



# MANAGER OF THE MONTH

## How did you join Melford Court?

I joined the team at Melford Court having previously worked in management at another group. I had worked with a number of the Stow Healthcare managers in the past. They recommended me when the management role at Melford Court came up, and the rest is history!

## What is special about Melford Court?

Melford Court is such a lovely home. It sits in the heart of its community, in the middle of the longest high street in the country. Since Stow Healthcare took over the home, which was previously rated 'requires improvement', we have worked hard to rebuild its reputation. Fast forward six years, and the home is buzzing with life. The team pull together through thick and thin.

## What do you find most rewarding about your job?

For me, it is about being able to make a difference. Just receiving a smile or a 'thank you' from a resident is enough of a reward. What tops it off is the team who pull together through the rough and the smooth. My team at Melford are all about breaking down barriers and proving you are never too old for anything. One resident decided to be confirmed into the Church of England so staff arranged for the local bishop to visit to complete the confirmation.

## What has been your proudest moment?

There isn't one stand-out moment. I am always proud whenever I get positive feedback about the home. A

**Melford Court Care Home manager Amanda Atkins explains the reasons Melford Court bounced back from a 'requires improvement' rating, including its all-hands-on-deck approach to the pandemic.**

little 'thank you' when things have gone well, whether this is from staff or residents and families, makes me proud. The manager's job can be tough but when people take the time to show their appreciation for the hard work you put in makes it worthwhile.

## What has been your greatest challenge and how did you overcome it?

The last three years of the pandemic have been some of the toughest in my career. The home faced an outbreak in the first wave, affecting staff and residents. Throughout the pandemic, the team was galvanised into action. There were no longer individual departments but one team whose primary focus became keeping residents safe. Staff dedicated spare hours to help. The maintenance manager served meals before and after his shift to maintain resident nutrition and hydration. Another staff member, formerly a qualified hairdresser, washed and cut residents' hair.

## Tell us three things you need to provide great care?

You must have the drive and commitment to want to provide the quality care in the first place. Remember great care doesn't happen overnight, it takes time to build the team and embed the values and support them each day.

On a practical level, you need a good skill mix of caring staff across all departments of the home. They all form an important part of the puzzle.

Finally... do it all with a big smile! It can make you feel better even on the bad days.