

## Elena, The Choice Care Group and Lifetime Training

My name is Elena, and I'm a registered home manager for a service supporting seven people. I started managing in February 2023 and began my Level 5 Leader in Adult Care apprenticeship in February 2024, completing it while running a busy service.

I chose to do the apprenticeship because, after finishing my Level 3 and becoming a full-time manager, I realised I needed more skills and knowledge to lead my team confidently. My manager encouraged me to progress to Level 5.

At first, I thought the apprenticeship would be easy, but balancing work, learning, and personal life became very difficult. I fell behind and honestly thought I might fail because I wasn't engaging well and felt too nervous to ask for help. When I finally did, it felt late - but then everything changed. I was assigned a new coach, Jo-Ann Reed, who supported me straight away. She set up weekly meetings, encouraged me every session, and helped me get back on track. With her support, I gained so much knowledge and confidence.

To prepare for my assessments, I attended every meeting and listened carefully to all feedback. The biggest challenge I faced was a personal loss, which made me take a break from learning. When I returned, I struggled more than expected and nearly quit. Being honest with my coach made the difference - Jo-Ann understood exactly how to support me, and she helped me go from "I'm going to fail" to "Congratulations, Distinction!"

Overall, the apprenticeship was an amazing experience. Even with the challenges, it helped me grow into a better leader. I learned how important it is to really listen to people, even when mistakes happen. My confidence has grown massively; I now rely more on my own judgement instead of needing reassurance all the time. My employer and colleagues see the qualification as important and valuable, and I've felt fully supported.

My advice to anyone considering an adult care apprenticeship is simple: do it - and ask for help early if you're finding things difficult.

Now that I've finished, I'm taking a short break from learning to focus on my role and support others with their apprenticeships. From 2027, I plan to continue studying so I can keep progressing in my career.