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WHEN DID YOU START WORKING IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WORK?

Five years ago.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO PURSUE A CAREER IN SOCIAL WORK?

I always wanted to pursue a career in a field where I could use my lived experience and skills to support people. I have a strong sense of social justice and believe that people should be treated fairly.

HOW DID YOU INITIALLY ENTER THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WORK?

I entered the field of social work directly, applying for the job as an outside candidate and applied for the apprenticeship 2 years in.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING BEFORE YOU STARTED WORKING IN SOCIAL WORK?

I worked for the NHS for 11 years with my last post being a Multidisciplinary Team Co-ordinator where I liaised with various professionals (i.e., GPs, district nurses, occupational therapists, social workers) supporting people in the community and advocating on service users' behalf.

DID YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE YOUR DECISION TO PURSUE SOCIAL WORK? IF SO - HOW?

My previous experience has definitely influenced my decision to become a social worker. In my role within the NHS, I worked with various professionals and social workers, were those who stood out to me. I could relate to them mostly and admired their dedication to social justice and motivation to empower people whose life experiences were challenging.

HOW HAVE YOU FOUND THE EXPERIENCE OF WORKING AS A SOCIAL WORKER IN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

In the last 2.5 years, I have completed my placements in Children's and Adults teams. I had an opportunity to work with people at various stages of their lives, from unborn to older people and worked with people with mental disorders and other diagnoses that can impact their daily lives (i.e., autism, dementia). I find that across the services, social workers go above and beyond their role to support service users. However, sometimes it can be tricky to find the right resources to offer support as the funding for social care has been significantly cut in recent years.

CAN YOU WALK US THROUGH SOME OF YOUR DAILY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

I am now back working with the Transfer of Care Team (after completing my last placement) where I usually work with older people and support their safe discharges from hospital. My role is to carry out the Care Act 2014 assessments and mental capacity assessments when I am concerned that a service user might be lacking capacity around their care and support needs or recommending more appropriate discharge pathways. I also conduct safeguarding enquiries. I work in a fast-paced environment surrounded by various professionals; the multidisciplinary working is a big aspect of working in hospital.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST REWARDING ASPECT OF YOUR CAREER IN SOCIAL WORK SO FAR?

The most rewarding aspect of my career is knowing that my contribution to a service user's journey can support their decision in making positive changes in their lives. One of the recent examples of this is of a service user whom I came across on placement. This person struggled to accept that they were transgender due to the societal norms and views. After some discussions, encouragement, and re-assurance, they are now a proud member of LGBTQI+ community. I received very positive feedback from this service user and feel very proud to have been part of their journey.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND A CAREER IN SOCIAL WORK TO SOMEONE CONSIDERING IT?

I would recommend it to a person who has a strong sense of social justice and believes in equality. To be in the social work profession, you need a kind heart but also thick skin as in reality, it can be very hard to support a service user when the resources are very limited or when you find yourself ethically challenged.