

## Birchgrove: Putting you first, every time!

January is a tough month. Not only are the days dark and weather grim, but this year in particular January has felt that much more bleak. And worst for older people facing real loneliness because their families are terrified of giving the virus to parents they love and want safe.

It's neither doom or gloom here at Queensgate Apartments in Sidcup. We've been purposeful and busy. Our residents were among the first in the country to receive the Pfizer vaccine in December, all receiving their second jab in January.

We've also welcomed many new

residents into our fold, most safely moving to be among others and not alone. We've created a new role 'Resident Champion' to better support our residents' emotional and physical wellbeing. As the 'go-to person', both ladies in the role are already appreciated by residents and families alike. Their sole focus is to look after the more personal needs of our residents as well as liaise and reassure relatives who know their loved ones have someone there for them, when they just can't be.

We caught up with Karen, one of our Resident Champions, to find out a bit more about her role and what she's been doing after hearing so many lovely stories about the help and kindness she's been giving those who live at Queensgate Apartments.

"I work closely on a one-to-one basis with my residents, and I'm here to provide emotional support, encouragement – be that friendly shoulder – as well as help them with their day-to-day needs and concerns.

It can be anything from a friendly chat or helping them with something in their apartment to escorting them to a hospital or doctor's appointment. I am solely there for them. To champion their needs and rights as their advocate.

"Everyone here is under my wing, they are my second family - one of the ladies even calls me her surrogate daughter, which is lovely. I've really got to know everyone as individuals, understanding their different moods, feelings, emotions – because everyone is different. So, recognising, respecting and accepting that different people need different things is important. I'm here to fight their corner and do what's absolutely best for them.

"I've spent a fair bit of time at the hospital during lockdown, but its not all hospital appointments, mostly it's being observant and being there for people. I like to think this is the real difference that sets Birchgrove apart, from anywhere else. It's that human touch. That genuine empathy and kindness that goes



above and beyond anything I've witnessed. It makes me feel very proud to be part of the team."

Queensgate Apartment provides modern and spacious 1, 2 and 3 bed self-contained apartments for people in later life who want to continue living independently in their own home, but with assistance and support available should they need it. If you would like to find out more about Queensgate Apartments, get in touch with the team at Birchgrove on 020 3929 5599 or visit [www.birchgrove.life](http://www.birchgrove.life)

