

# Recruiting older workers

## Pat Smart - The Partnership in Care Ltd

Pat Smart is currently 72 years of age and is employed in a nursing home run by The Partnership in Care Ltd, where she has worked for the past 22 years. She is employed as a care assistant doing night shifts.

Pat started in the home at the age of 50 after bringing up three children, during which time she also did a variety of jobs including fruit picking. However none of these gave her much satisfaction.

Having cared for her mother-in-law for three and a half years until she died, she knew she had the skills and experience to become a carer. She approached her local nursing home who offered her a job and has never looked back.

Pat says: "I really, really love the work. Looking after and helping other people makes me feel I am doing something worthwhile with my life."

Over the years Pat has witnessed many changes but is not afraid to learn and adapt. She recently completed a month long training course designed to help her and her colleagues respond better to the increasing number of residents admitted with dementia.

Pat currently has no plans to retire. Not only does she need the additional income to pay her bills, but she enjoys the work and believes it keeps her fit and healthy.

## The employer's view

Tania Sibbald, the home manager, describes Pat as an excellent worker, highly skilled and experienced. Pat is caring, extremely competent in dealing with even the most challenging behaviours of residents suffering from dementia, hard working and with a perfect sickness and timekeeping record. In addition she is more than willing to accept extra shifts if and when required.

Tania emphasises the importance of recognising the wealth of skills and knowledge that older workers bring from both the job and their own life experience. She says: "These cannot be taught so they are invaluable in helping new staff learn on the job."

The buddy system operating in the home enables Pat to be teamed up with newly appointed staff so they can quickly benefit from her extensive knowledge and experience.

Having Pat in the home has left a positive impression on Tania as to the value of older workers and she would have no hesitation in employing others.

Ian Turner, the company owner, also stresses the value older workers provide, retaining experience and organisational memory. His belief in their value is evidenced by the fact that Pat is just one of a number of his employees over state pension age.