

Local heroes wanted

Since the beginning of the Covid pandemic, a spotlight has been shone on the amazing work of social care staff throughout our communities.

Local authorities and adult social care providers have worked together to ensure that despite all the challenges, there is a really strong local workforce to help those most in need to stay safe.

There are always great opportunities in the adult social care sector, whether for young people starting out in their careers or for those with valuable

transferrable skills and experience from other industries who are wanting to make a positive career change.

Unlike other sectors that have been hit by the pandemic, there continue to be lots of job opportunities within adult social care in Berkshire. These include supporting older people who may be frail or have dementia, or people with

learning disabilities or mental health problems. These job opportunities are in different settings, including supporting people in residential care or to remain living in their own homes. Some of these positions offer very flexible hours and suit people who may not want to work nine-to-five.

Jon

Jon, who spent almost 20 years as a nightclub manager, trained to become a Community Care Worker after Covid hit.



Jon has drawn on his personal experiences of looking after his dad, who has Parkinson's and terminal cancer, in his new role.

He said: "Coming out of my comfort zone has helped me to see we can help people in ways that I couldn't see before. Not only physically, but by being there for someone when they need it the most. It's about accepting different environments and providing dignity, choice and respect to people at all times.

"There aren't many male care workers out there, but it's a good job that can lead to further opportunities if that's what you're looking for.

"For me it's important to ensure that the people I care for feel relaxed, happy and comfortable, while keeping as much of their independence as possible."

Bethany

Bethany has been a Community Care Worker for three months and her role enables residents to stay in their own homes.



She said: "I absolutely love being able to care for people and enable them to stay in their own homes. Seeing them smile when you arrive knowing how much it means to them to see a friendly face is just so rewarding!

"On a typical day, I perform a variety of care tasks that cater to each client. Ranging from having a cheerful conversation while making a cuppa or assisting with personal hygiene, I know each task is equally important and makes an incredible difference! The support and training I received from day one has made sure I feel safe and a valued member of the team."

Stephen

Stephen, previously a chef, is now a Support Assistance Teacher working full time in a school and as a bank staff member with a care agency, working with people with learning disabilities.

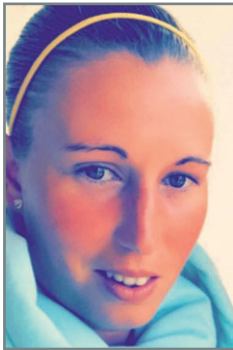


He said: "What I love about my role is knowing I help to make a difference to other people's lives and supporting them to achieve their goals. As a carer you need to have a lot of patience and understanding towards the people you're caring for as sometimes they have a bad day just like we all do. They may also process things more slowly and need more time to fully understand what's happening around them."

Care focused virtual job fairs are run regularly by Jobcentre Plus. For more information email Berks.employerteam@dwp.gov.uk and mention 'care virtual job fair' in the subject line.

Abi

Abi used to work in customer service, but after seeing the compassion and care from staff looking after her mum who has early onset dementia, she decided to become a care worker.



After starting as a care assistant for a care company, she excelled and became the training manager, before becoming a registered manager responsible for the operational day-to-day management of the service.

Abi said: "I wanted to make a difference, and hopefully I have done that with the support of such a great, compassionate, caring and dedicated team. I have been very fortunate within the industry and would advise anyone who wants a change or wants to make even the smallest difference to someone's life; this is the industry to be in. It's by far the most rewarding job I have ever had."

Rikwan

Rikwan has been working as a Support Care Assistant while studying at university.

Rikwan said: "I decided to start in the caring profession when I was 18, after caring for disabled members of my family. I found it a very rewarding and fulfilling job where everyday is a different experience. I've been working as a support care assistant for the past five years, alongside my university studies.

"In a typical day I will speak to service users, make sure they are happy, help provide medication and food and ensure they have a high quality of life. To excel in this role you must be a patient and caring individual who genuinely wants the best for those around you and to help those less fortunate."

While social care can be seen as doing a set of tasks for other people, it's actually about creating a relationship and helping them to feel empowered to do more for themselves, as well as be respected and valued as individuals.

People interested in a career in social care need to be sensitive to the individual's needs, as well as empowering them and respecting their personal dignity, culture and identity.

Sally Kitson, the council's strategy and partnership manager, said: "The practical skills can all be learned, and there is lots of training on offer, no

matter your past work experience. We are seeking staff that can really respect and value each person needing care and support, seeing them as a unique individual and supporting them to live as fulfilling lives as possible."

Tony Johnston, managing partner at Oxford House Care, said: "Adult social care is an industry where young people can forge a fantastic career, with training, support and amazing experience from day one. Many of our service users especially gel with younger members of the team who are so full of energy and enthusiasm.

"However, we welcome people from all backgrounds, with all kinds of experience. Care can be transformational for people and it's wonderful to see the impact you can make on people's lives. Very few careers offer this kind of motivation and reward."

Find out more

Visit Berkshire Opportunities at www.berkshireopportunities.co.uk, a website delivered by Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, to find out about live job vacancies, apprenticeships, Further Education and Post 16 courses and training opportunities, as well as local career path options, including adult social care opportunities.

Berkshire Opportunities is a free service helping local job seekers, students and residents to make informed career decisions, and it was designed to deal with challenges brought about by the Covid pandemic.

Slough Borough Council is working in partnership with Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Jobcentre and Berkshire Opportunities on this campaign.

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