative

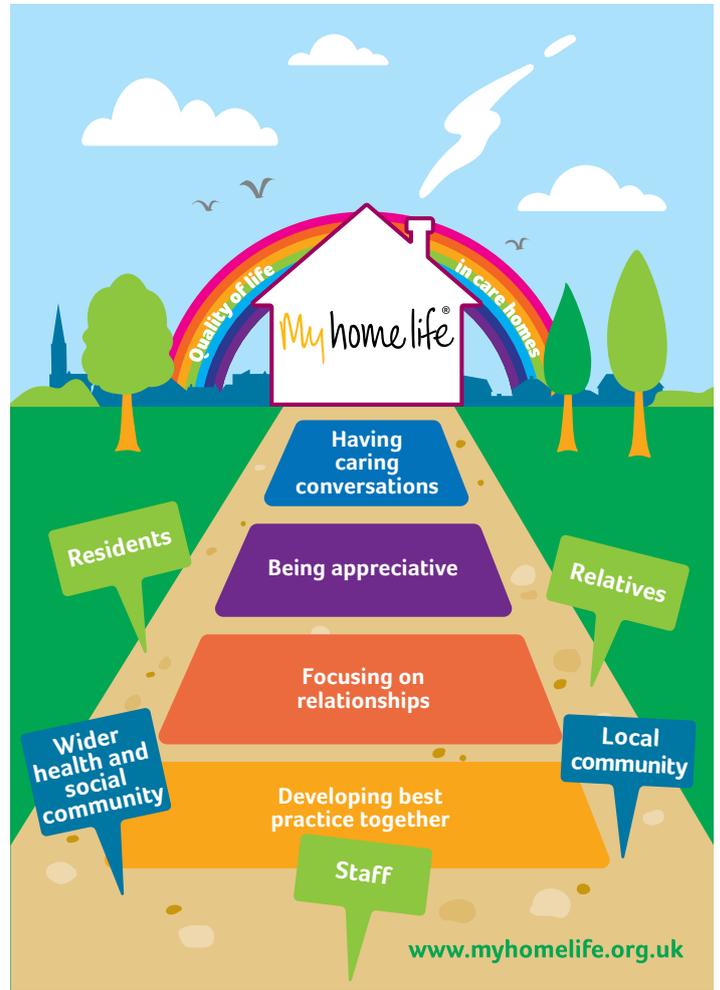
Care homes are often shrouded in negativity. We focus on the positive, appreciating and building upon strengths and successes, and getting back to what matters. Adopting this philosophy as a starting point re-energises and re-engages people to challenge the status quo and to develop and take forward plans for improvement.

### Having caring conversations

Being appreciative, focusing on relationships and developing best practice together requires a different approach to engagement. Through our Caring Conversations framework, we support people to be courageous and ask what matters to individuals, connect emotionally, be curious rather than judgemental, collaborate to make things happen, consider the perspectives of all those involved, compromise in order to focus on what is possible, and celebrate and build upon what works.

**Further information on the work of My Home Life and how you can get involved can be found on our website:**

**[www.myhomelifescotland.org.uk](http://www.myhomelifescotland.org.uk) Or contact: [Belinda.dewar@uws.ac.uk](mailto:Belinda.dewar@uws.ac.uk) or [david.innes@uws.ac.uk](mailto:david.innes@uws.ac.uk)**



### Blending UK-Wide and National Activity

My Home Life UK is led by City University London, England. We also have a distinctive presence in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each national team benefits from strong academic leadership. The national teams work together on UK-wide issues and maximise shared learning opportunities. Given the differences in the social care, political and policy systems between the nations of the UK, having separate teams also facilitates the delivery of activities in response to national and more local priorities and enables stronger relationships to be developed with relevant stakeholders.

