



# CareHome

# Lifestyle

Talent Edition

If music be the food  
of love, *play on!*

Music with meaning

WALTZING *for wellbeing*

Leave your worries on the dance floor

Feel the fear and  
do it anyway

Why trying something new  
is good for you!



It's your time to shine at Care Sector's Got Talent 2025

Enter now at [championingsocialcare.org](http://championingsocialcare.org) - Applications close 11th January 2025



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# Registrations for CARE SECTOR'S GOT TALENT 2025 now open

Apply online at  
[championingsocialcare.org.uk](https://championingsocialcare.org.uk)  
by 11th January 2025



Care Sector's Got Talent 2024 delivered a fantastic day of entertainment and showcased the huge range of talent within the care sector. If you have what it takes to perform live on the CSGT stage, you are invited to audition for the next competition.

Successful applicants will have the exciting opportunity to take part in the CSGT final in Birmingham on 2nd April 2025.

To enter, visit [championingsocialcare.org](https://championingsocialcare.org) and complete the registration form. Upload a video showcasing your skills and creativity (maximum duration 2 minutes).

Good luck! We can't wait to see even more talent from the dedicated people working in care.



Congratulations to  
CSGT 24 winner Molly  
Blackburn (main  
shot) and finalist Joe  
Douglass (above)



Care Sector's Got Talent overall winner Molly Blackburn with the judges

Welcome to this special edition of CareHomeLifeStyle!

I believe good health is our true wealth. Not just physical health - taking care of the mind and soul is as important as looking after your body. If you're familiar with CareHomeLifeStyle, you'll know its purpose is to share positivity and light with those working in care.

This special 'Talent 25' edition celebrates Care Sector's Got Talent and puts the wellbeing benefits of the performing arts in the spotlight.

When CareHomeLife had the opportunity to be headline sponsors of Care Sector's Got Talent 24, having just joined the company, I had the privilege of a seat on the judging panel. I was blown away by the courage and talent of all the finalists. They were all winners to me! On page 4 you can find out how past finalists felt to be part of this special event. You'll also find articles about the positive impact of singing and dancing, the importance of checking in with yourself, and why we should feel the fear and doing it anyway.

So if you, or someone in your care home has a special talent to share with the world, entries are now open for CSGT 25. Chances are you'll feel some nerves about applying, but we hope CareHomeLifeStyle inspires you to 'do it anyway' and be a part of something very special.

*Cheryl*

**Cheryl Jones, Editor, CareHomeLifeStyle  
Care Sector's Got Talent Judge**



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# IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE, *play on!*

Music plays a central role in care. Bringing people together, unlocking memories, sharing joy. It can be central to personal wellbeing too. Applications for 'Care Sector's Got Talent' have just opened so we took the chance to ask three recent finalists what music means to them.



*Music ... helps me connect with residents on a deeper, more personal level.*

SUNNY SINGH

*I have used music and in particular singing within my everyday practices when caring for others.*

MARK ARROWSMITH



**MARK ARROWSMITH**, finalist from 2024, works for Hallmark Care Homes and his work is focused on end-of-life care. He says he has always found that music and wellbeing go hand in hand.

“Often music can make us recall memories, times in our lives and most of all feel emotion. I have used music and in particular singing within my everyday practices when caring for others.

“Using music during an individual’s end-of-life experience has provided me a way to connect with the person on an emotional and spiritual level. I have had the honour of being present for people physically and emotional during this very

difficult time, by singing songs that are familiar and loved by the individual as they pass.

“Music also has a positive effect in my own life as I often sing to relax and listen to music to support my own wellbeing.”

**SUNNY SINGH** of Avery Healthcare won hearts with the energy of his performance on stage at Talent 24.

“My passion for music and performing has been with me since my college days, where I started with school and college events and later advanced to state-level competitions with Radio Mirchi in India. I’ve had the privilege of performing live shows across different states in India and in London, including events like the Cally Festival. These experiences have shown me the incredible power of music to connect with people, and it brings me great joy and fulfilment.

