

## Dedication from Senior Receptionist Wendy at Hengist Field Care Home



Our staff are a dedicated team at Nellsar, often going above and beyond for our residents in their roles. One such staff member is Wendy Wilkinson, Senior Receptionist at Hengist Field, who, having lived with a number of health conditions for many years, has embraced her role as a way to focus her mind away from her illness.

### Work commitment

**Operations and Compliance Manager Silvia Barret has been impressed by Wendy's dedication to her role and to those around her;**

*"Wendy, who is living with an illness, never took time off during the pandemic; even when she received a shielding letter, she refused to take the furlough. She comes to work every day as her ponies Mervin and Merlin are her motivation to get up out of bed; work is important to her and takes her mind away from her aches and pain. During the pandemic she finished her Level 3 Diploma in Customer Services and was incredibly supportive to our Home. I think she's such an asset to Hengist Field and I know others will be inspired by her story."*

### Wendy's story

#### Here Wendy highlights her journey and how her passion for work has helped her thrive;

I come from a farming family and am the youngest of three girls. In my early twenties I was diagnosed with Rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma (a hardening and tightening of the skin and connective tissues) and Raynaud's (numbness and cold often in fingers and toes in response to cold temperatures or stress).

It was a lot to take in at first but over time I learnt to live with the pain, cold, blue, and sometimes white hands, chilblains on my toes, numbness, and lack of energy.

### Treatment

I had my first hand surgery at a London hospital in 1999 and a few years later had more surgery to further correct a finger. From 1999 – 2010 I had more surgery to two more fingers, one on each hand. I had a great surgeon who always allowed me to watch the operations, as I was interested in what he was doing!

After each surgery I had to adjust to a finger that did not work that well, and I taught myself to use a left and right-handed keyboard.

A couple of years ago I had surgery to a toe and further treatments after having frost bite which developed into an ulcer.

### Building confidence

Over the years I have coped with various illnesses and conditions, as well as shyness and people not understanding my ailments, which can be incredibly stressful and upsetting.

I have stayed professional however and endeavoured to strengthen my **self-esteem** and **confidence** in the past five years, which has seen me achieve a step up the career ladder to **Senior Receptionist** in a job that I love.

### COVID-19

Coronavirus came along and on 13 March 2020 **Hengist Field** went into lockdown. I received an NHS message telling me that I was at high risk, due to underlying health conditions, and I was advised to shield.

I informed management at **Hengist Field** that I had received the message and my decision was to continue to work as I had '*a job to do*'. I was asked by Silvia to think about it, but I knew the answer would still be the same. Our residents mean a lot to me and I felt I needed to be at work to answer the phone to relatives who so wanted to visit their loved ones but could not.

I have followed the instructions from management not to go onto our Units (Rowena, Horsa and Orca). It has been so hard not to go and see residents, but I could not put myself or them at risk.

I created a '*Thank you*' board for all the messages of support we have had for our staff – from relatives, suppliers and management. And every shift I have worked the CD has played something to cheer staff up, *and it's really worked!*





Wendy with her beautiful ponies Merlin and Mervin