

Q&A with Zee, a Social Care Officer at Wigan Council



How did you get into social care at Wigan Council?

“I joined Wigan Council as a social care officer in February 2021. I've been quite fortunate in that I've had the opportunity to do a quite a wide range of jobs. I used to work at another hospital within the discharge team, and prior to that I worked in a mental health supported accommodation unit. Before that I worked for a charity supporting a homeless people and a charity supporting refugees and asylum seekers.”

What does your role as a social care officer involve?

“As a social care officer we work within a multidisciplinary setting alongside different colleagues, such as occupational therapists, nursing staff, district nurses and social workers. The main group of people we work with is patients in hospital, and our work is to facilitate a hospital discharge. For example, if we've got somebody in hospital who is a vulnerable person, or someone that needs our support, then we complete an assessment, such as a support plan assessment and needs assessment, to identify what support we could put in place for that person in order to bring them home safely and avoid hospital admission.”

Adult health and social care in Wigan

Why did you choose adult social care?

"I think I've always been a people's person; I've always been quite caring and compassionate. I always want to give something back to society, I want to make a difference, even if it's a little thing I could do to change somebody's life. I always say that if I could bring a smile to just one person's face each day, then I'm happy."

What's it like working for Wigan Council?

"It has a really dynamic approach. There is a wide range of training available, for example the trusted assessor course, social work apprenticeship routes, best interest courses and so on, there's a lot of development available at the Council. There's a great support network, we have very supportive management in our team and across Wigan Council. Management are always pushing us to allow us to be the best we can be.

"There are secondment opportunities within the Council too. In these we come out of our corporate role, and then we go to a different part of the Council. For example, you could spend six months in the mental health team to get a flavour of whether it's something you'd like to go into. It's so good, isn't it? Before you make those different career decisions you can kind of see what's involved. Sometimes you have the impression that you'd want to do something, but here you can try it out first – like try before you buy!

"Wigan Council has a great atmosphere, a great vibe to work in. There are lots of benefits too – you can claim mileage, get physio treatments, gym memberships, growth and development opportunities, lots of perks and benefits, as well as setting yourself up for the future with a very good pension too."

And finally, what's the best thing about working in social care?

"Working in the Council, and especially the hospital discharge team, you're making a difference. You're supporting vulnerable people leaving hospital, giving them the independence to go back home and live their lives as best as possible with the support network. Last week I had a case where a gentleman who needed to go home, but there was no support in place. Rather than just finishing and leaving for the week, I stayed on to make sure he got home. When I went for the home visit on Monday, he had a big, big smile on his face and he said, 'thank you so much, if you hadn't completed the assessment, I would have ended up being in hospital for another weekend'. So, I know I'm making a real difference to people's lives. I wake up each day and I know that I'm doing a rewarding, positive job."