

my story

carers in merseyside

> Karl Green

How long have you been a carer?

I've been caring on and off for 20 years but not formally in my own home until I became a Shared Lives Carer for PSS about 8 years ago.

What are the needs of the people you support?

Over the years we've helped a number of young people with learning difficulties who have left the care system (these are known as 'transitions placements'). They were dealing with family breakdowns and sometimes mental health issues; we've also helped someone through drug withdrawal and self harm.

It's great to know that after spending some time with us and getting a bit of TLC, some people can come off medications altogether. Lack of confidence has been a big issue when people first come to stay, one young man wouldn't even get off the bus when he first came to us and now he's doing really well, going off to places like the Trafford Centre by himself.

What do you enjoy most about being a carer?

I enjoy helping the people we work with move forward. I also enjoy the initial challenge when they first move in and then seeing the progress they make over time. They really do go through some massive changes.

We know we've made a massive difference to everyone who has lived with us; we supported another lad a while ago who had been living in a semi-secure unit and had become institutionalised. After staying with us, he moved into semi-independent accommodation and is still there doing well. Another lad has also been attending job interviews. It's great to see people



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come so far.

Any thoughts on the support that PSS has provided you with in your role?

It's excellent. They are always at the end of the phone. We took a bit of a chance taking on the transitions placements as it was a new scheme and there were lots of challenges, particularly at first. The staff from PSS were always there on the phone, you do need someone to talk to sometimes and their positivity is unrelenting! It's great to have that reassurance, especially at first when it's not always easy.

Any thoughts on the training that you have received in your role?

I've had plenty of training from PSS in the essential areas such as Health and Safety, Food Hygiene, Fire Safety and so on. I had a service user living with me once who had epilepsy and so I requested this training, PSS bought that in which was very good. However it's definitely a role which you learn 'on the job'. You can prepare all you want with training courses but until you're in that room with that person, that's what makes it real.

After you became a carer, how long did it take to get your first placement?

It took about 7 months from my first point of contact to me getting my first placement. The recruitment process took a couple of months, then my application was taken to panel and I had to have a few modifications made to my house. Since then though we have always had at least one person living with us, some long term and some on respite and short breaks.



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