



CareChoice

**20**

Years of Care

GEM Awards 2026

# **CATEGORIES & CRITERIA GUIDE**

## GEM of the Year – Genuine Empathy and Motivation

This award celebrates an individual who truly embodies the CareChoice values of Compassionate Care, Enriching Lives, Honesty, Pursuit of Excellence and Transparency in everything they do. Their actions inspire colleagues and make a lasting difference to people in our care, their families and colleagues.

### Criteria

- Demonstrates genuine kindness, empathy and respect in all interactions.
- Demonstrates a meaningful positive impact on people in our care or their families.
- Inspires colleagues through consistent example and everyday actions.
- Consistently goes the extra mile to support others and enhance wellbeing.

## Legacy GEM Award – 20 Years of Dedication

This special anniversary award celebrates long-term commitment and contribution to the organisation. It recognises individuals whose dedication over many years has helped shape services, support colleagues and positively impact the lives of those in our care.

### Criteria

- Has completed twenty years of service with the organisation.
- Has made a lasting positive impact on people in our care and colleagues.
- Is highly respected by colleagues.
- Consistently represents organisational values in their work.

## Carer GEM of the Year – Residential Services

This award is open to carers working in CareChoice nursing homes and long-term residential care settings. This award recognises carers working in CareChoice residential services who demonstrate outstanding compassion, professionalism and commitment in supporting residents. It celebrates those who consistently embody the CareChoice values and make a meaningful difference to residents' daily lives.

### Criteria

- Demonstrates compassionate, respectful and person-centred care in all interactions with residents.
- Builds strong relationships with residents and their families.
- Promotes dignity, independence and choice in daily care.
- Demonstrates initiative and responsiveness in meeting residents' needs.
- Works collaboratively with colleagues to maintain high standards of care.
- Consistently enhances residents' wellbeing and quality of life.

## Carer GEM of the Year – Specialist Services

This award is open to carers working in the Acquired Brain Injury Unit, Independent Living Units and Parnell Road Stepdown facility.

This award recognises carers working in specialist services who demonstrate exceptional dedication, skill and empathy in supporting patients and service users with complex needs. It celebrates those who empower individuals to achieve the highest possible level of independence, participation and wellbeing.

### Criteria

- Provides person-centred support tailored to individual needs, goals and preferences.
- Demonstrates empathy and professionalism when supporting individuals with complex needs.
- Encourages independence, confidence and participation in daily life.
- Builds positive relationships with patients, service users and their families.
- Works collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams.
- Enhances quality of life and outcomes for those they support.



## The Roisin Preston Perpetual Award – Group Carer GEM of the Year

This award represents the highest recognition for carers across the organisation. It honours the individual who best exemplifies the CareChoice values and whose dedication has made an exceptional difference to the lives of people in our care and colleagues.

### Criteria

- Demonstrates exceptional compassion and dedication in their caring role.
- Has made a significant and lasting impact on the lives of those in their care.
- Is highly respected by colleagues and service users.
- Embodies the CareChoice values in action every day.
- Serves as an inspiration to others across the organisation.

## Clinical Excellence GEM Award – Nursing

This award recognises nurses who demonstrate exceptional professional standards and compassionate care. It celebrates those who combine clinical expertise with empathy, leadership and a strong commitment to improving the wellbeing of those they support.

### Criteria

- Demonstrates clinical leadership.
- Maintains high professional and clinical standards.
- Applies evidence-based practice.
- Provides compassionate and person-centred care.
- Mentors and supports colleagues.
- Contributes to quality improvement initiatives.

## Mealtime Experience GEM Award

**Small Service e.g. ≤100 beds / Large Service e.g. >100 beds.**

This award recognises teams who create exceptional mealtime experiences for people in our care. Mealtimes play a vital role in promoting dignity, wellbeing, nutrition and social connection, and this award celebrates teams who go the extra mile to ensure that every meal is a positive and enjoyable experience.

### Criteria

- Provides nutritious, well-balanced meals prepared to a high standard.
- Ensures meals are attractively presented and enhance the experience.
- Offers menus that reflect variety, choice and seasonal ingredients.
- Maintains a warm and comfortable dining environment.
- Promotes relaxed and social mealtimes.
- Ensure people in our care are offered meaningful choice at mealtimes and supported to make decisions about their meals.
- Respects individual dietary requirements, cultural preferences and personal routines.
- Adapts meals appropriately for those requiring modified diets or additional support.
- Ensures individuals who prefer or require meals in their rooms receive the same quality of service as those dining communally.
- Ensures meals delivered to rooms are served at the correct temperature, well presented and provided in a timely manner.



## Culinary GEM Award – Chef of the Year

This award recognises culinary excellence within our services. It celebrates chefs who provide nutritious, high-quality meals while responding to individual preferences and dietary needs.

### Criteria

- Adapts meals appropriately for individuals' dietary needs while maintaining quality and presentation.
- Creates visually appealing meals that enhance the mealtime experience.
- Ensures meals are delivered at the correct temperature and quality.
- Ensures dishes are prepared and served to a high standard and are as described on the daily menu.
- Ensures everyone is offered choices from the daily menu and that meals are adapted as needed.
- Maintains the highest food safety standards and stringent hygiene practices.

