

“ I believe I will always
work in social care ”



Melanie Bukowski

Personal Assistant

Melanie Bukowski, 45, has worked in social care since November 2008 as a personal assistant (PA) to people in their own homes.

Prior to a career in care, Melanie worked in a factory and an office environment but yearned for a change. She cared for her elderly father in his own home for 15 years until he went into a care home and felt she should be putting her care skills to good use elsewhere.

Melanie saw an advert in the local paper for an evening course on how to work with disabled people and signed up. She found the course extremely informative and it gave her the direction she needed.

Melanie felt she was lucky to have a friend who was a carer who could give her an insight into what could be involved in working in care and ideas on where to look for positions. Melanie looked on the internet for social care vacancies and began working part time as a personal assistant.

In her current PA position, Melanie is working with a gentleman who sustained brain damage through an accident at work. He has care 24 hours a day, seven days a week from a team of personal assistants and his family. Melanie's role as personal assistant involves assisting with personal hygiene, administration of medication, dressing, cooking and household tasks. She occasionally drives the client around for leisure, shopping and appointments and assists with daily exercises from stretches to hydro therapy and visiting the gym.

Melanie is team leader to the other PAs which involves creating monthly rotas, ordering medication, keeping records up-to date and liaising with the case management team. She also holds supervision meetings with the other staff members to discuss how they are finding the job, reporting any problems, sharing ideas and setting goals.

Since she started working in social care Melanie has undertaken training in several areas, including first aid and moving and handling. She receives on-going support from her client's wife and from the case manager appointed to the client, who she can call if she is unsure of anything or just needs someone to talk to about work.

Melanie says:



I find my job very rewarding. I enjoy helping others to live their day to day life, carrying out normal daily tasks in a relaxed environment with very little pressure. I feel appreciated by those who employ me and an affinity towards them.



She acknowledges it's not always easy being in someone else's house for long periods of time doing what they want to do as and when they want to do it, however it is all about the clients choice. She believes "the assistant is there to ensure that the client is living 'his' life as he wants to – just with a little assistance. The job involves dealing with family and friends and being able to mould into the background so as not to intrude in these relationships."

For the future Melanie says: "I believe I will always work in social care – I could not dream of going back into a 9-5 job behind a desk and giving up that satisfying feeling of helping others achieve their goals."

For more information about working in social care visit
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/careerpathways