Oxfordshire Care Awards 2027

Terms and Conditions

and

Awards Guidance

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If you can't decide in which category to enter…

…Let OACP choose…

We will allocate your nomination to the most appropriate category.

Thank you for your interest in the Oxfordshire Care Awards 2027.

The 2027 Categories

There are 12 Awards to choose from with a refresh of previous Award categories for 2027:

Category	Primary focus
1. Rising Star	Potential and early achievement
2. Care Home Excellence	Outstanding practice in residential care
3. Domiciliary Care Excellence	Outstanding practice supporting people at home
4. International Contribution	Contribution of internationally recruited staff or support for international colleagues
5. Emerging Leader	Leadership potential and development
6. Outstanding Leader	Sustained leadership impact
7. Nursing and Clinical Excellence	Clinical excellence and person-centred nursing
8. Outstanding Team	Collective achievement
9. Complex Care Excellence	Supporting people with complex needs
10. Oxfordshire Hero	Going above and beyond
11. Long Term Service	Sustained contribution over many years
12. Innovation and Improvement	New approaches delivering measurable benefits

If you are not sure, select ***Let OACP choose*** in the online entry form to submit your nomination and we will allocate your submission to the most appropriate category.

Rules for entry

Awards are open to individuals, teams and organisations working, volunteering, contributing to or receiving adult social care support in Oxfordshire. **Anyone may submit a nomination.**

The Awards cover care work from **1 March 2026 onwards**, except Long Term Service Award, which recognises contribution over *at least* 10 years.

One nomination per entry.

All entries are treated confidentially.

Entries will be judged by a panel of reputable, independent and impartial adjudicators.

Entries will not be returned.

The Judges' decision is final and no discussion will be entered into.

How to enter

Choose the category in which you want to nominate a colleague, or team.

If you are entering into more than one category, separate entries must be completed.

Please read the Awards Judging Criteria carefully.

Write a statement of up to 600 words saying why the nomination should be considered.

Additional evidence from a service user/ resident/ client/ family member is welcomed, but not essential.

If possible, please provide a photograph of the nominee to help us celebrate shortlisted nominees and winners.

If you would like to add more information to support your online nomination, please use the **Add file** option in the entry form.

Additional evidence should be no more than two A4 pages.

Please make sure that the **name of the nominee** and the **award category** is included on all supporting information.

Please do not include logos, or links to websites, social media etc.

All nominations are shortlisted from multiple submissions: be clear why this individual or team stands out from your usual service delivery.

Complete the online entry form and submit.

Entries will be received at **awards@oacp.org.uk**.

This is the email address for any queries or follow up.

When you submit your form online, you will receive a confirmation e-mail: please check your junk folder for receipt. If you do not receive acknowledgement, please email us at the above address.

Closing date for Nominations is midnight on Friday 2 April 2027

Top Ten Tips for Writing Winning Nominations

Make your nomination stand out. Competition standards increase year on year.

We do not know why a person or team is outstanding. Convince us.

1. Think carefully about who in your team, or which team, deserves additional recognition for their work over the last 12 months, or, in the case of Long Term Service, their contribution over 10 or more years.
2. Read the Rules of Entry above.
3. Check the Award criteria and try to evidence each bullet point.
4. Write out your supporting statement. Pause.
5. Re-read your supporting statement. Are you convinced? Is it succinct and relevant?
6. When ready, copy and paste the wording into the online form at **https://oacp.org.uk/oxfordshire-care-awards-2027**, or attach the document/ image. Keep a copy of your final submission.
7. Check that you are nominating the person in the right category for their role, or ***Let OACP choose***.
8. Add a photo of the Nominee. We will use it to showcase our stars of 2027.
9. Tell the Nominee, their manager/ their employer (where relevant). All Nominees are winners just by you recognising them.
10. And relax – you are going to make someone very happy.

1. Rising Star Award

This award recognises an individual who is at the beginning of their care career and has already demonstrated exceptional potential, commitment and impact.

