

Step 1

What is step one?

To say thank you: for staff to identify and thank the people, groups and organisations that your care home has good relationships with.

Why do this?

It's nice to be nice and let people know they're appreciated. And it's helpful to know where you've got good connections with your community.

By thanking them, they may wish to do more for you. What could you achieve if you got to know each other a little better?

How long will this take?

As much or as little time as you want it to – you're in control.

It could just be a simple thank you, face to face or in a card. Or you might like to make a bit more of a fuss and invite people to come to your care home for an event or for you to go and see them.

How do we do this ?

Here are a few ways to identify who to thank.

1. Use the window sticker to identify your home as part of the Care Home FaNs project.
2. Simply think of the people that your residents, families and staff might wish to thank.

Why not...

- a) Set aside ten minutes in a staff or resident meeting to ask they feel we need to thank?
- b) Distribute 'Thank-you cards' for staff, residents or relatives to complete (e.g "I'd like to thank..... for.....").
- c) Ask people for nominate someone by posting their nominations in your suggestion box.
- d) If you have 'staff member of the month', try doing the same thing but for 'community member of the month'
- e) Present someone with a 'Certificate' to recognise them for what they do.

Who are we thanking?

People, groups and organisations that you know. They might be:

Local businesses	Taxi firm, cafés, shops, cinema, theatre, vets, bus drivers, fish and chip shop, manufacturers, the local garage.
Community organisations or charities	Lunch club, choir, Scouts and Guides, musicians, local sports clubs, playgroup, local community centres
Health workers	District nurses, GPs, social workers, ambulance staff, dentists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, receptionists etc
Friends and family	Relatives of residents and staff, friends
Other care homes	For instance, a care home that you sometimes share ideas and resources with?
Public sector	Library, swimming pool, police, fire service, museum, refuse and recycling service
Neighbours	Local paper shop, dogwalkers, people living nearby, milkman, postman.
Church/faith groups	Churches, chapels, mosques and temples
Schools or colleges	Also include Nurseries, crèches, University of Third Age

What are we thanking people for?

Ideas	Big or small, anything that has helped to make life fun, exciting or meaningful. From changing how chairs are positioned in the lounge to holding a dog show in the garden. Who had the bright ideas that have helped?
Skills	Who are the people that do things well?
Attitude	Cheery chat from the postie? Shop assistants who remember residents names? What are the attitudes that help the most?
Actions	Good deeds, favours and jobs done well.
Outcomes or impacts that went unnoticed	Things that turned out well, but maybe the people involved went unthanked? We've all meant to and then forgotten to say thanks to someone (because life got in the way). Who is lurking on your list?
Resources	Things you've been given or borrowed. Equipment, vehicles, stuff.
Time	Volunteers are the obvious one here, but who else gives you their time?
Knowledge	This could be functional (such as something that helped your systems work better or got you a discount on a service). Or it could be knowledge that has enriched residents or staffs lives: a talk given by an enthusiast or the calm help of a mentor. Whose know-how has made a difference?

Saying thank you

It's good to be as clear as you can about who you are thanking and why.

How have your connections helped to make life fun, exciting or more meaningful for people living in your care home?

If you can, use examples and direct quotes, such as:

- + We'd like to thank Karen for being a kind and thoughtful taxi driver. She always chats with our residents and her questions really brighten up the journeys we take with her.
- + Our resident Amy would like to thank Jade the papergirl: "She is very prompt and reliable and gives me a wave and a smile every morning."
- + John really appreciates Billy the gardening volunteer asking for his advice about how to prune the roses and other shrubs, "I like telling him what I'd do when he asks," explains John.

Try to include what residents have said. Using their words and presenting things from their point of view is very powerful.

Ideas for thank you events

It can be nice to make a bit of a fuss when you thank someone. What sort of thing would suit your approach to Friends and Neighbours?

Fancy a cocktail?

An evening do could be a good way to thank people who are at work during the day. Magic Me have been hosting cocktails in care homes since 2010. Their formula is to throw a fabulous social that just happens to be in a care home. Take a look at the Cocktails in Care Homes website for inspiration

An on-the-spot thanks

You could go to where the people you want to thank are and do it on-the-spot! A couple of residents and staff could hold a short ceremony in the post office, hairdresser's, leisure centre, or wherever the people you want to thank happen to be. Doing it this way will help to spread the idea that care home residents want to be part of the community.

Fete brought us together

If you've got the time and energy holding a fete can really make your local community feel welcome. It's a good way to include families with children as well as offering space and stalls to community groups. And saying thank you could be built into the day with bunting, balloons, ceremonies, cakes and competitions.

Network and natter

Do some of the people you'd like to thank have things in common? You could bring them together to say thanks, but also help them get to know each other. For example you could ask people who do 'bodywork' at your home to come for a coffee morning: the physio, hairdresser, masseuse, podiatrist and exercise instructor might enjoy meeting each other. They'll be busy people, so aim for something short, sweet and useful to them.

A cyber-ceremony

Confident with social media? You could use it to say thanks. Some more words here, but seeing what we say about publicity/messages elsewhere first.

REMEMBER – By THANKING THEM, your community may return the gesture and acknowledge you for the great work that you are doing – which can be used as evidence in your inspection!