



Making the most of
Care Home Open Week



Introduction

Care Home Open Week is your chance to showcase modern social care and to educate your community about what matters in care. How the relationships, creativity, professionalism and joy define everyday life in your home.

In 2025 around a third of care homes took part in Care Home Open Week, and close to two million people engaged with events. The event continues to grow as an important tool to build public understanding of care.

This guide will help you use Open Week to bring people closer to your home, increase understanding of what social care really looks like, and offer high quality learning experiences for the community.



Educating your community about modern care

A practical guide for participating care homes

Why educating the community matters

Many people rarely step inside a care home, and public perceptions often lag behind the reality. It can feel like the media only wants to share bad news but there is a shift toward telling a more positive, lifestyle focused story about care — emphasising wellbeing, community, companionship and belonging.

Care Home Open Week gives you the perfect setting to:

- Show the warmth, professionalism, and skills of your team
- Celebrate residents' interests, talents and stories
- Demonstrate what high quality, person centred care looks like
- Inspire young people to consider careers in the sector
- Build long term relationships with local partners



Inviting community groups in

Reaching out to diverse groups brings fresh energy and helps widen understanding across generations. Consider inviting:

Local schools

Perfect for PSHE lessons, citizenship topics, careers education, or social history projects.

Scout and Guide groups

Visits can directly support badge work on:

- Community
- Healthy Living
- Caring/Volunteering
- Communication & storytelling

U3A

Active retirees often love taking part in intergenerational projects, talks, tours, and discussions.

Colleges & Sixth Forms

Especially departments focused on health and social care, psychology, catering, arts or media.

Local businesses & Chambers of Commerce

They will understand the sector better and may become long term supporters.

Faith Groups, Choirs, Arts Organisations, Sports Clubs

Many welcome opportunities to perform, run activities, or collaborate.

These kinds of partnerships were strongly encouraged in previous Open Weeks, where care homes were invited to build meaningful community connections through open days and musical, intergenerational and local activities.



Planning an educational visit: A suggested structure

Here is a simple structure that that you could follow for organised visits during Care Home Open Week:

1. Welcome & Introduction

(10 minutes)

- Greet visitors warmly
- Introduce your team and your home
- Offer a short explanation of what social care is and who it supports
- Provide simple printed leaflets or storyboards explaining:
 - Daily life
 - Types of roles in care
 - What person centred care means



2. Guided Tour

(20–30 minutes)

Your tour could include:

- Communal areas (lounges, dining room)
- Activity spaces or garden
- The staff room or training room (to show professionalism and learning)
- Memory or sensory spaces if you have them

During the tour, explain:

- How staff work as a team
- How care plans are created
- How activities support wellbeing
- How independence is encouraged
- How residents shape life in the home

This aligns with the sector's shift to highlighting lifestyle, community and belonging in care environments.



3. Take part in an activity

(20–40 minutes)

Invite visitors to join an activity taking place that day. Ideas include:

- A sing along or music session (see materials on our website from Music for Dementia and Glad to Care for help with this)
- Gardening or planting
- Art or craft workshop
- Quiz or reminiscence session
- Intergenerational games
- A wellbeing activity like chair yoga

Make sure activities are accessible, fun and inclusive.



4. Conversations with residents and staff team members

D. (10–20 minutes)

Set up small, informal conversation stations where visitors can chat to:

- Residents (in pairs or small groups)
- Care workers
- Activity coordinators
- Nurses or team leaders

Conversations help the community better understand the professionalism, skill and warmth that go into modern social care.



5. Careers & Community Impact Corner

(Optional)

For older students or community groups, set up a small “Careers in Care” table explaining:

- Different job roles
- Routes into care
- Apprenticeships or volunteering opportunities



Linking visits to community learning goals

To help groups use their visit meaningfully, you can map activities to their existing learning frameworks:

Schools (KS1–KS4 / PSHE):

- Citizenship & community
- Understanding ageing
- Healthy lifestyles
- Social responsibility
- Career exploration

Scouts & Guides:

Many badges include themes such as:

- Helping Others
- Communication
- Community
- Health & Wellbeing
- Photography or storytelling (if they document their visit)

U3A Groups:

- Lifelong learning
- Arts, history or music interests
- Community engagement projects

Colleges:

- Health & social care coursework
- Dementia awareness
- Safeguarding and care standards
- Work experience tasters

Providing a simple “learning link” sheet helps leaders plan the visit around their goals.