The award is open to anyone who is new to the adult social care sector, including apprentices, students, trainees, support workers, care workers or those who have joined care from another profession.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Has worked in adult social care for **two years or less** or is currently undertaking a recognised care qualification or apprenticeship.
- Demonstrates **a genuine passion** for providing high-quality, person-centred care and support.
- Has quickly developed the **knowledge, skills and confidence** needed to make a positive contribution to their role.
- Makes **a meaningful difference** to the lives, wellbeing, independence or outcomes of the people they support.
- Consistently demonstrates the **values** of kindness, compassion, dignity, respect and professionalism.
- Shows initiative, **a willingness to learn** and a commitment to personal development.
- Has **earned the respect** of colleagues, people who draw on care and support, and/or family members.
- Has the **potential** to become a future leader, specialist or role model within the care sector.

Nominators should **provide examples of the nominee's achievements** and explain the impact they have made during the early stages of their care career.

2. Care Home Excellence Award

This award recognises an outstanding individual working in a residential, nursing or specialist care home who consistently delivers high-quality care and support and makes a positive difference to the lives of residents.

The award is open to care workers, senior care workers, activity coordinators, support staff and other frontline colleagues working in a care home setting.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Consistently delivers compassionate, person-centred care that promotes dignity, choice, independence and wellbeing.
- Builds positive, trusting and meaningful relationships with residents, families and colleagues.
- Goes above and beyond normal expectations to enhance the quality of life of residents.
- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of individual needs, preferences, life histories and aspirations.
- Makes a measurable difference to residents' wellbeing, happiness, confidence or sense of belonging.
- Acts as a positive role model and consistently upholds the values of the organisation and the care sector.
- Supports colleagues, shares knowledge and contributes to a positive team culture.
- Demonstrates professionalism, reliability and a commitment to high standards of care.
- Responds creatively and proactively to challenges to ensure the best possible outcomes for residents.

Nominators should provide specific examples of how the nominee has improved the lives of residents and explain the impact of their actions on individuals, families, colleagues or the wider care home community.

3. Domiciliary Care Excellence Award

This award recognises an outstanding individual who provides exceptional care and support to people in their own homes or in wider community settings.

The award is open to home care workers, support workers, personal assistants, supported living staff and others who help people to live independently and lead fulfilling lives within their own homes and communities.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Consistently delivers compassionate, person-centred care and support that promotes dignity, choice, independence and wellbeing.
- Builds positive, trusting relationships with the people they support, their families and other professionals.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of the individual's needs, preferences, aspirations and rights.
- Goes above and beyond expectations to help people achieve their goals, maintain independence and participate in their community.
- Enables people to exercise choice and control over their lives and the support they receive.
- Adapts their approach to meet changing needs and responds positively to challenges and complex situations.
- Makes a demonstrable difference to the quality of life, wellbeing, confidence or independence of the people they support.
- Acts as a positive role model, demonstrating professionalism, reliability and a commitment to high standards of care and support.
- Contributes positively to their team, service or local community and reflects the values of adult social care.

Nominators should provide specific examples of how the nominee has made a difference to the lives of the people they support and explain the impact of their actions on individuals, families or the wider community.

4. International Contribution Award

This award recognises an individual, team or organisation that has made an outstanding contribution to adult social care through international recruitment, inclusion, development and support.

The award is open to internationally recruited care professionals, teams, managers, providers and organisations working across adult social care in Oxfordshire.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Has made a positive and lasting contribution to adult social care through international recruitment, workforce development, inclusion or support.
- Demonstrates a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, creating opportunities for people from different backgrounds to thrive.
- Has enriched their workplace, team, organisation or the wider care sector through their skills, experience, knowledge or leadership.
- Has improved outcomes for people receiving care and support through high-quality, person-centred practice.
- Builds positive relationships with colleagues, people who draw on care and support, families and partner organisations.
- Demonstrates professionalism, compassion, respect and a strong commitment to the values of adult social care.
- Has overcome challenges and shown resilience, initiative and determination in achieving positive outcomes.
- Has supported learning, integration, career development or wellbeing for internationally recruited colleagues.
- Has made a measurable contribution to workforce sustainability, staff retention, quality improvement or organisational culture.
- Additional considerations for employer or organisational nominations

Judges will be particularly interested in evidence that the organisation:

- Has developed effective and ethical approaches to international recruitment.
- Provides comprehensive induction, pastoral support, supervision and development opportunities.
- Supports international colleagues to settle successfully into their workplace and local community.
- Demonstrates strong retention rates, employee satisfaction and positive career progression opportunities.
- Promotes inclusion, wellbeing and belonging throughout the employee journey.
- Has created initiatives that could serve as examples of good practice for other care providers.

