

## Hello my name is Wendy

and, as the Administrator of Vanguard Care, I try to keep the rest of the team in order, as well as our carers, our clients and their families.



I started working with Vanguard Care in January 2015 (I actually applied for the position whilst on honeymoon in Cornwall!).

My role is office based and I am responsible for all aspects of administration, from ensuring that all new clients' and carers' paperwork is in order to invoicing our clients and sending out quality feedback forms to clients and carers. I am usually the first voice most people hear on the end of the telephone, and we all adopt the practice of answering the telephone with a smile! I also make the best cup of tea if you want to come and visit us in the office at any time.

I am an outgoing person with a wicked sense of humour and I enjoy meeting and talking to people. The majority of my career in Administration and Management has been in customer-facing roles as I was a Post Office Manager for nearly 20 years and an NHS Dental Practice Manager for 5 years. Most recently I worked for the Royal British Legion, and my husband and I are still actively involved with the charity and the local Branch activities.

I am originally from Cheltenham and moved to Tewkesbury 25 years ago and, despite the well-known flooding, I love the town. My husband and I own a small cottage in one of the old alleys in Tewkesbury and local legend states that our house was once lived in by one of Admiral Nelson's crewmen. We love the community spirit of living in a small town and we like to be involved in local events. We have two small rescue dogs who keep us busy and at week-ends we all enjoy long walks out into the surrounding countryside. I love to read and listen to music and I am also a keen clay-pigeon shooter, although a little out of practice at the moment!

## Vanguard's 25th Anniversary

We are proud to announce that Vanguard Care's 25th anniversary takes place on 15 May 2016.

Vanguard Care was first established in 1991 in Shropshire by Vanessa Woodward and her husband Captain Robert Woodward after his retirement from the Royal Navy. Prior to his retirement, Robert served on HMS Vanguard, hence the company name.

After being a 'Navy wife' for many years, Vanessa wanted to do something worthwhile after her husband's retirement and their relocation to rural Shropshire. They already had a retirement home in Greece, but she felt that she had another 10 years of working life in her, during which she could contribute something to the wellbeing of society in general. After talking with her friends, colleagues and acquaintances, Vanessa developed the idea of starting a local care agency mainly concentrating initially on housekeeping and companionship for the elderly in the private sector.

The business was first registered on 15 May 1991 and soon acquired a number of clients in Shropshire and the West Midlands. Over the next few years, word-of-mouth referrals encouraged Vanessa not only to develop the clientele into other areas of the UK (and the Channel Islands) but also to extend Vanguard's services towards personal care and a wider age range.

After the Woodwards' sale of Vanguard and their retirement to Greece in 2001, the company moved to its current location in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire and expanded the national base whilst still retaining its high standards of service. To this day, Vanguard remains a small personal agency providing live-in homecare in the private sector mainly for the elderly. Whilst we cover the whole of the UK and Channel Islands, we carefully restrict the number of clients to ensure that our high standards of premium service are maintained and are individually tailored to clients' needs.

Furthermore, unlike many other similar agencies, our professionally-qualified Care Manager personally carries out every care assessment, designs the client's care plan, and is responsible for its proactive ongoing implementation and management, all of which ensures that our clients' personal needs are met whilst remaining in their own home.

## Message in a bottle

Have you heard of a 'message in a bottle'?

No, it's not the usual message from a shipwrecked sailor in the archetypal glass bottle found on the local beach after floating thousands of miles from a lonely desert island, or even the eponymous Police hit of the 1980s. It's something much more important than either of those.



It is a simple plastic bottle containing a piece of paper listing vital information about clients and directed at the emergency services. This allows them to make quick and accurate decisions on what action to take at the point of contact, which could save a life in an emergency at home.

The distinctive white and green bottle is placed in the refrigerator door where the emergency services are trained to look. A green cross sticker is placed on the inside of the main house door (or where it is considered would be most obvious) and another sticker is put on the door of the fridge. Vanguard's carers are also made aware of the message in a bottle.

The information provided should include the location of medications and latest prescriptions, contact details, major medical conditions, personal doctor and anything considered necessary that would need attention in those first critical moments.

**Vanguard Care can supply bottles and forms free-of-charge.**

## UPDATE - Government cop out on care costs

The definition of a 'cop out' is "an excuse designed to shirk responsibility", and that is exactly what our government have done when it comes to funding the increasing costs of care in the UK.

Not only have the government introduced the so-called National Living Wage from 1 April 2016 (which is an admirable social objective, but, at a time when councils are reducing their funding of care cost, who pays?), but also they have pushed back a cap on care costs to at least 2020. The current system is means tested, so you pay for what councils deem you can afford, and anyone with assets or income over £23,500 must start paying for care after the first 12 weeks. However, a move that would have introduced a £72,000 lifetime cap on care fees has been delayed by the government.

Furthermore, whilst councils are required by law to offer deferred payment arrangements which allow people to borrow money to pay for care against the value of their home, they are not being told by councils that such a scheme is available, leaving families under the impression that they have no choice but to sell their homes to pay for the care of their loved-ones.

### What a mess!

- Answers To Quiz:
1. Boxing.
  2. Niagara Falls. The rim is worn down about two and a half feet each year because of the millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.
  3. Asparagus and rhubarb.
  4. Strawberry.
  5. Dwarf, dwell and dwindle.
  6. Full stop, comma, colon, semicolon, dash, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark, exclamation mark, quotation mark, brackets, parentheses, braces, and ellipses.
  7. Lettuce.
  8. Six (and more) things you can wear on your feet beginning with 'S': Shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, skis, skates, snowshoes, stockings, stilts.

## A QUIZ FOR VERY BRIGHT PEOPLE!

These are not trick questions - they are straight questions with straight answers.

1. Name the one sport in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends.
2. What famous North American landmark is constantly moving backward?
3. Of all vegetables, only two can live to produce on their own for several growing seasons. All other vegetables must be replanted every year. What are the only two perennial vegetables?
4. What fruit has its seeds on the outside?
5. Only three words in standard English begin with the letters 'dw' and they are all common words. Name all three.
6. There are fourteen punctuation marks in English grammar. Can you name ten of them?
7. Name the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form except fresh.
8. Name six things that you can wear on your feet beginning with the letter 'S.'

## Some latest compliments of Vanguard Care

*'Many thanks to you all at Vanguard for all your help. I have been recommending Vanguard to my friends in similar situations with their elderly relatives.'* (Surrey - April 2016)

*'I am full of praise for G and cannot speak highly enough of her and how she has been with my parents.'* (Dorset - March 2016)

*'We have been extremely satisfied with Vanguard.'* (Staffordshire - March 2016)

*'S's time with my mother has been an unqualified success for which I have thanked her very much. She has got my mother and our family to a settled and happy situation, and our family is looking much more positive than it did. Thank you for your excellent services.'* (GP from Dorset - March 2016)

*'The carer was excellent and exactly the type of quiet calm carer suitable for my mother.'* (West Sussex - March 2016)

*'What a great job A has done caring for my father. He has loved her cooking and, listening to A talking to him, it's good to hear him chuckling and interacting so well.'* (Guernsey - March 2016)

*'Yes, I would certainly have her back – she is jolly and cheerful.'* (Somerset - February 2016)

*'You have been impeccable in the choice of carer and it is a joy seeing my father looking so well.'* (GP from Oxfordshire - February 2016)