

What is it like to work in a Short Breaks and Residential service?

Helen Dance, (Care Worker) Wynhill Short Breaks Unit, Bingham

It can sometimes sound a little cliché when someone says how much they enjoy their job and how rewarding it is, but in my opinion, care work really is! Not only is it rewarding but it also gives you a huge sense of purpose, knowing that the people you are supporting are cared for and all their needs are met. Supporting people within a care service is a 'job', but I don't look at it in that way. I am someone whose heart truly belongs in care and I would like to share my story with you as.....

A Day in the Life of a Care Worker...

All days generally start the same. As a team we decide who we are to support, read their personal care plans and follow them as they are written for that person and dedicated to their needs and preferences. Although we are allocated people to work with, we are all part of team and offer support to each other and anyone who needs it.

Personal care is a huge part of our role, one which should not be rushed, as for many people, this is a time when they receive one to one time and a time when they enjoy the interaction. I like to feel that this time is a pleasant one and I enjoy supporting people to get ready for the day and look well presented. We always treat people in the way that we would like to be treated.

During the day we arrange activities and outings suited to people's personal interests. An example of an outing I have recently taken part in was a trip to the railway station. The gentleman I took was named 'Paul'. Paul is an avid train enthusiast, this is something he takes great interest in. Paul and I went to the train station and just sat on the platform looking at stationary trains and waiting for other trains to 'whizz' through the station. During the visit, I asked Paul if he was excited to see the trains, to which he replied 'yes' and had a huge smile on his face. I took a moment to sit back and watch Paul, I was in awe of how excited he was and how he expressed his feelings at watching trains and taking in the hustle and bustle of passengers getting on and off the trains. During this time I felt so privileged to be sitting there with Paul; not one day is ever the same as a carer.

We all have our own values and beliefs, some of us feel more rewarded as a carer than others, but this is just based on how we are as a person. I feel great satisfaction from the care and support that I offer, as I like to feel I have valued someone and made a difference to their day. This can be as simple as sitting chatting to someone I am supporting or taking them out on a trip or assisting with their personal care

It is only natural to have days where we are '*rushed off our feet*' due to being busy, however, having entered the day on a positive, I like to leave it on a positive knowing that I have given my all and have given the very best support I can to the very best of my ability, I then pick my bags up and go home hoping that I have made a difference to someone's day.

Michelle Hornblow, (Care Worker) Helmsley Road Short Breaks Unit, Rainworth

What's my job about? What's it like being a Care Worker?

I've worked in care for over 18 years and not every day has been the same. I enjoy care work for that reason, you just can't predict what's next in this role. Day shifts, afters, nights, one to one working, you can be doing one of them or all of them. I have worked every shift there is!

Every shift runs slightly different but it's very much the same job, supporting an individual in their life, being a part of their life and their families and carers too. We work in a person centred way, meaning that we respect everyone and give time for them to make their own choices in every area of their life. We help with guidance and support and change the care we give by taking their lead. We build care plans as we get to know people and by working with their families, carers and other teams who support them. We always encourage people to be as independent as they can.

It can be a very emotional job, like trying to keep professional throughout your shift when you see individuals you have known for a long time in pain or they have suffered a loss in their life. New people to the service are sometimes scared and confused and don't want to be there, but you are there to help them.

I am very much a people person and enjoy the chat, the laughter and the values of being a care worker. I get a lot of job satisfaction from supporting people and their families and working as a team. Some days are harder than others, the same as in many jobs, but in care it's a different type of being harder. You face many emotional challenges that some people will only face only a few times in their life, like losing someone you have known for years or seeing someone deteriorate in health. However, you also see people progress in their life and you know that you've been a part of that.

I enjoy all parts of my job, but supporting people out in the community to discos and dancing with people we support is so much fun! Seeing people happy and letting themselves go and wow! Some have the best moves... I try to be as good... but I'm way to stiff. I worry I am cramping their style sometimes!

Another part I truly enjoy is supporting our newcomers, those who are new to our service. It's a difficult time for carers and for the individual, but by slowly encouraging them and making it very person centred, the process is easier for everyone. For some people it just takes one visit, but for some it takes a year. Once they're settled with us and you see them coming up the path with a smile on their face... that's priceless! When their carers tell us they're having a break for a few days for the first time... that to me is amazing and what my job is about.

I've have had some people say to me, 'I don't know how you do care work, wiping bums and stuff'. My response is 'No! It's not just wiping bums, it's someone smiling, and it's taking someone to the shops, it's making someone's day'. ... Yes, it's tiring, messy, physically and emotionally demanding, but it's amazing too.

Cara Barnes (Care Worker), Holles Street Short Breaks Unit, Worksop

What's it like to be a care worker? What is my job about?

My job can vary every day, not one day is the same and that that's what makes my job unique!

It involves ensuring all the health needs of each individual are being met. Personal care is also part of my job and it can be very embarrassing for the person if not done right. I treat people with dignity and respect whilst talking to them and reassuring them throughout

Another part of my job is to support people to participate in activities and help gain independence with everyday life skills. I try to make activities person centred, which shows that I really know the person I'm working with. The response from doing this is really rewarding and this is just one of the reasons why I love my job!

To be a care worker you have to be fun, energetic, caring, enthusiastic, sympathetic, empathetic, patient and a good listener

I feel that it's the small things I do that make a difference to people's lives

Julie Matkin (Care Worker) 84, Church Street Residential Service

A typical day for me, if I was on a morning shift, would be to first check on the Church Street chickens, Pumpkin, Poppy and Churchill. We then have handover and get on with whatever we need to do. This could be medication, personal care, supporting people to go on outings or the day centre, support with meals and we also complete household tasks.

There is a great staff team at 84, with each staff member bringing something different to the service. This works well as all the people we support have very different personalities and enjoy different things. Some of them come out with some

cracking one-liners and we have a budding artist as well! The management team are great and also join in with the activities at 84. The morning shift finishes at 2.30pm and then I'm off home until the start of another day 😊