Nominators should provide clear examples of the difference the nominee has made and explain how their contribution has strengthened adult social care, improved outcomes for people receiving care and support, or enhanced the experience of internationally recruited colleagues.

5. Emerging Leader

This award recognises an individual who is at the beginning of their leadership journey and is already demonstrating the skills, behaviours and commitment needed to become an exceptional leader in adult social care.

The award is open to team leaders, senior care workers, coordinators, deputy managers, first-line managers and others who have taken on leadership responsibilities in the last two years, or are developing into a leadership role.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Demonstrates strong leadership potential and a commitment to making a positive difference for people receiving care and support.
- Leads by example, consistently demonstrating the values of compassion, dignity, respect, inclusion and professionalism.
- Positively influences colleagues through their attitude, actions and approach to supporting others.
- Takes initiative, accepts responsibility and shows confidence in addressing challenges and improving practice.
- Encourages teamwork, collaboration and a positive workplace culture.
- Supports, motivates and develops colleagues to deliver high-quality care and support.
- Shows a commitment to personal learning, leadership development and continuous improvement.
- Has introduced ideas, improvements or changes that have had a positive impact on people receiving care and support, colleagues or service delivery.
- Demonstrates resilience, adaptability and a willingness to learn from experience.
- Shows clear potential to become a future leader within the adult social care sector.

Nominators should provide examples of how the nominee has demonstrated leadership qualities, influenced others and contributed to positive outcomes. Particular emphasis should be placed on their potential for future leadership and the impact they have already achieved in the early stages of their leadership journey.

6. Outstanding Leader Award

This award recognises an exceptional leader who has inspired others, driven positive change and made a lasting impact on the quality of care and support provided within their organisation.

The award is open to registered managers, deputy managers, senior leaders, service managers, directors and others who demonstrate outstanding leadership within adult social care.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Provides inspirational leadership that creates a positive culture for people receiving care and support, colleagues and partners.
- Leads by example, consistently demonstrating the values of compassion, dignity, inclusion, integrity and respect.
- Has made a significant and measurable difference to the quality, safety or effectiveness of care and support within their service or organisation.
- Empowers and develops others, supporting colleagues to grow in confidence, knowledge and skills.
- Creates an environment where people feel valued, listened to and able to contribute their ideas.
- Successfully leads through challenges, demonstrating resilience, accountability and sound judgement.
- Promotes innovation, continuous improvement and learning to achieve better outcomes for people who draw on care and support.
- Builds strong relationships with families, professionals, community partners and other stakeholders.
- Demonstrates a commitment to workforce wellbeing, retention and creating a positive workplace culture.
- Has achieved sustained impact through their leadership, resulting in better outcomes for people, teams and services.

Nominators should provide clear examples of how the nominee's leadership has influenced others, improved services and delivered positive outcomes. Particular emphasis should be placed on the difference their leadership has made to people receiving care and support, colleagues and the wider organisation.

7. Nursing and Clinical Excellence Award

This award recognises an individual who delivers outstanding clinical care and support, helping people achieve the best possible health, wellbeing and quality of life outcomes.

