

Future Carers: A Story of Success



Lisa Earl: Support Worker

**Supported Living Barnsley (Since 2006)
Part of the Skills for Care Accolade Winning Team
2006**



Background

Lisa left school without formal qualifications and spent three years as a hairdresser through a youth training scheme. At school she had felt isolated, having been placed in low ability groups as a result of dyslexia. “I remember overhearing a professional tell my mum I wouldn’t amount to anything,” Lisa says.

As a child she had her first, informal experience of care: her aunty, Lillian, who had Down’s syndrome, was an important and much-loved member of the family. “As a child I loved to sit and colour with her. I think I understood her differences, challenges and behaviours,” says Lisa. “I could always patiently help her when others couldn’t.”

Future Carers

Lisa’s first contact with Future Carers in 2006 came at a difficult time in her personal life. “I was at a very low point in my life, suffering from depression, health problems, dependant on benefits and coping with a relationship breakdown.” She is thankful to her sister who saw the information about Future Carers and encouraged her to make contact with the team.

“My confidence was low but I knew I had to take this opportunity,” explains Lisa. “After I joined the programme the support I received built my confidence and self-belief. I felt dyslexia had held me back, but they saw something in me I couldn’t see.”

Her Future Carers programme combined theory and practical experience, including placements. “The first placement in elderly residential care helped me to realise that was not where I wanted to be. I then went to work at Compass House day centre. I recognised I wanted to work with people who have learning disabilities – I had found direction and purpose,” Lisa says.

“Future Carers enabled me to achieve formal qualifications: Learning Disability Awards Framework level 2 and first aid, plus I benefited from working with excellent role models.”

Six months into her placement an opportunity arose and Lisa successfully applied for a permanent post. “That was 10 years ago,” she says, “and if it hadn’t been for Future Carers I wouldn’t be where I am today – grey, a few wrinkles and a smile on my face!”

Career Progression

“My working life is different every day. It is challenging at times and a big responsibility which I enjoy. I want to stay in a position of working directly with clients. I know continuity supports the development of trusting relationships.”

Lisa adds: “I know times are uncertain, but I want to stay in the service and continue to work with people who have learning disabilities, people I believe that deserve the best.”

Manager Feedback

Feedback from Jeanette Cooper: BMBC Supported Living Service Manager.

BMBC Supported Living Service provides support to people with a learning disability across the borough of Barnsley with the support they need to live independently in their own home and to take part in their local community

Lisa joined the supported living service in November 2006 during this time Lisa's worked in different areas of the supported Living Service promoting service users independence and quality of life.

Lisa herself has gained lots of knowledge and experience over the years by undertaking Mandatory /bespoke training to meet the needs of the individuals she supports. Lisa is also a good mentor /role model to new and existing employees

Over the years Lisa fought a number of complicated health issues, but she never let them get the better of her and fights them through.

Lisa herself is a positive /caring person who always puts others first and is a valued member within the Supported Living team.

For the people she works with Lisa brings happiness into their lives; she's like a breath of fresh air, Bringing joy and laughter into their home