Tips for running a great visit

1. Keep it warm and relaxed

Authenticity matters more than polish.

2. Let residents lead where possible

Visitors love hearing real stories and experiences.

3. Showcase creativity

Music, art, gardening, cooking — these tell powerful stories about life in your home.

4. Use visuals

Display boards, photos, artwork and memory walls help visitors understand care intuitively.

5. Encourage follow ups

Invite groups back for seasonal events, volunteering or intergenerational projects.



Promoting your visits

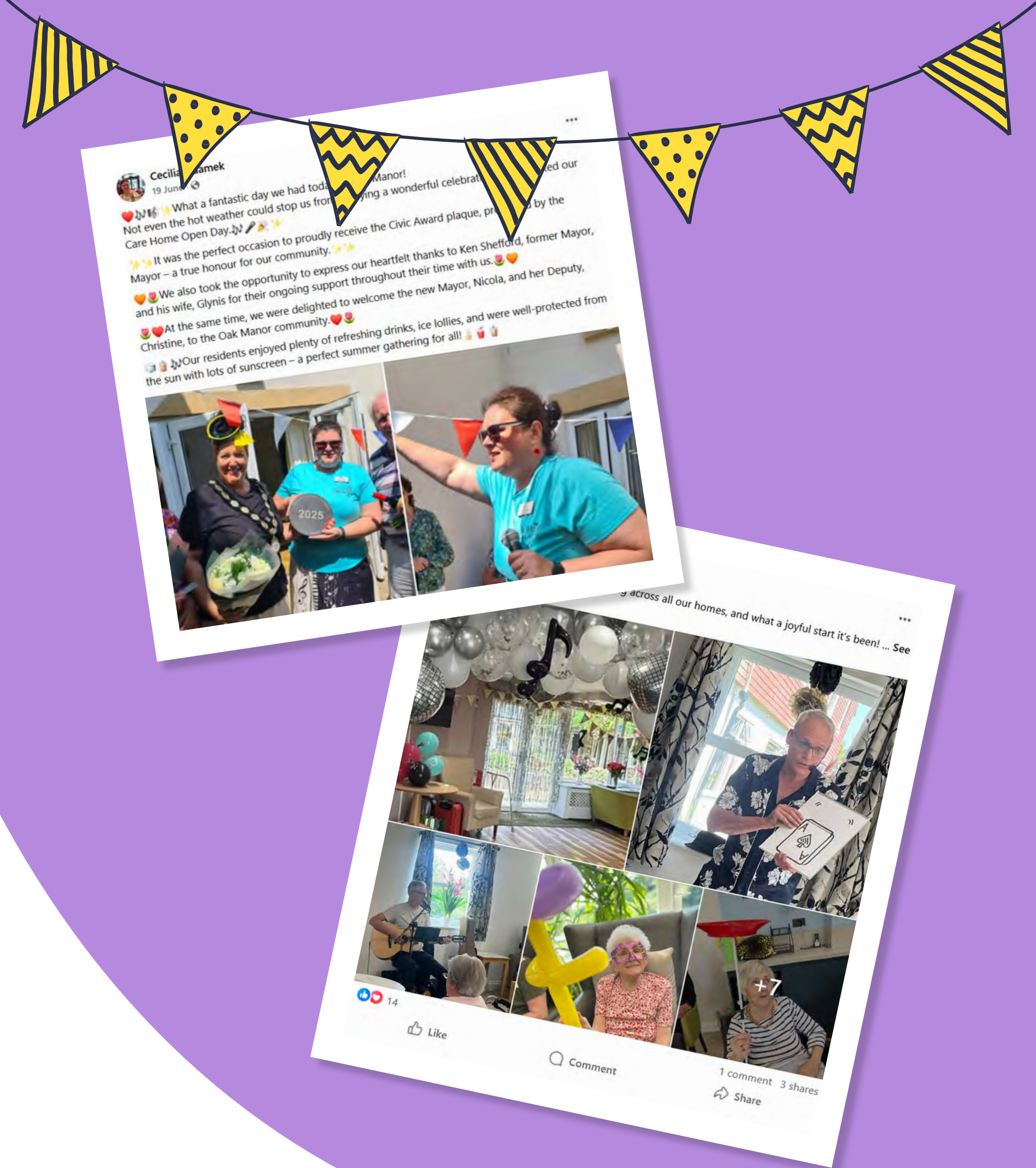
Use:

- Social media
- School newsletters
- Community noticeboards
- Local radio (they often love covering Open Week stories)
- Local newspapers and online community forums

And most important of all: let us know what you are doing so it can be added to the interactive map of events on our website.