The award is open to registered nurses, nursing associates, care workers, senior care workers, support workers and others working in adult social care who undertake clinical or delegated healthcare tasks as part of their role.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Delivers safe, effective and person-centred care that promotes dignity, choice, independence and wellbeing.
- Demonstrates excellence in supporting people's health needs through skilled practice, sound judgement and attention to detail.
- Makes a significant and positive difference to the health, wellbeing or quality of life of the people they support.
- Demonstrates competence and confidence in clinical or delegated healthcare tasks relevant to their role, while working within their training, competence and responsibilities.
- Works collaboratively with individuals, families, colleagues and health professionals to achieve positive outcomes.
- Recognises and responds appropriately to changes in a person's condition, helping to ensure timely and effective support.
- Advocates for the people they support, ensuring their needs, preferences and wishes are understood and respected.
- Acts as a role model for high standards of care, professionalism and compassion.
- Supports colleagues by sharing knowledge, encouraging good practice and contributing to a culture of learning.
- Contributes to improvements in care quality, clinical practice, safety or health outcomes within their service.

Nominators should provide clear examples of how the nominee's knowledge, skills and actions have improved health, wellbeing or quality of life outcomes for the people they support. Particular emphasis should be placed on the difference they have made through excellent clinical practice, delegated healthcare support or the management of complex health needs.

8. Outstanding Team Award

This award recognises a team that works together to deliver exceptional care and support, making a positive and lasting difference to the lives of people who draw on adult social care services.

The award is open to teams from any adult social care setting, including care homes, home care, supported living, extra care housing, day services, community services, specialist services, shared lives, personal assistant networks and other care and support services.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the team:

- Works collaboratively to provide high-quality, person-centred care and support.
- Demonstrates a shared commitment to dignity, respect, inclusion, independence and wellbeing.
- Places the needs, wishes and outcomes of the people they support at the heart of everything they do.
- Builds positive relationships with individuals, families, colleagues, volunteers and partner organisations.
- Demonstrates excellent communication, cooperation and mutual support within the team.
- Has achieved outstanding outcomes for people receiving care and support.
- Responds positively and creatively to challenges, adapting to meet changing needs and circumstances.
- Promotes a positive culture where all team members feel valued, respected and able to contribute.
- Supports learning, development and continuous improvement within the service.
- Has made a measurable difference to the quality, safety, effectiveness or experience of care and support.

Nominators should provide clear examples of how the team has worked together to achieve exceptional outcomes and explain the difference they have made to the people they support, their families, colleagues and the wider community.

9. Complex Care Excellence

This award recognises an individual or team that has demonstrated exceptional skill, compassion and dedication in supporting people with complex, specialist or highly individual care and support needs.

The award is open to staff working in any adult social care setting, including care homes, home care, supported living, specialist services, day services and community-based support.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Delivers outstanding person-centred care and support to individuals with complex physical, mental, behavioural, neurological or learning disability-related needs.
- Demonstrates exceptional understanding of the person's unique circumstances, preferences, strengths and aspirations.
- Supports individuals to maximise their independence, wellbeing, choice and quality of life, regardless of the complexity of their needs.
- Shows creativity, flexibility and persistence in overcoming barriers and finding solutions that improve outcomes.
- Builds positive and trusting relationships with the people they support, families, advocates and professional partners.
- Demonstrates skill and confidence when supporting individuals whose needs may require specialist knowledge, approaches or interventions.
- Promotes dignity, rights, inclusion and equality, ensuring the person's voice remains at the centre of decision-making.
- Responds calmly and effectively to challenging situations while maintaining high standards of care, professionalism and compassion.
- Works collaboratively with colleagues and partner organisations to coordinate support and achieve positive outcomes.
- Has made a significant and measurable difference to the life, wellbeing, independence or opportunities of the people they support.

Examples of complex or specialist support may include, but are not limited to, learning disabilities, autism, acquired brain injury, dementia, mental health needs, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, behaviours that challenge, palliative and end-of-life care, neurodegenerative conditions, or complex health conditions.

Nominators should provide clear examples of how the nominee has gone above and beyond to improve outcomes, overcome challenges or help an individual achieve goals that may previously have been considered difficult or unattainable.

10.Oxfordshire Hero Award

This award recognises an individual who has gone above and beyond their role to make an exceptional difference to the lives of others.