“As a Care Assistant, music has become a valuable tool. It helps me connect with residents on a deeper, more personal level. Whether singing to them or creating a soothing atmosphere, I’ve seen how music can lift their spirits and bring comfort, making their day a little brighter. Music has also positively impacted my own wellbeing, giving me a strong sense of purpose and satisfaction.

“I feel blessed that God has given me the gift of music to bring joy to others.”

**AIYSHA RASTALL** reflected on her performance in front of 500 people at the Care Sector Fundraising Ball – an opportunity that arose after she appeared in the 2022 final of Care Sector’s Got Talent.

“I’m honestly not very good with my words but I’ll try ha ha! Singing is my passion. I am so grateful for the opportunity to sing at the ball as it was an amazing experience. I never thought I would have the confidence to be able to sing in front of such a huge crowd but I’m proud that I did. It was so extremely nerve wracking and I’m not 100% happy with how my performance went but I’m so glad that I did it.

“I’d love to one day sing as a career alongside doing care work, as singing has always been my passion.”

Three very different people, doing different roles but all working in care and all united by the uplifting power of music in their own lives. ■



*I never thought I would have the confidence to be able to sing in front of such a huge crowd but I'm proud that I did.*

AIYSHA RASTALL

# Feel the fear and do it anyway



## The benefit of self-care

JO ASHTON, Founder  
of Optimise Workplace  
Wellbeing Ltd.



Optimise Workplace Wellbeing Ltd. works with organisations within the Adult Care sector and other sectors to develop wellbeing strategies and deliver training and support to enhance wellbeing in the workplace.

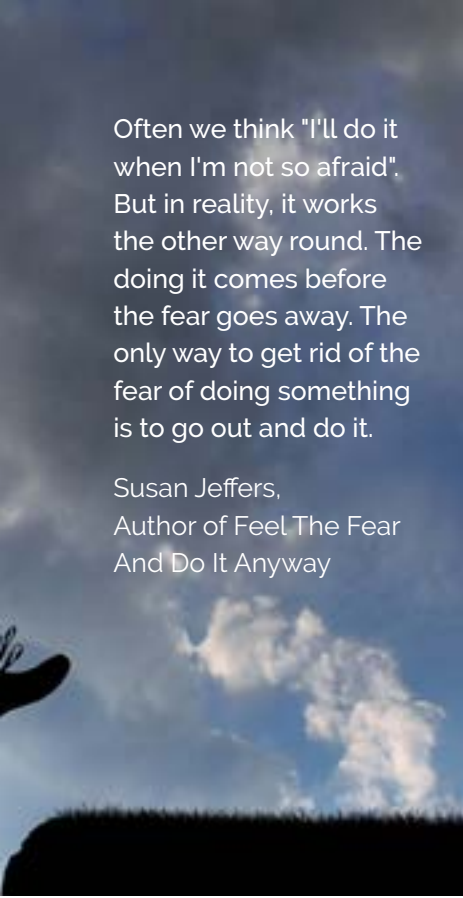
We all have things that we enjoy, but don't find the time for; or things that we would love to try, but don't get around to doing.

Maybe there's a bit of apprehension and fear attached to new hobbies, or doing something different, or maybe just finding the time is a barrier – especially when we lead busy lives and have lots already going on.

Let's try to think about this from a different angle. Let's try and consider, not the fear or the nerves, but what the sense of achievement will feel like, and possibly how much better you will feel about yourself in finding, and making that time for, **yourself**.







Often we think "I'll do it when I'm not so afraid". But in reality, it works the other way round. The doing it comes before the fear goes away. The only way to get rid of the fear of doing something is to go out and do it.

Susan Jeffers,  
Author of *Feel The Fear  
And Do It Anyway*

There have been various studies on the correlation between positive mood and creativity. For many people, the focus on doing something creative has a very cathartic effect, showing evidence that symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety can be reduced. For others, it may not be something creative that works for them, but the important thing is to find some things you enjoy doing, and ensure you do them regularly.

I always advise people to have 'big things' and 'little things'...

