

Joined Up Careers Derbyshire

Journey into health and social care story **- Sue W, social worker/training officer,** **Derby City Council**

What was your first job?

It was as a secretary in an insurance company. I had studied languages and office skills to get a job overseas but then made choices that meant I could no longer do that and I stayed in the UK.

How did you get to your current role?

I had been a social worker for many years and other than being a manager there was no other career route open to me. I always enjoyed supporting students and knew several people in the team who seemed to enjoy their roles. I was able to highlight my social work skills and experience and share that with others who were either learning the role or considering it.

Did you move across different career paths?

I moved away from office-type work to people-type work which suits my skill set better although my administrative skills are really useful and I think they would be in any role as we are so reliant on IT communications.

Did you face any challenges to get to where you are now?

Yes. My first degree didn't get me where I wanted to be and so I had to go back to university and train to be a social worker. It was very tough as I'd just had a baby and needed an income. I worked five different relief jobs in residential and day care settings whilst studying so I missed a lot of my daughter's early years. Often I would be at uni in the day then do an early evening shift in one setting followed by an overnight shift in another. I got through it but it wasn't good for my health or my family life.

What do you do now?

Now I support and train people to join and remain in our adult work force in social services. We have students and apprentices studying social work and then I also support workers who are newly qualified and those who have been working as social workers for a while. After qualifying we all have to continue

our studies to keep up-to-date with changes in law, society and the world. I also mentor and support some workers.

What is it about your job that inspires you?

The best thing for me is starting to work with someone who is not doing very well or not very good at the role and then seeing them develop and enjoy learning and progressing to become brilliant social workers. Even those who are good at the outset can become better as we can all learn something to help us be better at what we do.

What is positive to you about working for Derby City Council?

I have colleagues that I have worked alongside for 20-plus years but we also have newer workers and we all work well together.