

Care in Scotland it's life changing work

**Ann Timmons,
Support Worker**

"If you have a genuine desire to help people, don't mind getting your hands dirty... then do it."



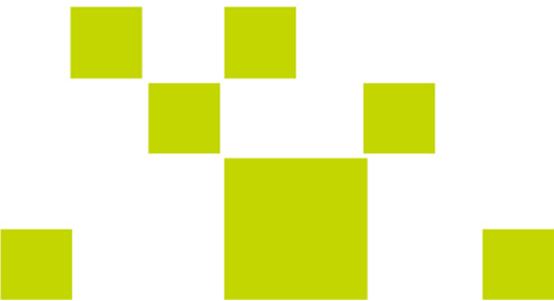
Ann supports men with learning difficulties who need help with daily living. Read her story here.

What type of service do you work in?

I work at Birkdale, we support six men aged from 17-65 with learning difficulties of varying degrees, ranging from severely autistic to mild learning difficulties, including a blind man and two young men who attend college with support of staff.

Have you always worked in social services?

No, previously I worked in retail for 20 years.





What made you choose the career you have now?

I needed a change. I worked with people every day, mostly very pleasant and a few very difficult. I was used to public and staff and dealing with challenging situations.

I have good people skills, parenting skills and life skills and felt these were the skills needed to support people who need help with daily living.

Can you tell us more about your job?

It is person centred so can range from a person not being able to function in any area of daily living to a person requiring help with certain aspects.

My job includes personal care, shopping, menu planning, cooking, cleaning, finances, medication, health – physical and mental wellbeing, supporting people to activities, accessing the community and giving someone encouragement to be the best they can be.

Can you give an example of something that you are working on at the moment?

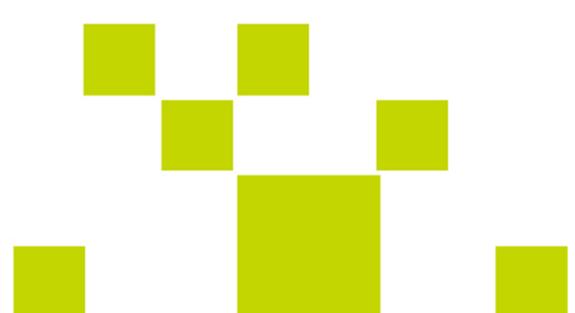
Encouraging a man to go out in public, group outings, parks, out for lunch and visits to parent all things he had not done until the past year or so.

What qualifications do you need for this job?

No qualifications are required at the moment but you must be willing to work towards SVQ2.

Who else is in your team?

Men and women, younger and older. Some with years of experience and some with no previous experience at all.





Do you work with other professionals in other sectors?

Yes, we work with health care workers, doctors, hospital staff, dentists - every aspect of a persons wellbeing. Also other agencies, SALT (speech and language therapists) BSI (behavioural support and intervention team), district nurses, care managers, solicitors and college tutors.

What part of your job motivates you and why?

Encouraging independence - it's great to see someone achieve something for themselves.

What are the best bits about your job?

Encouraging someone with something new and watching their progress.

What are the challenges, good and not so good that you face in your job?

Challenging behaviours physical and verbal - this can be good and not so good, at worst you can be injured/hurt or upset and at best you can find out why the behaviours are happening, support the person to manage their behaviour by getting them the right support.

In what way is your career in social services rewarding?

Just knowing the days you've made a difference to someone's life.

Can you explain the skills and qualities you think are needed to do the role you're doing?

Patience, understanding, ability to listen and to recognise how a person is - not always by words but body language, behaviours and actions, and an understanding that no individual is the same. Also a person with learning difficulties is entitled to make informed choices, be given opportunities and have the same basic human rights as any other member of society. Also knowing how to run a successful home and parenting and people skills can be adapted for this role.





Has your job opened up new learning and development for you?

You are given mandatory training such as health and safety, basic first aid, communication, moving and handling etc. I have been given the opportunity to do an SVQ funded by the company, specialist training specific to the needs of the gentleman at my service such as autism awareness, epilepsy, peg feeding, palliative care.

How do you see your career progressing?

I am happy with my role however I do volunteer to help when needed at other projects, service user holidays etc

What would you say to someone thinking about a career in social services?

If you have a genuine desire to help people, don't mind getting your hands dirty and enjoy watching someone make even what seems to be the smallest progress and are willing to learn as you go then do it.

Is a career in care the career for you?

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You can hear from people already working in social care, early years or social work as they talk about why they love their job and what a difference they make to someone's life. And find out about the many different types of jobs and areas you can work in.

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