



Celebrating

My home life[®]

20 Years 

Two decades of improving the quality of life for everyone living, visiting and working in care homes and other care settings.

(2006 – 2026)



The history and ethos of *My Home Life*

Since 2006, My Home Life (MHL) has been driven by a clear aim:

To improve the quality of life for everyone living, visiting, and working in care homes and other care settings.



Founded by Age UK (formerly Help the Aged), in partnership with the National Care Forum and City, University of London, MHL emerged at a time when care homes and other care services were often portrayed negatively. We set out to change that narrative – highlighting good practice, celebrating success, and sharing learning across the sector. My Home Life has grown into a vibrant social movement for quality improvement, influencing care practice across the UK and internationally.

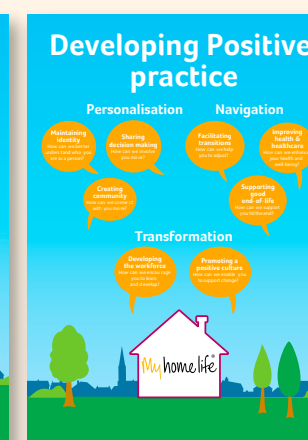
At the heart of MHL is a focus on relationships. Meaningful connections between residents, staff, families, services and communities are fundamental to delivering high-quality care. Through collaboration and co-creation, MHL promotes a shared vision for a better future in care.

As we reflect on two decades of progress, there is much to celebrate – from strengthened relationships to improved care experiences and empowered communities. Looking ahead, the focus remains on listening, learning, and working together.

“Here’s to the next 20 years of My Home Life and to continuing to build a future where everyone living and working in care settings can truly flourish.”



Our work is supported by **four key, evidence-informed frameworks** that help build confidence, strengthen partnerships, and support care teams to improve experiences.



View online at www.myhomelife.org.uk/research



20 Years of Impact



3,700+

Care leaders have completed leadership programmes



163,000+

Hours delivered on MHL values, relationship-centred care and frameworks in care settings



1,900+

Hours of free creative workshops provided in care settings



1,543+

Participants engaged in creative activities



6,000+

Younger and older people linked together through intergenerational initiatives



100+

Free resources developed and available for use to support quality in care settings

Improving lives, strengthening relationships and shaping the future of care settings since 2006.

Support provided

To thousands of care settings to improve culture and quality

Leadership quality

Strengthened leadership quality and collaborative cultures

Research & reports

Produced sector-leading research, reports and publications

Active collaboration

Across 5 international partners (UK nations and Australia)

Improved support

Improved quality of support for individuals and families

Reduced system pressures

Contributed to improved outcomes in care services and reduced NHS pressures

Policy development

Supported policy development and sector engagement

Trained facilitators

45 trained facilitators supporting care leaders

Professional development

Built peer networks for ongoing professional development

Extended influence

To care settings in Germany and Tasmania

Positive cultures

Enabled transformational culture change

200+ presentations

Delivered 200+ conference presentations

My Home Life Charity

Working Together

Established in 2020, My Home Life Charity ensures the long-term sustainability of the My Home Life movement.

Trustees operate on a voluntary basis, supporting partners and responding flexibly to sector needs.

The Charity enables collaboration across partners, sharing resources, attracting funding, and creating opportunities for research, practice and social action.



England

Established in 2006, MHL England's mission is to improve quality of life for people wherever they are supported, by empowering confident care leaders, improving care experiences and creating sustainable care systems. Part of City St George's, University of London, we work with all types of care organisations, including care homes, homecare, supported housing, and with wider systems.



Key achievements include:

- Over 2,700 care leaders completing a MHL England professional support and development programme.
- Approximately 98% of care leaders improving the quality of their leadership.
- Conducting extensive research, including *Thriving in Residential Care* (2024) and *Improved Outcomes Through Partnership Working* (2026).



We support managers and leaders through our flagship Professional Support and Development Programme (PSDP), and a growing range of bespoke offers.

5 key outcomes of our programmes include:

- Improved leadership quality and care cultures
- Increased staff morale and retention
- Better support for individuals and families
- Stronger engagement with regulators
- Improved service quality and reduced pressure on systems

We've also connected hundreds of care settings with their local community through the national *Care Home Friends and Neighbours* (Care Home FaNs) programme.

