



Conversations with Carers

Sarah's Story



What does being an unpaid family carer mean to you?

I care for my elderly parents, one has COPD and the other Parkinson's disease. They are pretty much house bound, so as often as I can I take them out of the house to enable them to socialise with family and friends. I assist with shopping and life admin, ensuring they have their prescribed medications and taking them to medical appointments. I also have my own family commitments with my young daughter. I think caring for my parents has been a natural thing for me to do as I am able to do it holistically as I know them very well and know their likes, dislikes and preferences.

How did you hear about your current job and what made you apply?

I found out about my job through a friend who works at College of West Anglia. I am a registered nurse and was previously working in research at a GP practice. I have been passionate about improving care through clinical research so this role was interesting to me as it enables me to improve care by delivering training to people looking to go into caring professions.

What skills and knowledge have you gained since starting in your role?

I have gained lots of knowledge and skills related to education and have been able to undertake qualifications to support my role. I have also gained confidence and a better understanding of some of the barriers people face when getting into health and social care roles.

How is having this job helpful to you?

I don't quite work full time hours so there is some flexibility that allows me to maintain other commitments with my family and parents. Improving my skills and knowledge has improved my confidence, peace of mind and makes me feel like a valued member of society.

What challenges do you face?

Juggling everything can be a challenge at times, especially undertaking teacher training while working, looking after my home life, family and caring responsibilities. It can be an hour plus round trip to get to my parents if they need me which can be problematic but I do my best to make sure they are well cared for. I also find it challenging to have time to do things for myself and have me time for things like getting exercise, but with good friends around, it is possible for me to do things from time to time.

What is your advice to others who might be considering getting a job?

Go for it! You will get the chance to gain new skills and knowledge, make new friends and have time to socialise whilst at work. I think the biggest thing for me is the sense of achievement in using my experience and knowledge help make the lives of others better. It has also been really important for my own mental health and wellbeing.

