

A day in the life of . . . a support worker at Peartree Jubilee House

So much is going on in our over night short break services, we thought we'd ask one of the team about their work.

Courtney East is a support worker at Peartree Jubilee House

How long have you been working at Peartree?

I have been working as a support worker for children with learning disabilities at Peartree for approximately eight months (since November 2019).

What do you do in your role as a support worker?

There are various responsibilities as a support worker, which centre around the physical and emotional support for the young people that stay with us and a unified effort to encourage growth and independence. This is carried out through personal care, assisting the young people with getting dressed, personal hygiene and providing different activities through 1:1 interaction such as cooking, cleaning, physical activities involving leaving the service and joining in other social activities. In supporting their needs while promoting independence, I am encouraging the young people to enjoy their lives and grow in confidence.

As a support worker I am also responsible for their medical needs while the young people stay with us, such as assisting the young people with taking their medication or those with gastronomy, to receive all appropriate feed and fluids. I am also receiving tasks to complete which involve updating support plans for the young people and communicating with schools and families to provide the best care. I have personally completed different tasks and have received different roles since I joined in October, involving the responsibility of checking that first aid boxes are still in date, checking consortium items weekly and updating boards such as Young People's Forum and the story boards.

I am also responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the service, along with other support workers, particularly in the Covid-19 pandemic, and providing meals for the young people.

What do you enjoy about your job?

I enjoy so much about my job and still continue to do so since my first day working here. This is mainly everything that surrounds our Young People, particularly in helping them to achieve goals as once they have, it is so rewarding to see and to know that this has given them the encouragement to continue growing in different ways. I enjoy making the young people smile most, such as singing to music with them and carrying out different activities they enjoy, especially now as we go into Summer due to the use of the garden and paddling pool which so many enjoy. I enjoy the constant team effort by everyone and the positivity in the workplace which makes every working day so rewarding and exciting. I also enjoy going out of the service, particularly with our Children and Need group as it is visible that our young people within our group are growing independently and



developing relationships. I mainly love making the young people laugh as they are at their most comfortable and happiest which is so nice to see.

What did you do before coming to Peartree?

Before Peartree, I was at University for three years studying Philosophy and Religion which I believe has helped me in this job role in particular, learning and understanding the meanings of inclusiveness and various beliefs and worldviews which has helped me to be open-minded. Once my degree had finished, I decided I wanted to move into social care work and applied to work in a residential home which I believe gave me valuable experience in working with people and assisting their needs. While I enjoyed my time at this residential home, I discussed the idea of always wanting to work with children/young people and after a little over two months (from August to November) I decided to apply to Jubilee House and have loved working here since.



How has COVID changed your role?

COVID has changed my role in the way I view all the ways I work, specifically through hygiene practices. I have, along with all other staff, been cleaning excessively and maintaining high cleaning standards with cleaning lists that we complete three times a day. We are also required to wear masks and have our temperatures taken and use hand sanitising gel, also constantly washing our hands throughout the day. It has made me more alert to things that might have been missed before COVID and understood that above all else, the young people are in complete safety from it reaching them at our service. It has made my role one of the most important roles as while I am still working, I am responsible for preventing COVID from spreading to our service and maintaining a strong communication with families and schools to maintain it, which has been done successfully.

What new things have been introduced as a result of COVID? - training , routines support

There are many new things that have been introduced such as new cleaning schedules, including completing High Tough Infection Control sheets, cleaning all areas that are likely to have been touched throughout the day, three times a day (morning, afternoon and evening). Deep cleaning bedrooms, bathrooms and all areas of the building to a high standard. There has also been training regarding Infection Control and meetings discussing any improvements that need to be made and what needs to change. As said above, we are wearing masks, aprons and gloves during personal care and cleaning (PPE), maintaining social distancing, particularly with training. The policies are also being updated and constantly re-assessed to fit the criteria for COVID. We have created a folder containing all updates from our management with advice in how to better protect ourselves and our young people. Our routines have also changed in terms of the young people that stay with us, we are still receiving bookings but becoming more aware of how to provide the care for particular needs during this pandemic. We have been maintaining a high standard of interaction with the children and introducing new activities such as 'Clap for Carers' taking the young people to the front of the building to clap and produce pieces of art such as rainbows for our windows. The positivity we are expressing is also reflected in our young people and their new routines.

What have been the challenges and successes during COVID?

Challenges – The challenges have involved not being able to take the young people out of the service such as going for walks and visiting different areas such as the park and going into the town for shopping/other day trips. This has also been challenging for the young people who have fixed routines and who are facing challenges themselves with changes to these routines. Not being able to leave the service has meant we are creating new routines for the young people and introducing new and different activities, which has been going very well. Some personal challenges have involved wearing masks during times of hot weather, but while this is a challenge, I understand the importance of wearing these and taking the breaks recommended by management.



Successes – We have maintained high quality cleaning in the service and continuing to complete all our new forms. We are also continuing to support our young people during this pandemic and adapt to any changes necessary, all of which have responded positively. We have also maintained strong communications with all others involved with the young people, such as families, schools, social workers etc. so that in spite of this difficult time, we are all coming together to maintain a high standard of care for our young people. A personal success would be consistently putting in effort in providing care and offering help where it is needed, which is always received and has been shown to be appreciated. The main success has been the team effort which has been demonstrated throughout this pandemic, particularly the care and support from our management to support workers so that we can work the best that we can in assisting the needs of our young people.

What would you expect to change/not change after this pandemic?

I would like to see that the changes we have made for the pandemic are still continued such as the cleaning schedules and that there is still a heightened awareness of COVID and the implications it has brought to our ways of working. I would also like to see the same team work which has really been demonstrated during this time. I would like to assess going out of the service again but with caution. I would also like for myself and others to use the information we have received from management and the government in how to be more cautious, hygienic and responsible when facing difficult times and when we are faced with various challenges and from COVID, know how to better respond to anything similar in the future.