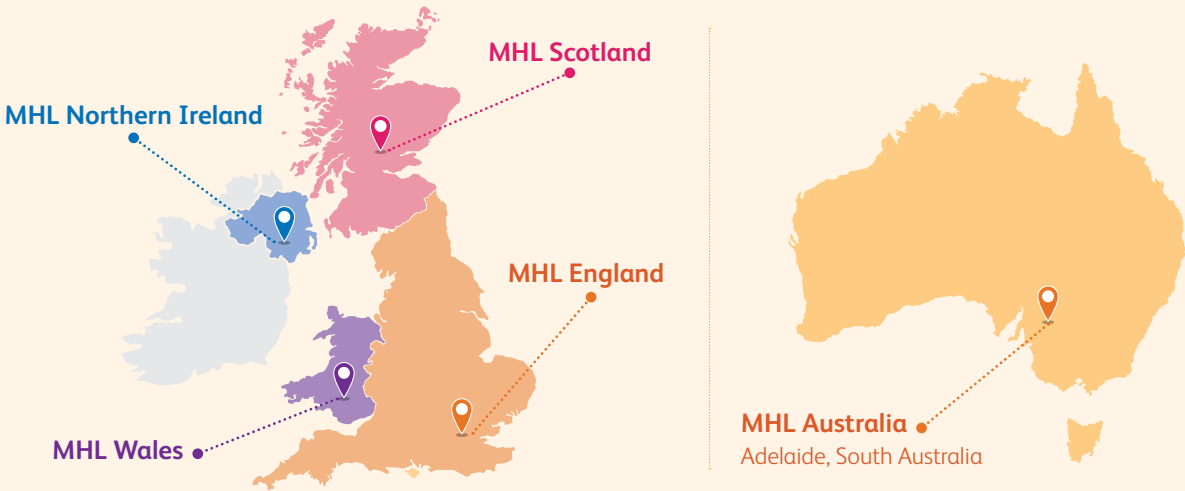


"My Home Life is a real game changer for many managers. Beyond all the valuable benefits it brings to leadership and practice, one of its greatest strengths is the way it helps to build a sense of community, something that truly responds to the needs we have as managers."

Konrad, Care Home Manager

The MHL Partners

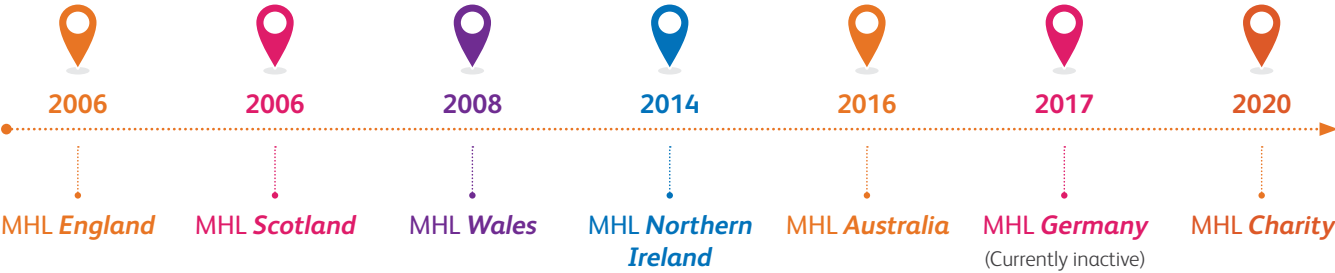
Making an impact across the **UK** and **Australia**



The Partners' journeys to deliver and develop the MHL Vision

Each My Home Life Partner brings a distinct and individual contribution to the MHL movement, shaped by their own context, priorities, and achievements. While every partner charts a unique path – defining their own progress, impact, and successes – these diverse efforts are united through a shared foundation.

Growth of the MHL movement



Scotland



Beginning in 2006, our base initially was the University of the West of Scotland. More recently our base is Robert Gordon University Aberdeen. MHL Scotland has focused on learning in practice, working alongside staff, residents and families.



1,000
practitioners

Over 1,000 practitioners have been engaged in health and social care settings.

A defining part of our journey has been the time spent in practice. As My Home Life facilitators, we have spent time with social care staff in their own care settings, being alongside them to help to understand their context, implement learning, modify our philosophy and resources, and work directly with the families and residents. This allows for genuine reciprocal learning.

There has been continual movement in what is offered. Moving with the times, and with what chimes for those who live, work and visit care homes.

MHL Scotland is proud of its growing suite of resources - a series of tools, underpinned by the evidence-based frameworks which have been developed in Scotland to help build relationships and connections, facilitate learning and enable growth.

Research has always been a central part of the Scotland story, woven into our practice and reflecting the underpinning frameworks of My Home Life including Caring Conversations and the Senses Framework.

“Research did not sit on the outside looking in. It walked alongside, listening, adjusting, learning from those who lived the work each day. It asked not just what works, but for whom, and in what way, and is there a new possibility.”