### WE ALL NEED BIG AND LITTLE THINGS

The big things may be going on a lovely long walk, having plans to look forward to, or spending a day at your favourite place (mine is the beach!) having quality time with family and

friends is another, the little things may be taking 10 minutes to yourself when you get in from work to decompress, going for a 20-minute walk, having a cuppa, or even spending just a few minutes focussing on your breathing or making sure you've eaten and drank! The truth is we all need big and little things because the key is that we need to have the time to add these 'things' into our already busy lives! The little things should be easy to slot in at some point most days!

Simple things, like making sure you're meeting your own basic needs (see our self-care check-in grid) are things we can and should, all do daily. Then, we build on that to make time for the bigger things too, making sure that we make time to do things we enjoy. For me, if I can't afford a whole day of my weekend to go off to the beach, I will allow an hour or so, to go for a coffee with my husband or a friend. Or, if I can allow a couple of hours, we'll go for a

nice walk.

Sometimes, it's about allowing ourselves to just stop! To not compare ourselves to others and feel that we should be doing all of the things we feel pressured to do, and just listen to our own body and mind, and let it rest.

### TAKE THE LEAP

And sometimes, we need to stop getting in our own way and just take the leap and do the things we are nervous to do and just try it - what's the worst that can happen? If you didn't like it, don't do it again. If you did enjoy it, GREAT - new hobby unlocked!

Next time you feel worried, or afraid, or you feel you don't have time, think back to this, take a quick look at the self-care check-in and ask yourself... what's the worst that can happen, and just give it a go.

You never know, you may be an expert in your new hobby and it could open up a whole new world for you! ■

## SELF-CARE CHECK-IN GRID

### How do I feel today?

Mentally?

Physically?

### How is my thinking today?

How are my thoughts making me feel?

What can I control?

### Am I taking care of my self?

Am I:

Eating enough/well and hydrated enough?

Getting enough sleep/sleeping well?

### How full is my Stress Container?

What do I need to do?  
How can I prioritise this?

Am I doing things I enjoy?  
Making time to socialise?  
Making time for my hobbies?

# Waltzing for Wellbeing



**ALI ARTHINGTON** is the lead designer for CareHomeLifeStyle magazine. In her free time, she's also a keen amateur Ballroom and Latin American dancer and a member of a local community choir. An advocate for the health and wellbeing benefits of dancing and singing, Ali never misses an opportunity to encourage people to join a group or a class.



## LATE TO THE DANCE FLOOR

I took dance classes as a little girl and would often sing in primary school performances but had stopped doing both by my teens. From around the age of 16, I yearned to start dancing again and held a secret dream to sing in public. If only I had the confidence. Being painfully shy, I didn't feel brave enough to join a class on my own and was embarrassed to tell people I wanted to sing. So I didn't – but the ambitions never went away.

At the age of 29, I joined a dance class on my own. It was a ladies-only class teaching Street dance. Although I was nervous and self-conscious, I loved it and never missed a class. A year later, *Strictly Come Dancing* launched on TV so I joined another class to learn Latin American dance. Over the years that followed, I kept up the Latin and also tried Ballroom, Ballet, Cheer dance and even Burlesque. While some of these styles didn't come naturally, I danced as often as I could because of how it made me feel: joyous, accomplished, focused, alive. Dancing was my therapy.





## A HUGE SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT

20 years after taking that first Latin class, at the age of 49, I plucked up the courage to enter my first competition in Latin and Ballroom. I donned the sequins, spray tan and fake lashes to finally show off my skills in front of an audience. It was completely nerve-wracking – my partner could feel me shaking throughout each dance

– but the sense of achievement was huge. I even came away with four trophies. Now I've got the competition bug, and so much more confidence.

Apart from two short breaks when I was pregnant and had young babies, I've danced continuously for 22 years. I'm not superwoman; I often feel exhausted before I go to a class but once I get there I feel invigorated and so glad I made the effort.



## 7 REASONS dancing is so good for wellbeing

### 1. Dancing is a fun distraction from real-life worries

When you're learning to dance you have to focus on what your feet are doing – otherwise you fall over! With Latin and Ballroom dance styles, once you master the steps, you also need to think about your arms, hands, posture, head and face (smile!). This amount of focus means you can't think about other things you have on your mind. Dancing is a brilliant distraction from your worries, however big or small.