Check out the communications and promotional materials that you can download from the Care Home Open Week website.

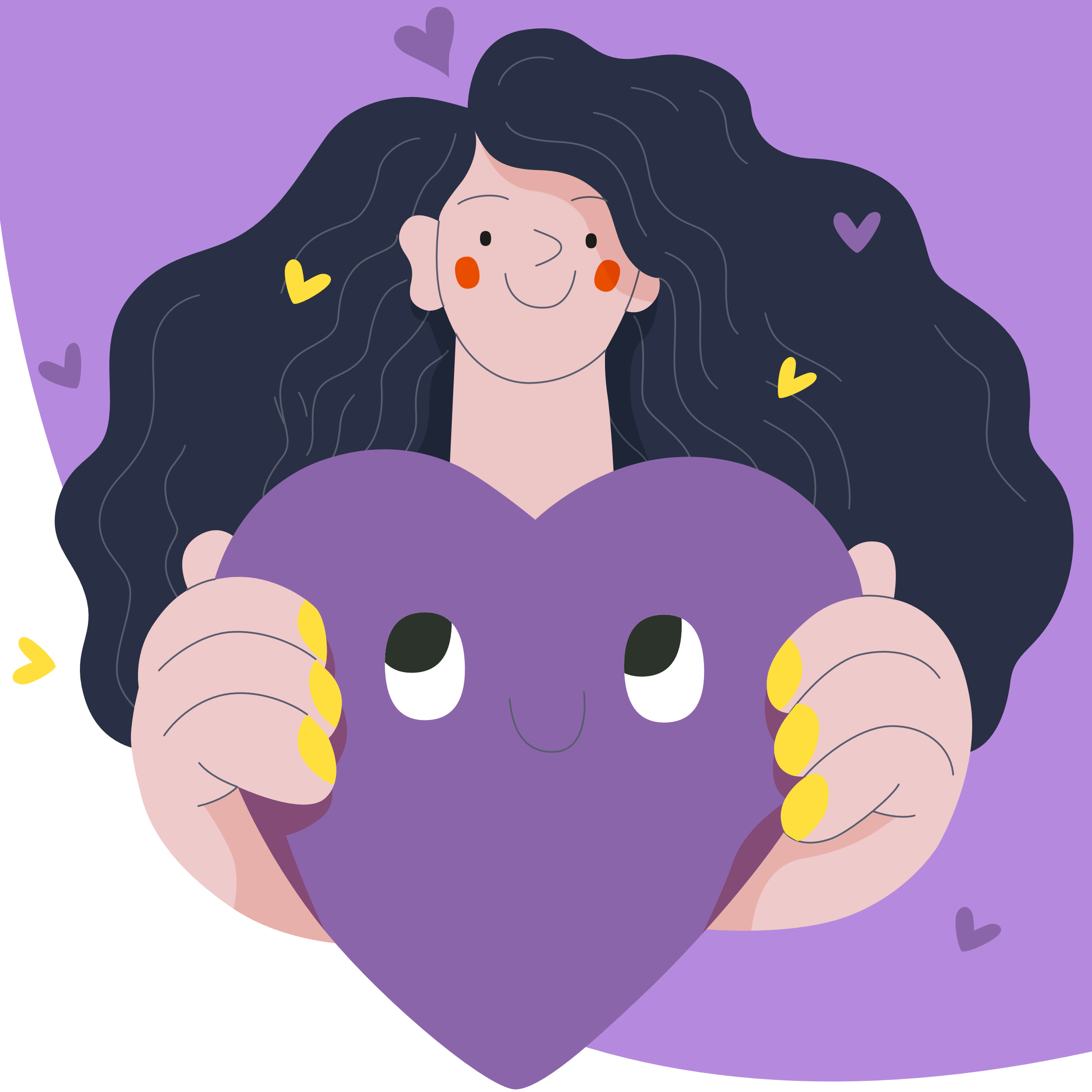
And remember to highlight what visitors will learn, not just what they'll see.



A final thought

Every visit you host has the power to transform how people think about care. By opening your doors, sharing your expertise, and celebrating your residents, you play a huge role in shaping a more informed, compassionate view of social care in the UK.

Care Home Open Week is your opportunity to make that difference — and to bring your community closer than ever before.





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