Wales



Established in 2008 with Welsh Government support, MHL Wales has worked directly with care homes and other care settings to encourage, support and promote quality of care, dignity and respect for care home residents through creative arts projects, programmes, training and events.

Key achievements include:

- › Development of 8 Good Practice Guides
- › National Conversations on Care Home Support
- › Public Health Wales Care Home Improvement Programme (2019–2023)
- › Policy work on arts in care homes
- › The cARTrefu project (2015–2021) delivered large-scale arts engagement, showing measurable improvements in wellbeing and a strong social return on investment
- › Introduction of Grant Schemes

“Dignity and respect are two basic requirements for anyone to maintain a good quality of life while living in a nursing or residential care home.”

John Moore, Manager, My Home Life Wales

cARTrefu Project stats

Phase 1:

- › 1952 hours of free creative provision in care homes.
- › 1543 residents attended one or more sessions.

Phase 2:

- › 11 artists had completed residencies in 6 care homes, 1 artist, 5 care homes.
- › 16 artists received specialist dementia training.
- › Social return on investment shows £6.48 return on every £1 invested.

Phase 3:

- › 40 introduction to cARTrefu care home workshops.
- › 16 introduction to cARTrefu artists workshops.
- › Activity plans developed with 47 care homes, 25 were new to cARTrefu by artists and residents.



“My hip was giving me a lot of pain this afternoon, but I started colouring and I went to a place away from the pain.”

cARTrefu participant

Northern Ireland



Award-winning research collaboration winners

Introduced through Ulster University, MHL NI delivered our first Leadership Support Programme in 2014 and expanded with Department of Health funding from 2020.



Our achievements:

- › 428 care leaders, from 276 care settings, have completed the MHL Leadership Programme.
- › Independent Department of Health evaluation of the Leadership Programme highlighted improved confidence, leadership skills, staff wellbeing and quality of care.
- › Strong policy influence and national recognition.
- › 26+ quality improvement initiatives co-created with care leaders and widely shared across the health and community care sector.
- › Award-winning research collaboration (2026).
- › Focus on relationship-centred practice to build positive, meaningful cultures in care homes and other care settings.

“Ulster University’s delivery of the My Home Life (MHL) Leadership Support Programme for Care Homes on behalf of the Department, has been one of the key drivers in improving the quality of life for care home residents, relatives and staff across Northern Ireland (NI) since 2013.”

Mike Nesbitt, Health Minister,
Department of Health (2025)



“I’ve been a care home manager for 20 years and this has been the most rewarding programme for me as a manager. I would do it all over again!”

Care Home Leader, MHL Programme

Australia



Established in 2016 through the Innovation Hub, MHL Australia adopts the MHL model with a community of practice of Aged Care Providers. The Innovation Hub works across a range of areas, improving quality of life for people receiving care, improving the sustainability and skill base of those working in care across many care settings.

 **137**
graduates

To date 137 graduates have completed our MHL Leadership Programme

MHL Australia’s aim is to improve care through evidenced based innovation. We are collaborating with State Government and Flinders University to evaluate our programme and the impact of My Home Life principles on people with complex needs and their families

At MHL Australia, we provided training for the Repat Neuro Behavioural Unit, a specialist dementia service. The unit has contributed significantly to developing MHL for this client group and is recognised as a leading practice in supporting people experiencing dementia (and their families) who can not be supported in mainstream aged care.

“I wasn’t sure what to expect through my participation in My Home Life, but I left my first engagement inspired, energised, and equipped with practical ideas to lead real culture change to support those people that live with dementia that are entrusted to us with their care: a truly transformational experience.”



Ben Hall,
CEO Barossa Village, Australia



Repat Neuro Behavioural Unit
‘Graduation Group, RNBU’

My Home Life Leadership Programmes

Led by professional MHL Facilitators, MHL Leadership Programmes equip care leaders with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enhance their leadership practice, apply evidence-based relationship-centred approaches, and effectively resolve complex operational challenges.

The Programmes provide the space and support for care leaders to reflect upon and engage in a journey towards positive cultural change. These improvements contribute to higher-quality services and positive outcomes for residents, relatives, and staff.

“There is nothing quite like watching a group transform through their My Home Life Programme. The impact reaches far beyond the participating leaders – it shapes how their teams work, influences their organisational culture, and touches the everyday experiences of people receiving care and support, their families, and the wider community. The ripple effects are huge, and guiding that journey is incredibly rewarding.”