### 2. Dancing is exercise that doesn't feel like exercise

I love to stay fit but I hate traditional exercise like working out, running and playing sports. Dancing is an ideal opportunity to get your heart rate up without doing something you don't enjoy.

### 3. Dancing is good for every 'body'

If you've ever watched *Strictly Come Dancing*, you'll have seen the transformation many contestants experience over the series.

Many lose weight, tone up, gain muscles and stand straighter.

Whatever dance style you choose, there are physical benefits to be gained.



### 4. You do it to music

Listening to music is great for reducing stress and anxiety. Combine that with the benefits of moving your body and you've got a perfect recipe for feeling good.

### 5. Dancing is a great way to meet new people

While you don't need a partner for many styles of dance (you can even learn to dance Latin and Ballroom solo), you will meet people and most likely make some new friends on the dance floor.

### 6. Dancing gives your brain a workout

Who would have thought that learning to dance could affect your mental agility and memory? In fact, learning dance steps and movements improves cognition, attention, social communication, and memory! We adults may not pick up the patterns as quickly as children do, but mastering your moves is a great mental workout as well as a physical one.



### 7. Dancing builds confidence and self-esteem

While you may not want to enter competitions or dance on stage, the confidence you gain from becoming a dancer will flow over into your everyday life.

## FINDING MY VOICE

In 2018, I saw a flyer announcing a new choir was starting locally. I decided it was time to stop putting off my dream to sing and went to the first rehearsal (although I did take my 11-year-old along for moral support).

I was incredibly nervous. Would I be able to hit the notes? What would people think of my voice? Would they all be better singers than me? What if I embarrassed myself?

I needn't have panicked quite so much. As a newly-formed choir, everyone else was experiencing similar fears. But, united by a love of singing, we set about learning how to do it

in harmony – well, most of the time.

Fast forward to 2024 and our choir has grown both in size and confidence. We put on several concerts each year, and are invited to perform at local events. I have even sung solo on stage. Chatting to other members, we all agree that our choir rehearsals are like weekly therapy sessions. We always leave feeling so much lighter than when we arrived.

I've never tried singing and dancing together (which requires a crazy level of fitness) but doing each once a week keeps me fit and helps bolster my outlook even when I'm going through stressful times. ■



## 7 REASONS singing in a choir is so good for you

### 1. Singing makes you feel better

Singing releases 'happy' chemicals that boost your mood and make you feel good about yourself. Scientists believe that's one of the reasons people report being on a high during choir sessions –and continue to feel positive, uplifted and motivated afterwards.

### 2. Singing is an aerobic activity

Singing introduces more oxygen into the blood leading to better circulation – and a better mood.

### 3. Singing enhances lung function

The way singing requires you to breathe, makes you increase your lung capacity as well as engaging the muscles around the ribcage.

### 4. Singing helps you beat stress and relax

Breathing properly and with more awareness is also good for releasing anxiety and helping you transition to a state of rest and relaxation.

### 5. Singing builds a sense of community

Singing with other people can help build connections and feelings of togetherness. To put it simply: you'll meet new people and make friends!

### 6. Singing builds confidence

Learning a new skill, becoming a better singer and performing before an appreciative audience all do wonders for your confidence and self esteem.

### 7. Singing is a brain workout and improves memory

Creating harmony while singing in a choir requires you to focus on multiple things at once – your part, your breathing, your words – engaging many areas of the brain. And you'd be surprised just how many song words you can memorise when you put your mind to it!



Sharing  
**positivity** and light  
with those working in Care



*In our latest issue...*

**Happiness.**  
**An inside job.**

What's the secret to feeling happy and content?

**It's great to be grateful**

What have you got to be thankful for?

**A to Z of healthful food**

Feel-good food to boost body and mind

**Good slumber.**  
**Good health.**

Wake up to the benefits of a good night's sleep

**Living your best mid-life**

Shake off the stigma of menopause – it's time to enjoy life!

**Good energy**

Be a positivity magnet



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