## Social Engagement GEM – Activities Team of the Year

This award celebrates teams who bring creativity, joy and meaningful engagement to people in our care. Through activities and events, they enhance wellbeing, connection and quality of life.

### Criteria

- Provides creative and engaging activities.
- Encourages participation and inclusion in activities.
- Enhances the wellbeing of those in our care.
- Enhances quality of life for people in our care.
- Maintains a structured programme of activities and events.
- Shares activities through newsletters, calendars or other communications.
- Participates in Network Meetings.
- Builds community partnerships.

## Facilities GEM of the Year

This award is open to maintenance staff, painters and drivers working across CareChoice facilities.

The Facilities GEM Award recognises individuals who play a vital role in ensuring our environments are safe, well maintained and supportive for people in our care and colleagues. Through their reliability, practical skills and commitment to service, they help ensure that facilities operate smoothly every day.

From maintaining buildings and equipment to ensuring transport runs safely and efficiently, these colleagues contribute significantly to the comfort, safety and overall experience of those in our care.

### Criteria

- Ensures facilities, equipment and surroundings are maintained to a high standard.
- Responds promptly and effectively to maintenance or operational issues.
- Contributes positively to the daily experience of those in our care through their work.
- For drivers, ensures safe, reliable and respectful transport for appointments, outings or services.
- Demonstrates dependability, a strong work ethic and pride in their role.
- Maintains high standards of safety, organisation and care in their work.
- Works effectively with colleagues across departments.



## Environment and Hygiene GEM – Housekeeping and Laundry Excellence

This award recognises the essential contribution of housekeeping and laundry staff in creating safe, clean and welcoming environments across CareChoice services.

Through their dedication and attention to detail, these colleagues help ensure that residents, patients and service users live in environments that promote comfort, dignity and wellbeing. Their work supports infection prevention, maintains high environmental standards and contributes to the overall quality of life of those in our care.

### Criteria

- Consistently maintains high standards of cleanliness and environmental hygiene across personal and communal areas.
- Supports infection prevention and control practices through safe and effective cleaning procedures.
- Ensures clothing and personal items of those in our care are handled with care, respect and attention.
- Maintains high standards in laundering, organisation and return of those in our care.
- Demonstrates care, thoroughness and pride in maintaining environments and personal belongings.
- Contributes to an environment where those in our care feel comfortable, respected and well cared for.
- Works collaboratively with colleagues across departments to support high standards of care.
- Demonstrates reliability, professionalism and a strong work ethic.

## Leadership GEM – Inspiring Leader Award

This award recognises leaders who inspire, support and empower their teams to deliver excellent care and services. Through strong leadership, integrity and clear communication, they create environments where colleagues feel valued, supported and motivated to perform at their best.

The award celebrates leaders who lead by example, foster positive workplace cultures and support their teams through both opportunities and challenges. These individuals demonstrate the CareChoice values in action and play a key role in developing others and driving continuous improvement.

### Criteria

- Encourages and supports colleagues to perform at their best.
- Creates an environment where team members feel valued, respected and motivated.
- Demonstrates honesty, professionalism and fairness in decision-making.
- Leads by example and consistently reflects the CareChoice values.
- Supports colleagues' professional growth and development.
- Encourages learning, mentoring and knowledge-sharing within the team.
- Creates an atmosphere of trust, collaboration and open communication.
- Promotes teamwork and mutual respect across roles and disciplines.
- Provides clear guidance and support during challenging situations.
- Encourages new ideas and continuous improvement within the team.



## Workplace Culture GEM – Team Spirit Award

This award recognises services that foster positive, supportive and inclusive workplace environments where colleagues feel valued, respected and empowered. It celebrates teams where collaboration, open communication and mutual support are part of everyday practice.

### Criteria

- Promotes an environment where colleagues feel respected and valued.
- Demonstrates strong team spirit and shared purpose.
- Encourages cooperation across roles, departments and disciplines.
- Shows how team members support one another to maintain high standards of care and service.
- Creates an environment where colleagues feel comfortable sharing ideas, feedback and concerns.
- Demonstrates appreciation for the contributions of team members.
- Celebrates achievements and supports colleagues during challenging times.
- Promotes a workplace where staff wellbeing is valued and supported.
- Encourages a culture of kindness, respect and mutual support.



## Support Services Excellence GEM Award

This award is open to administrative and reception staff, HR teams, finance teams and head office colleagues across the organisation.

The Support Services Excellence GEM Award recognises the vital contribution of colleagues whose work enables services to operate effectively every day. Through organisation, communication and professional expertise, these individuals and teams provide essential support that helps services run smoothly and allows frontline teams to focus on delivering excellent care.

Whether supporting services through administration, coordinating communication, managing resources or strengthening organisational systems, these colleagues play a key role in ensuring the organisation functions efficiently and effectively.

