



Rhiannon Ward  
**Operations Director**

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The SilverCrest Group is a group of specially designed care homes located in Swansea, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf, and Pontypridd in South Wales. We are dedicated to providing the highest quality care and fostering vibrant communities, with residents' health and wellbeing as our top priority.

Our staff are caring, respectful and dedicated professionals who share our vision of providing a safe and happy environment. Our residents have the freedom to live as independently as they like with full support from our wonderful staff.

### **Why did you sign the Employer Pledge?**

As a care home group, the wellbeing of our people is paramount, and without them, we would not be able to provide the highest standards of care. We are committed to providing an environment where staff know it is acceptable to talk about their mental health and remove the stigma attached to it.

Working in care has always been challenging, but following the pandemic, our staff faced more emotional pressures, loss, lack of resources, and heavier workloads, all leading to stress, anxiety and burnout. We knew we needed to put something in place to support our staff further which is why we implemented an Employee Assistance Programme. Although some staff chose this option, which they found extremely beneficial, we recognised a lot of staff were not always open to discussing their mental health and how it was affecting them at work and at home, which was probably due to the stigma surrounding it.

After we heard about this initiative, we became aware of what more could be done to help the staff, which is why we have signed the Employer Pledge.

Now, with Time to Change Wales on board, we will continue making positive changes in the workplace, with more resources and support from TtCW Champions and management.

### **How do you promote mental health awareness?**

Mental health awareness will be promoted effectively to our employees through a targeted communication strategy.

Firstly, we will be holding a management meeting and then appointing Employee Champions across the five care homes, who will be given full training by Time to Change Wales with an information pack, clear signposting, and urgent contacts at hand. As an organisation, we will share our objectives around mental health awareness with them as well.

We will promote national awareness days such as Time to Talk Day, Mental Health Awareness Week and Stress Awareness Month, during which employees will have the opportunity to learn more about how they can improve their mental health and the services available to them.

We have recently enhanced our Employee Wellbeing Programme (EAP) so they, along with their friends and family, have emotional and mental health support 24/7. We also hold internal staff appreciation days, thank you days and general wellbeing days, which are designed to lift morale and improve their mental health.

All of this will be promoted through our internal newsletters, which will include employee case studies detailing how they have dealt with struggles with mental health and how they have benefitted from our wellbeing offers, as well as FAQs. We will have a text service, which means we can send information about our wellbeing offers and mental health support reminders more frequently. This will also be enhanced with posters and other literature in our staff areas. When staff have their supervisions with management, we have added a section on staff wellbeing where they are reminded of our support services. This also allows us to check in with each other and support one another.

**What long-term actions will you take to enable a positive mental wellbeing environment in your workplace?**

We will be looking at strengthening the support for our Employee Champions, possibly increasing the number of volunteers who become Employee Champions and ensuring they are confident and comfortable in supporting staff. We will aim to pull them together as a team, which will hopefully be overseen by our Wellbeing Lead. This will help us reach our goal of establishing peer support networks or 'buddy systems' across the organisation, where staff can provide emotional support to one another and share coping strategies.

We are currently in the transition of changing external HR partners and conducting a full review of our HR policies. We will encourage our leaders and managers to lead by example by prioritising their own mental health and actively supporting staff wellbeing initiatives. Greater focus will be placed on organising wellbeing initiatives such as mindfulness sessions, stress management workshops, or physical activity programs to support staff in maintaining their mental health which our dedicated in-house activities team will support.

A key to establishing a long-lasting positive mental wellbeing environment is ensuring that we foster a culture of openness and support, provide continuous training and development opportunities, ensure resources are available for mental health services, and demonstrate leadership commitment to promoting staff mental health and wellbeing. This will, therefore, help us create a psychologically safe environment for our colleagues, where they can speak up, feel safe to challenge, be open, honest, vulnerable, and feel safe to make mistakes. Ultimately, staff need to know that they are not alone and that it's time to change and talk.

