



Press Release: For immediate release

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### Harnessing the power of technology at Longfield Care Home

**Excelcare's Essex based care home, Longfield has recently harnessed the power of technology through their arts partnership with curious directive.**

In November 2019, Excelcare and intergenerational arts charity, Magic Me started a partnership to bring modern forms of art into care homes and study the benefits this could have on mental and physical health, working alongside Anglia Ruskin University and funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, Fevered Sleep, Gecko and curious directive partnered with four of Excelcare's Essex-based care homes to deliver these sessions throughout 2020.

The early formats of these sessions focussed around members of the arts organisations meeting the residents and getting to know their likes, dislikes and interests. Responses to different activities would then form a basis for the remainder of the project, which each group would deliver in their own unique medium.

Curious directive were partnered with Longfield Care Home, with plans to deliver their sessions using the power of technology. Their first sessions were very successful, and they had many ideas about how they could introduce new technology into the care setting.

One idea that was incredibly well-received was the introduction of VR (Virtual Reality). For the first few sessions, the team from curious directive were supporting people as they got comfortable with wearing the headsets at their own pace. The introduction of VR began before the COVID-19 lockdown placed limitations on who could visit people living in care homes, so the presence of family members and familiar faces also helped to ease feelings of anxiety.

After people were comfortable wearing the headsets, curious directive began to personalise their experiences by asking for places people had previously visited, or places they would like to go. Using these suggestions, they uploaded videos of the locations to the VR headsets, allowing the residents to be transported to their favourite places around the world.

One of the residents requested an air show experience and while wearing the headset, she found herself looking into the sky at all the planes that seemed to be flying above her. It was a wonderful moment that she will always remember. "It was fantastic, just like being there", she said.

Relatives also took part and really enjoyed being a part of their loved ones' experiences too. Many turned up to every session and enjoyed it just as much as those living at the home, showing no matter your age or background, VR could be enjoyed by all.

Unfortunately, a few months into the scheme, the COVID-19 restrictions came into place, restricting visits to the home. This put the project on pause and meant the VR sessions couldn't continue.



This was explained to the residents who understood, with many saying at least they had the memories, sights and sounds from the previous sessions they could hold on to.

“It was amazing to see the residents using the VR headsets! A couple of people said after the experience that they really felt like they were there. Our residents with Dementia reacted very well to the more Musical experiences and enjoyed singing along! This was a very positive experience all round and residents spoke about it for a long while after”, said Paula, a Lifestyle Coordinator who observed the sessions at the home.

When restrictions are eased and normal life at the homes resume, the project with curious directive will continue and bring many other virtual environments and experiences to the people living at Longfield.

- ENDS -

#### **Notes for the Editor ABOUT EXCELCARE**

Providing high quality, person centred care since 1989, Excelcare is a family-run company with 33 care homes and a home care service situated amongst communities within Cambridge, Essex, London and Milton Keynes. Employing more than 2000 team members, Excelcare supports over 2500 people to lead a high quality life, delivering individualised care with empathy, kindness and compassion.

For more information about this press release please email [info@excelcareholdings.com](mailto:info@excelcareholdings.com) or call 020 8313 5000. [www.excelcareholdings.com](http://www.excelcareholdings.com)

#### **MAGIC ME'S ARTISTS' RESIDENCIES IN CARE HOMES - ESSEX**

Magic Me's Artists' Residencies in Care Homes project brings together 4 arts organisations; Matthew Bourne's New Adventures, Fevered Sleep, Gecko and curious directive with four care settings in Essex run by operator Excelcare UK. The project is funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Magic Me is the UK's leading intergenerational arts charity. They have been bringing together different generations through creative activities for over 30 years. During the Covid-19 pandemic they have repurposed their ongoing programmes and projects to meet the new context and grouped them under a new programme 'At Home Together'. Through this programme they have run 6 projects since March 2019, working with 14 artists across 15 care settings and 6 schools and involving older adults living independently and adult volunteers who were part of the Cocktails in Care Homes project.

[www.magicme.co.uk](http://www.magicme.co.uk)

#### **ABOUT PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION**

Paul Hamlyn Foundation was established by Paul Hamlyn in 1987. Upon his death in 2001, he left most of his estate to the Foundation, creating one of the largest independent grant-making foundations in the UK. Their mission is to help people overcome disadvantage and lack of opportunity, so that they can realise their potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives. They have a particular interest in supporting young people and a strong belief in the importance of the arts

#### **ABOUT CURIOUS DIRECTIVE**

Since 2008, curious directive has explored life through the lens of science. We forge sustained relationships between science communities, theatregoers & technology partners pursuing layered, emotionally charged science-led theatre. As stewards of theatre innovation we were the first theatre company to use the Periscope app for live streaming (2014), the first 'Resident Theatre Company' at a UK Science Festival (Cambridge 2015) and have created VR cuing software for live theatre (2017). Critically acclaimed, with 15 prestigious arts-science nominations and awards (including two Scotsman Fringe First Awards 2011 and 2014), we've been published six times (Methuen) and regularly work with world-leading science institutes.