

Future Carers: A Story of Success



Clare Pollard: Future Carers Programme
Tutor for BMBC Workforce Development
(Since 2012)



Background

Clare Pollard has always been a busy person. Aged 11 she became a Red Cross volunteer, then a youth helper for Riding for the Disabled, before going on to serve as a Special Constable for seven years, a parent-helper at her children's schools and, for the last seven years, an assistant leader with Penistone Scouts.

In 2001 she became an informal carer for her sister's daughter who was born with severe cerebral palsy. Over the next 10 years the role became second nature, Clare says, occupying weekends and sometimes her weeks, too. After 10 years, her niece's family were able to provide a permanent team of highly skilled professional carers.

Following relocation from Buckinghamshire to Yorkshire, Clare contacted her local Job Centre about guidance on training for getting back into work. "I found a Future Carers information sheet on the advisor's desk and the rest, as they say, is history," she explains.

Future Carers

"The first day of the Future Carers programme caused me major anxiety; I made every excuse not to walk into the training centre. However, I settled in, started to rebuild my confidence and progressed to complete the programme with a Level One Certificate in Progression in Social Care – my first official qualification in care.

"The progression was not an easy one – but it opened my eyes to the vast range of transferable skills I had built up over many years of previous employment and voluntary work. It gave me a huge insight into the realities and responsibilities of the professional care sector. All this made me certain the care sector was the right area for me."

Her past experience as a voluntary carer gave her a good background knowledge of the requirements in care, and the course built on that detail, bringing the formal aspect of care into play, Clare explains.

"I have to say, through all the learning environments in the past, the Future Carers course quite simply made more difference than all the others put together. The team were incredibly supportive and gave me an enormous boost in self-confidence.

The culmination of her Future Carers course came in April 2012 when she successfully applied for the position of tutor with the Future Carers team itself.

Career Progression

"Enabling people to come in as caterpillars and emerge as butterflies, just as I did four years ago, makes this job incredibly rewarding in its own right," Clare explains.

"It was very clear to me just how much of an impact the course had on my self-confidence and motivation. I have witnessed this within the vast majority of learners since my own induction into the adult learning field."

“The programme supports people whose potential is recognised in the first instance, and the feedback we get from previous learners about the difference they are making in the world of other vulnerable people is fantastic.

“Training and individual support is foremost within the Future Carers team, with regular supervision enabling a clear and essential foundation of training and support.”

Her career development continues alongside her tutoring responsibilities; Clare is working towards a Level 3 Award in Awareness of the Mental Capacity Act.

As Clare explains, her career achievements have also benefited her family life: “Since taking on my role I have been able to support my daughter through university, enabling her to devote her time to study. I’ve also been able to ensure my son has the money for equipment and travel required to go forward with his Duke of Edinburgh gold expeditions.”

She reflects: “I have been extremely lucky to earn a place in the best working team I have experienced, where I have been stretched and encouraged, and all levels of support are readily available to nurture personal and professional growth.

“I intend to stay with the Future Carer team for as long as the position is available, where I feel the work that we do is of major value to the care sector within the Barnsley area.”

Manager Feedback

Clare’s manager, Pat Ryder says she has brought much to her role as a tutor on the Future Carers programme.

“Her personal journey has provided her with insight and an empathetic approach to supporting the people we work with,” says Pat. “Clare has a practitioner’s perspective from her days of volunteering and working in a substantial informal care role. Committed and dedicated, she has achieved formal teaching qualifications with the BMBC assessment centre and has brought a boundless energy to ensuring learning within the programme is current, relevant and the experience enjoyable.”