MHL Facilitator





3,700

care leaders

Over 3,700 care leaders have completed leadership programmes



45

facilitators

45 trained MHL facilitators supporting care leaders



Care Leaders who completed the MHL (NI) Leadership Programme (2025)

“I think the My Home Life programme should be the standard... In fact, I think it should be part of the process of becoming a registered manager.”

Care Manager, MHL Northern Ireland

“My Home Life came into my life at a time when I doubted myself in my career, was struggling with my staff, had a vision for my home that wasn't working the way I wanted. I was close to burn out and walking away from social care.”

“No one had treated us the way My Home Life England did. With understanding and compassion. Equipping us with the right tools to survive this crazy, stressful, but rewarding business of adult social care. We all felt we were onto something life changing here. Because of My Home Life, I am still in social care and making a positive difference, not just in my care home but also in my organisation.”

Rikki, Care Home Manager, MHL England



“My Home Life has helped us pause, reflect, and lead with intention. Through shared learning and caring conversations, our leaders gained new confidence, deeper self awareness, and a renewed commitment to relationship centred care. The result has been stronger teams, better outcomes for residents and families, and a culture that continues to grow from strength to strength.”



Michelle Church,
CEO St Basils Homes,
MHL Australia

“Since I joined my programme, my management skills have developed. MHL gave me confidence in my leadership, and a platform to express my feelings. Even after 10 years, I am still attending a My Home Life England CPD group with other great managers, and we share our feelings there and we cry and laugh.”



Josi George,
Home Manager,
Mundy House
Care Home /
Permacare Limited,
MHL England

Promoting Positive Cultures

By working together and co-creating solutions, My Home Life promotes a shared vision with a strong, coherent, relationship-centred approach to improving the quality of care and promoting positive cultures by aligning to the eight My Home Life best practice themes.

The Repat Neuro Behavioural Unit (RNBUnit)

One tool that has been particularly embraced is A Way With Words, and the principle that ‘Words Create Worlds’. The RNBUnit team is continually reflecting on the use of language and how this can impact on those hearing these words. We make an effort to ‘flip language’ all the time, but also engage with those in our care and their family, as well as staff to focus on a specific word or phrase in our ‘word of the month’ where all alternate options are brainstormed collectively and shared.

We have seen a significant shift in how notes are documented, how we handover care and how we communicate with each other and our residents and family. Other services frequently notice this and are keen to learn from us, and we are always excited to share.



South Adelaide Local Health Network (MHL Australia)



Grace, MHL Leadership Support Programme Participant, Northern Ireland

Oral Health for Care Home Residents

Information was collected about how our residents felt about oral health and how confident or knowledgeable our care staff felt about providing mouth care. We found that whilst staff said they understood oral care they did not feel confident in doing it effectively. By the end of our quality improvement project over 95% of staff felt confident and over 90% of residents had a personalised dental care plan.

We provided in house training, identified how to make care plans more meaningful, and created posters for staff, residents and relatives to consider the importance of good oral health. We used images to help residents with communication difficulties to input to the project throughout.

Model Handling Complaints Procedure

Complaints handling is a core responsibility in health and social care leadership. As care managers we reflected on how complaints are dealt with in our own setting. Complaints were seen as difficult and not much fun to deal with. A core theme that emerged early was a perception among staff that complaints are solely a ‘management problem’.

We explored the importance of challenging this mindset recognising that effective complaints handling must be a shared responsibility – that complaints are ‘everybody’s business’. Embedding this collective approach is key to building a culture of openness, learning, and continuous improvement.

We were able to help shape a procedure that will have a real and lasting impact on our sector and we’re now in a stronger position to put it into practice. We understand it. We can share that understanding and we can support others with insight and confidence. What was once a process we may have seen as complex, burdensome, even unwelcome, now feels more manageable, more meaningful, and ultimately more empowering.



Care Home Leaders, Cohort 27, My Home Life Northern Ireland

What the future looks like?

“Collaboration has always been central to My Home Life.

As the sector evolves, the focus remains on improving quality across all care settings and expanding internationally.

A strategic review with partners will ensure that My Home Life continues to respond effectively to future challenges.”



Des Kelly, OBE
Chair of My Home Life Charity



Thank you!



*Over the past 20 years, the commitment and support of partners, practitioners and communities have shaped the **My Home Life** journey.*

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to inspiring compassionate, collaborative leadership – ensuring continued progress for everyone living, working and visiting care settings.

*To everyone who has been part of our story so far, and to those who will join us in the future, **THANK YOU.***

If anything in this document is of interest and you would like further information, please contact the relevant MHL Partner listed below.

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