



Case study

John has worked in social care for a year and is already feeling the benefits of his first role as a personal assistant. At the age of 26, he moved into the industry having decided to make a total career change. He is keen to learn and evolve in his role and newfound career, through on-the-job experience and training.

John Cook

John Cook, Personal Assistant
Employed directly by client

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I care...

Background

Before joining the social care sector, John spent a number of years working in the motor and retail industries after leaving school. Although John had no professional experience of social care, he had personal experience of caring for and supporting family and friends with dyspraxia, autism and ME, so felt he would suit the care environment. John researched potential openings into the sector and found his current personal assistant role via a social care agency. John's life skills, positive attitude and diverse background were considered to be invaluable.

Career progression

John started his career in the motor trade and became a vehicle technician, qualifying to NVQ Level 3. He then moved into the retail sector for three and a half years, gaining experience of various commercial environments. At this point in his career, he felt he lacked job reward or satisfaction and had already considered the social care industry as a potential career change.

“I'd always wanted to get into care as I enjoy helping people and feel the benefit from supporting others. I don't feel that I really achieved this in the job roles during my earlier career, so took the plunge to find out more about a rewarding career in social care.”

Twelve months into his role as personal assistant, John feels that he definitely made the right move and is eager to succeed in social care, whilst making a positive difference to others.





A role in social care

John's current work as a personal assistant involves person-centered care, essentially providing one-to-one support to a lady in Middlesbrough. It entails improving her wellbeing and the social aspects of her daily life through tailored care that supports her individual needs and aims. John has found that those being cared for often feel vulnerable in their own, and external, surroundings. Things may have changed for them over the years to a point where one-to-one support proves to be invaluable.

“It's simple for me. I'm in this role to help improve someone's life, by focusing on their values. It's a really nice feeling knowing that what I have done in my day has made someone else feel good about themselves.”

John's role varies from day to day, depending on his client's needs and feelings. He supports with daily chores like shopping, going out for the day or just sitting with his client and working through puzzles. Whilst each day can be rewarding, it can also present many challenges, including having to think of new ideas to support his client and constantly adapting to meeting her specific needs.

“Having found this personal assistant role, I now really enjoy what I do. You often need to think on your feet as you can encounter many challenges, but you just adapt according to the needs of your client. I get a real sense of achievement through helping somebody to have a better quality of life.”



Ongoing support

During the last 12 months, John has undertaken a number of courses to support his steep learning curve, including completing Skills for Care's Common Induction Standards as well as first aid, manual handling and food hygiene training. He has also gained an insight into dementia awareness and life path training.

John hasn't made any immediate plans for his future career, but is considering a qualification in social care as the next step to help him gain as much experience and knowledge of social care as possible.

“What I'm doing at the moment is a good foundation and really rewarding, so I'd like to continue to learn and evolve in social care. I'd recommend working in the sector as there's a lot you can get out of it, plus there are so many different avenues you can go down.

“I feel like I've gained a lot of wisdom. I've been through a lot of life experiences myself so feel I can empathise and understand the needs of clients. In this industry you get the chance to meet a lot of people and it really gives you an insight into different aspects of people's lives.”

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