### Criteria

- Delivers reliable and effective support to services, colleagues or teams.
- Demonstrates a helpful, responsive and solution-focused approach.
- Contributes to the smooth and efficient running of services or organisational functions.
- Maintains high standards of organisation, coordination and communication.
- Identifies opportunities to improve systems, processes or ways of working.
- Contributes to initiatives that enhance efficiency or service delivery.
- Demonstrates professionalism, accountability and strong attention to detail.
- Consistently delivers high-quality work and supports colleagues when needed.
- Helps enable frontline teams to deliver high-quality care and services.

## Hidden GEM Award – Unsung Hero

The Hidden GEM Award recognises individuals whose contributions may not always be visible, but whose dedication and reliability make a meaningful difference every day. These colleagues quietly go above and beyond in their roles, consistently supporting residents, service users, colleagues and the organisation through their commitment and work ethic.

This award celebrates those who demonstrate the CareChoice values through their actions and whose efforts are deeply appreciated by those who work alongside them.

### Criteria

- Makes a positive and lasting difference through their daily work and actions.
- Demonstrates consistent commitment, dependability and a strong work ethic.
- Provides support to colleagues and contributes positively to the wider team.
- Demonstrates the CareChoice values of Compassionate Care, Enriching Lives, Honesty, Pursuit of Excellence and Transparency in their role.
- Is recognised by colleagues as someone whose contributions make an important difference.



## Rising GEM Award – Newcomer of the Year

The Rising GEM Award recognises employees who have joined the organisation within the past two years and have already made a strong positive impact in their role. It celebrates individuals who demonstrate enthusiasm, commitment and a clear passion for their work while showing strong potential for future contribution within the organisation.

This award highlights emerging talent and recognises colleagues who have quickly embraced the organisation's values and culture.

### Criteria

---

- Has joined the organisation within the past two years.
- Demonstrates strong performance and contribution early in their role.
- Shows enthusiasm, initiative and dedication in their work.
- Demonstrates the CareChoice values through their actions and interactions.
- Shows clear potential for continued growth, development and contribution within the organisation.



## Community Connection GEM Award – Intergenerational Collaboration

This award recognises services that create meaningful connections between residents, service users and younger generations through partnerships with schools, youth groups and community organisations.

These initiatives foster mutual learning, shared experiences and positive relationships across generations, enriching the lives of residents and service users while strengthening links between services and the wider community.

The award celebrates creativity, collaboration and commitment to building programmes that promote connection, inclusion and engagement.

### Criteria

- Develops opportunities for residents, service users and young people to interact through shared activities, learning or social engagement.
- Demonstrates regular and ongoing collaboration rather than one-off events or visits.
- Promotes enjoyment, social interaction and a sense of connection for residents and service users.
- Creates opportunities for young people to build relationships and gain insight into the experiences of residents or service users.
- Demonstrates creativity in developing partnerships and activities that strengthen intergenerational engagement.



## Hospitality GEM Award – Service Excellence

This award is open to kitchen porters, kitchen assistants, hosts and catering assistants.

This award recognises hospitality staff who contribute to creating positive and welcoming dining experiences for those in our care. Through their professionalism, attention to detail and supportive approach, these individuals play an important role in ensuring that mealtimes are enjoyable, respectful and well organised.

The award celebrates those who demonstrate warmth, reliability and teamwork while supporting the delivery of high-quality hospitality services.

### Criteria

- Interacts with residents, patients and service users in a friendly, respectful and supportive manner.
- Contributes to creating a positive and comfortable mealtime experience.
- Demonstrates professionalism, punctuality and a strong work ethic in their role.
- Shows care and attention in all tasks.
- Works effectively with catering and care teams to ensure mealtimes run smoothly.
- Helps ensure people in our care feel comfortable, respected and supported during mealtimes.



## Care Centre of the Year – The Ultimate GEM

This award represents the highest honour of the GEM Awards and recognises a CareChoice facility that demonstrates outstanding excellence across all aspects of service delivery.

The Ultimate GEM celebrates a care centre that consistently delivers exceptional care while creating a positive, supportive and enriching environment for people in our care, families and staff. It recognises services that demonstrate excellence in care quality, resident, patient and service user experience, teamwork and overall operational performance.

The winning facility will exemplify the CareChoice values in action, showing a strong commitment to dignity, compassion and continuous improvement while fostering a culture where people we support and colleagues can thrive.

### Criteria

- **Eligibility:** To be eligible for this award, facilities must be shortlisted as finalists in the Mealtime Experience GEM Award and the Workplace Culture GEM Award and the Social Engagement GEM - Activities Team of the Year
- Provides evidence of high-quality care and support delivered consistently to people in our care.
- Demonstrates positive inspection outcomes and strong regulatory compliance.
- Enhances quality of life for people in our care.
- Provides a strong mealtime experience that promotes dignity, choice and social interaction.
- Maintains a meaningful activities and social engagement programme that supports wellbeing and inclusion.
- Demonstrates innovation or service improvements that enhance care or daily life within the facility.
- Maintains strong occupancy levels, reflecting confidence in the service.
- Demonstrates financial performance and operational sustainability that support long-term success of the facility.