**Care Minister praises Ambient for their work in supporting staff with vaccine uptake during virtual visit**

(11th March 2021) Care Minister Helen Whately met staff and service users from a selection of Ambient Support’s learning disability services during a virtual tour.

Ambient Support are a national charity that provide over 30 thousand hours of specialist care to people on a weekly basis to support a range of needs due to the ageing process, learning disability or mental illness.

Whilst there has been much discussion about how the pandemic has impacted older people living in care homes, Helen was keen to hear about the impact for people with a learning disability, especially those in supported living services.

She met with Ambient team leaders and service users from across the country to hear first-hand how frontline staff and the people they support have been coping during the pandemic.

She discussed many topics, including the Covid vaccine roll out and praised team leaders for their hard work in providing knowledge and continued support to help allay fears and dispel the myths for those hesitant about having the vaccine.

Two experts by experience, members of the service user ‘Ambient Guardians’ team, Philip and Jonathan who live in an Ambient supported living services, were also on the call. Both were keen to share with Helen how much their daily lives have changed.

The Guardians were set up when the pandemic first struck to ensure that people being supported by Ambient had their voices heard, when the usual face to face conversations could no longer happen. They explained that independent living is about being a part of the local community and it has been challenging and frustrating adapting to the restriction on movements and social interactions.

When Helen asked frontline managers how they are coping, they told how the extra administration needs as a result of the pandemic has put strain on staff and the challenges of keeping motivation up amongst team members. They were however optimistic that the vaccination brings hope for a brighter 2021 in the months ahead.

**Tom Harrison, Director of Operations at Ambient said:**

*“Thanks to the wonders of technology, Ms Whately was able to meet a broad spectrum of people from our services around the country and hear our feedback on the challenges we continue to face. It was encouraging to hear Helen thank our staff for their hard work and commitment and know this has not gone unrecognised.”*

**Following the tour, Minister for Care, Helen Whately said:**

*“It was fantastic to speak to staff and the people they care for at Ambient Support. It’s been a really hard time and it was clear staff have gone the extra mile for those they look after, particularly to make up for lack of usual activities.*

*“It’s great to hear how they are now supporting the vaccine roll out, with staff encouraging colleagues to be sure to get vaccinated. I urge everyone who is eligible to come forward for their vaccine as soon as they are offered it.”*

For more details on Ambient services please visit [www.ambient.org.uk](http://www.ambient.org.uk)

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**About Ambient Support:**

* One of the Top 20 generic Not-For-Profit Health & Social Care Providers in the UK Ambient Support (formerly known as Heritage Care and Community Options) is a registered UK charity with over 25 years’ experience
* They deliver services that meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable adults in our society. Operating in over 130 locations, they provide over 30 thousand hours of care to people on a weekly basis to support a range of needs due to the ageing process, learning disability or mental illness
* Their wide range of quality specialist services are delivered by dedicated, professional, and passionate staff and their success is built on supporting people to live a full and meaningful life.
* Ambient currently employs around 1,325 people across the UK in a number of settings
* Ambient can also help young adults who are transitioning from Children’s to Adult Learning Disability Services
* The Charity has an above industry average with 85% Registered Services rated as Outstanding and GOOD by CQC.

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