



Case study

Jane has been in social care for 28 years, during which time she has held a number of roles. She has worked at Derby City Council for 22 years and currently works with adults in the Health and Housing department. At the age of 48, Jane has a dual role of Principal Social Worker and Best Interest Assessor.

Jane Haywood
Principal Social Worker,
Derby City Council, Derby

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I care...

Background

Although Jane's background in social care spans almost three decades, she still finds the industry interesting and challenging and feels fortunate to have found her niche. Jane's mother was a district nurse and recommended that she initially work as a kitchen relief worker in an adult residential care home in Derby. Because Jane had always gravitated towards older people she felt that the opportunity was too good to miss. It gave her a taste for working in social care and how you can make a real difference to people's lives.

Career progression

Jane has progressed her social care career through various roles within local authorities including a care assistant, residential care manager, domiciliary service organiser and care team manager. In 1997, Jane achieved a diploma in social work, followed by a degree in social work in 1998.

Since 1999, she has been involved in hospital-based social care work for Derby City Council at Royal Derby Infirmary where her career progressed rapidly. From social worker, she became senior practitioner, before being promoted to principal social worker. She is now part of a team of 16 that includes a team manager, principal social workers, care managers and community care workers.





A role in social care

Jane's principal social worker role couldn't be more varied. No two days, or social care cases, are the same. Her remit covers 50 per cent coaching and mentoring the hospital social work team, and 50 per cent managing a complex case load that allows Jane to work with people who use services first-hand. She supervises team members, manages casework and advises on safeguarding issues.

The mentoring side of Jane's role can be challenging, yet satisfying. She supervises community care workers on a formal basis but is available daily to offer support and advice and to ensure that processes and protocol are being followed. Jane also supervises students within the team and acts as a mentor for practice teachers who manage them.

“I am results driven and like the feeling of achieving. I enjoy the mentoring and coaching side of my role, especially when the team achieves fantastic results for people who use services, for example getting them back in the comfort of their homes.”

For the care management side of her role, Jane tends to work with older people who have been hospitalised and whose cases may be a little more complex. They might already have a care package or their personal requirements need reassessing. Whatever the case, Jane works in a multi-disciplinary environment with doctors, nursing teams, dieticians, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, with the core focus being on the person who uses services and their families.

Jane assists the hospital with discharging those patients that need social support services, for example benefits, residential and social care, assessing all the options available and ensuring the best interests of the individual are managed, whatever their capacity.

Despite the challenging current financial climate, Jane's team at Derby City Council continues to exceed expectations. It is able to quickly assess the safeguarding or other needs of individuals, whether low, moderate or critical. The team then works cohesively to ensure that those needs are met with the very best service.

Ongoing support

The Derby City Council environment supports an open learning philosophy whereby informal and formal learning is part of everyone's role. Jane has constant support from her manager, her team and a workforce and training department that nurtures development within the organisation.

Jane has achieved the social work diploma and degree, the post-qualification in social work, practice teaching award in social work and a best interest assessor training award. She has also taken part in focused, mandatory and non-mandatory training. Jane is currently working on an award in supervision and is already an assessor.

Jane is keen to recommend a career in social care as she has thrived, and continues to excel, in her role.

“I know that social care work isn't for everybody but I find it fulfilling, interesting and exciting. You never know what's going to happen next! There are so many different levels in social care, but ultimately you are helping people to achieve and realise their potential, and that's satisfying.”

For the future, Jane plans to continue her core social work and develop further through training.

“I love my role as it offers so much variety and is very fulfilling. I feel that I'm at the front line of social work. In 28 years, I've never dreaded coming into work and that says it all really.”

Skills for Care

West Gate
Grace Street
Leeds
LS1 2RP

Telephone 0113 245 1716
Email info@skillsforcare.org.uk
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/recruitment

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