

The Manor reborn

A new and exciting chapter is unfolding here at Wellburn, as we expand our care services across the region for those living with young onset dementia.

→ **By Isobel Moran**

In March of last year, we celebrated the opening of The Manor at St Catherine's - the region's first dedicated home for those living with young-onset dementia, one of only a handful nationwide. The idea for The Manor came from a critical need and gap in dementia care for younger people, whilst renovating our St Catherine's home.

The R&D phase alone for this project highlighted some stark and sobering realities when dealing with young onset dementia. The lack of support and understanding in this country is astounding, with virtually no age-appropriate care available that allows younger people with dementia to remain social, independent and maintain key aspects of their former lives, ultimately providing a better quality of life.

We knew something had to change, and thus The Manor at St Catherine was born. It quickly gained momentum and fast forward to the present day, The Manor is truly thriving, providing age-appropriate care for younger people with dementia, allowing them to live happy and fulfilling lives. This is making a huge difference not



only for young people with dementia but for their support networks too, as we help them navigate this uncertain period in their loved ones' lives.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, as we collaborate closely with our friends at the York-based charity Dementia Forward. The transformations we have witnessed among our clients at The Manor at St Catherine's have been truly heartwarming, and fill us with pride that we're already making a difference. But with our success came the realisation of just how needed this service truly is. Enquiries were coming in not only locally but all across the UK, highlighting a huge gap and need for age-appropriate, specialist care. People across the UK were crying out for a service that, up until now, simply didn't exist.

This success led us to expand our model up north into Newcastle, where again, we found a woeful lack of support for young people with dementia, let alone any specialist facilities to care for them. And so, The Manor at Eighton Lodge was born, sitting proudly on the grounds of our Eighton Lodge Care home in Gateshead. Set to open in the summer of 2024, we're already well on our way to establishing our second Manor and here's how we made it happen.

The transition from one to a second young onset dementia home certainly brought challenges and plenty of valuable lessons along the way. Our biggest challenge so far has been navigating the restructure of our existing Eighton Lodge care home

to create 'The Manor at Eighton' with the least disruption whilst still maintaining the true concept of what good young onset care looks and feels like. At Eighton Lodge, we had a brand-new lounge/café area that wasn't used much because residents found it difficult to get to, naturally gravitating towards other areas of the home. The garden area to the side of the home also wasn't ideal for those with limited mobility. Choosing the best location for our second Manor involved many considerations but ultimately, Eighton Lodge's location on the A1 next to the Angel of the North, access within the home, garden space, and minimal disruption potential made it the perfect choice.

So far (fingers crossed), we haven't faced too many structural issues, but there have been some exciting changes. Once the work is complete, The Manor at Eighton Lodge will boast a brand-new entrance and garden space specifically for this separate facility, to make it feel as homely as possible. Since many people with young onset dementia are likely to still be working, pursuing careers, hobbies, and even raising young children, it's crucial that we create a space where they can maintain their independence, socialise, and continue enjoying their hobbies.

Our main challenge in terms of staff has purely been ensuring the work causes minimal disruption to the home. We've held several consultations with the staff at Eighton Lodge, who are all very excited about this new chapter in Wellburn's history and the transformations we're making. Our staff will be the driving force behind these exciting changes in supporting people with dementia of all ages, making it an exciting journey for them to be part of too.

The main difference between The Manor at St Catherine's and the new Manor at Eighton Lodge is that we now have a year of experience and learnings under our belt with this new type of service, which we can apply right from the get-go to the second Manor. Working in what used to be uncharted territory, we now have the knowledge to really understand what good dementia care means for younger people and how to provide the best age-appropriate,



person-centred care. On top of this, we've built fantastic new relationships with leading experts in the field, charities, and, most importantly, the families of those we care for, who have become part of our Manor family. Structurally, The Manor at Eighton Lodge will be on one floor, unlike the two floors at St Catherine's, but we're confident it will still feel like home, offering the same flexibility and 'home from home' living that makes The Manor at St Catherine's so successful.

As a business, we have long supported people living with dementia across our 14 homes, so while St Catherine's introduced new dementia design and specialist technology, we're not unfamiliar with this type of care. And Eighton Lodge is no different—our staff are fully trained and have all the necessary skills to support those living with dementia. This new service at Eighton has invigorated the home, creating a new excitement and enthusiasm to support different generations with dementia - something which hasn't been done before.

Amidst these exciting developments, we're also embarking on a new journey →



“Our legacy has always been about supporting communities, and making a difference in people’s lives.”



← that will impact how we care for those in our homes, making sure we’re always one step ahead. To lead this effort, we’ve brought in world-renowned dementia expert Professor David Sheard to spearhead a 12-month transformational programme called ‘Path’, in collaboration with our friends at York-based charity, Dementia Forward. This initiative focuses on a culture change to redefine our approach to dementia care across all our homes.

We have already started rolling out the programme in our flagship dementia specialist homes in York and will use this expertise to implement changes across all our homes, beginning with Eighton Lodge given the expansion of The Manor here. The end goal is to establish a company-wide culture of excellence in dementia care, gradually introducing the ‘Path’ project to all our homes. (Scan the QR code to read more about ‘Path’.)

So, there’s a lot happening at Wellburn—not just with our expansion of The Manor into Newcastle to offer specialist care for more people with young-onset dementia, but also internally as we work behind

the scenes to gradually roll out our ‘Path’ programme. All of these efforts combined are driving us towards delivering the best possible dementia care, both in the quality of care we provide and the physical dementia facilities our homes offer.

And with the advent of the second Manor on the horizon, the future at Wellburn is looking bright. As long as The Manor and its services are needed, we have a successful model to replicate across our other homes, allowing us to expand further into new areas and provide hope to more people living with young onset dementia. This is just the beginning.

Speaking about her motivations for creating a second Manor, Wellburn’s Chairman, Rachel Beckett, says: “Our legacy has always been about supporting communities, making a difference in people’s lives, delivering the best care possible, and reinvesting in our homes. Of course, businesses need to make a profit to survive but not only did my dad re-invest huge chunks of that profit but so have I. With enquiries for The Manor coming in far and wide across the UK, we know there are

so many families that need our support – we need to expand quickly. I am very passionate about making this a legacy of hope for those who so desperately need it.”

So, not only is the creation of a second Manor a huge part of Wellburn’s future and a way for us to ensure the continued success of our family-run company, but more importantly, The Manor at Eighton Lodge will be a beacon of hope for people across the country living with young-onset dementia and their loved ones too. This expansion marks a new era of support, care, and hope for those who need it most. ■

Life

To keep up to date with what's going on across all of our homes, visit:
→ wellburncare.co.uk/life

or follow us:
f @wellburncare

26
Out and about

We take a look at what our residents have been getting up to in and around our homes.

28
Latest news

We catch up on all the latest news and goings on from all fourteen of our care homes.

32
The Dish

We bring you a super tasty, delicious dessert recipe, perfect for summer.

34
Book club

We offer up some great reads and listens for you to sit back, relax and enjoy this summer.