The award is open to anyone working, volunteering or supporting adult social care in Oxfordshire. This includes frontline care staff, ancillary staff, administrators, coordinators, maintenance teams, catering staff, receptionists, trainers, drivers, volunteers, office-based staff and others whose contribution may not be recognised through other award categories.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Has demonstrated exceptional commitment, kindness or dedication beyond the normal expectations of their role.
- Has made a significant and positive difference to the lives of people who draw on care and support, families, colleagues or the wider community.
- Consistently lives the values of compassion, dignity, respect, inclusion and professionalism.
- Has shown initiative, determination or creativity in overcoming challenges or responding to difficult situations.
- Inspires others through their actions, attitude and commitment to helping people.
- Demonstrates a willingness to go the extra mile to support others.
- Makes a positive contribution to the culture, morale or success of their organisation, team or local community.
- Has shown exceptional commitment during a particular event, challenge or period of change, or has consistently demonstrated outstanding dedication over time.
- Embodies the very best of adult social care and serves as a role model for others.
- This category is intentionally broad and seeks to recognise those individuals whose contribution may not fit neatly into another award category, but whose actions deserve special recognition.

Nominators should provide clear examples of how the nominee has gone above and beyond, explain the difference they have made, and describe why they deserve to be recognised as an Oxfordshire Care Hero.

11.Long Term Service Award

This award recognises an individual who has made a sustained and exceptional contribution to adult social care over many years, demonstrating unwavering commitment to the people they support, their colleagues and the wider sector.

The award is open to anyone working or volunteering in adult social care in Oxfordshire. Nominees will have made a significant contribution over a period of at least 10 years, although judges may take account of the overall impact of their service rather than length of service alone.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to adult social care and the people they support.
- Consistently delivers high standards of care, support or service over an extended period.
- Has made a lasting and positive difference to the lives of individuals, families, colleagues or communities.
- Demonstrates the values of compassion, dignity, respect, professionalism and inclusion throughout their career.
- Has earned the respect and trust of people receiving care and support, colleagues, families and partners.
- Acts as a positive role model, inspiring others through their dedication, knowledge and experience.
- Has contributed to the development of colleagues, services or the wider care sector through mentoring, coaching, sharing expertise or promoting best practice.
- Has remained committed to improving the quality of care and support throughout their career.
- Demonstrates resilience, adaptability and a continued passion for making a difference.
- The award recognises not simply length of service, but the lasting impact an individual has had throughout their career. Judges will be looking for evidence of a sustained contribution that has enriched the lives of others and strengthened adult social care in Oxfordshire.

Nominators should provide examples of the nominee's achievements, contributions and influence over time, explaining why they are deserving of recognition for their long-term service and commitment.

12.Innovation and Improvement Award

This award recognises an individual, team or organisation that has introduced a new idea, approach, process or way of working that has delivered measurable improvements in adult social care.

The award is open to care providers, care professionals, teams, managers, support functions, volunteers and partner organisations working across any adult social care setting in Oxfordshire.

Judges will be looking for evidence that the nominee:

- Has identified an opportunity to improve care, support, workforce wellbeing, safety, quality, efficiency or outcomes.
- Introduced a new idea, service, initiative, technology, process or way of working that has delivered positive results.
- Demonstrates creativity, initiative and a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Has achieved measurable benefits for people who draw on care and support, families, staff or the wider organisation.
- Has successfully engaged colleagues, people receiving support, families or partners in the development and implementation of the improvement.
- Demonstrates how the innovation addressed a challenge, solved a problem or improved an aspect of service delivery.
- Can evidence positive outcomes, learning or impact resulting from the innovation or improvement.
- Has created an approach that could be sustained, expanded or replicated by others.
- Reflects the values of person-centred care, dignity, inclusion and continuous learning.

Innovation does not have to involve technology. Judges welcome nominations covering service redesign, workforce initiatives, quality improvement, partnership working, environmental improvements, community engagement, digital solutions, new models of care, training programmes, co-production initiatives or any other improvement that has made a meaningful difference.

Nominators should describe the challenge or opportunity that was identified, explain what changes were introduced and provide evidence of the impact achieved.

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