



## Working in Social Care

*Everything you need to know  
about starting a career in care.*



# A Career in Social Care

Frontline key workers in the social care sector are invaluable! Could you become part of our family?

As the number of vulnerable people within our society continues to increase, the need for fantastic care assistants grows too and so there's never been a better time to join the social care sector.

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, many people have changed career paths into care, fuelled by a desire for important work and to really make a difference in our communities.

In addition, many other industries have unfortunately suffered as a result of the pandemic, meaning some people with the right skills for care are out of work and are identifying the care sector as their next career opportunity.

This guide will share an insight into social care, what a career in care involves, the type of people that suit being a care assistant how you can find suitable care jobs.

Read on to find out how you can become part of this worthwhile and incredibly appreciated sector!



# Why Social Care?

Working in care provides opportunities to be part of a stable and growing industry, good career prospects and without a doubt, job satisfaction.

Demand for social care is growing every day as the elderly and those with long-term mental and health conditions increases.

According to the Care Provider Alliance, at least 1.7 million additional adults will require social care over the next 15 years.\*

The UK will need an extra half a million care assistants by 2030!

The NHS tells us that the social care sector employs 1.48 million people and will need another half a million extra care assistants by 2030.+

This demand and continued growth means that social care is a stable career choice and one that offers enormous opportunities for progression.

This coupled with the extremely rewarding and flexible work makes it a great choice!

Source:

\* <https://careprovideralliance.org.uk/adult-social-care-market-overview>

+ <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-social-care>



# What is Social Care?

Social care is all about providing support, be that physical, emotional or social to help people live their lives safely and happily, with independence, dignity and control. You'll be providing support to a person in need of care and enhancing their lives by attending to their individual needs and assisting them with their daily tasks.

Social care takes place in a variety of settings to include the customers' own home, a residential care home or sheltered housing for example.

At Bluebird Care we provide care in the comfort of our customers' homes which is also known as domiciliary care.

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*We have fun together, we always have a laugh and when I see Rowena smiling, it makes me happy.*

Shannen, Live-in Care Assistant, Bluebird Care

”

As a domiciliary care assistant, you are enabling people to remain in their homes, with their beloved pets, near to their friends and family and to stay part of their community. By visiting and helping them with their daily lives, you are preventing them from being forced to leave their homes.



# Domiciliary Care.

**Domiciliary care offers two main types of care assistant roles:**

## **Care Assistants**

Provide help and support with daily tasks. This may be cooking, shopping, assistance with medication or day trips to name a few. These visits can last from as little as 30 minutes a day through to multiple hours in line with the customers' needs.

## **Live-in Care Assistants**

Living with the customer in their home, providing care and support for them as they need. Whilst you are living in their home, however, we make sure your working hours are kept to an agreed amount of normally 8 -10 hours per day.



# What will I do as a Care Assistant?

Your main role is to provide support to a person in need of care, improving their lives by attending to their specific needs and assisting them with their daily tasks.

You may be working with children, the elderly or people with disabilities or learning difficulties. Whoever your customer, key duties will usually include:

- Providing personal care to customers such as assisting them with washing, feeding, and dressing.
- Helping customers with tasks such as shopping, cooking and general housework.
- Supporting customers with appointments.
- Monitoring customers conditions by taking their temperature, pulse, respiration and weight for example.
- Providing emotional support to customers and their families.
- Keeping the customer comfortable and at ease.



# What is it Really Like to Care?

Imagine taking care of a vulnerable person and making them smile and laugh day in day out. That person looks forward to seeing you, relies on you and you become a key part of their life.

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*I wanted to be their friend and the person they could love and trust, and I was. That feeling is like no other.*

Harriet, Care Assistant, Bluebird Care

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With no two days the same, the work is varied and interesting. This coupled with flexible shift patterns and full or part-time work means a job in care offers huge rewards to the right person.

As many care assistants will testify, it's the most valuable and worthwhile job they've ever done. However, it can also be extremely challenging and being a care assistant requires patience and calmness among many other things.

The following case studies are real-life Bluebird Care, Care Assistants who have shared some of their stories with us.



## Meg, Care Assistant, Age 70



“

*Being a carer is the most rewarding job I've ever done. I just love it and look forward to going to work.*

”

I joined Bluebird Care in 2019, the year after I retired as an office administrator. It was just before my 70th birthday and I now work up to 15 hours a week.

I'm one of those people who rarely sits down, I'm always doing something, and I like to keep busy.

I was divorced in my 40s and live alone. The job is company for me. I care for some lovely people and have interesting chats.

Frances, who has Parkinson's, went to the same hairdresser as me for years and we talked about the people we

knew, it was great.

There's a lady who has dementia who told me wonderful stories about when she was a teacher. She is gentle, and lovely and enjoys embroidery; she has sewn little flowers onto her curtains. There are photographs of her husband in her home and she chats to me about how they met.

When I went to see her yesterday, she was totally confused. I put my hand on her shoulder, I wanted to give her a hug, but she would have wondered why I was doing that. I put a hot water bottle in her bed so that it was warm for her and had to stop myself from bursting into tears. You can't help but become involved.

Mavis is in her 90s and loved to look at the birds on nearby rooftops, so I bought her a bird feeder for her garden.

Sheila is in her 90s too, and I buy little treats for her cat. When I go to see her, the cat comes running over to me. Sheila likes to look at photographs of my grandchildren.

I know what it is like to be on my own. I have had lonely times, and

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*I think when you are my age, you have had experience of life and you know how people are feeling.*

”



sometimes you just need to have a chat with somebody. Because I have experienced loneliness, I can understand what it's like.

There's lovely man, a proper gentleman

can see you are making a difference in people's lives. I certainly get a lot out of it, that's for sure.

I like the learning I do as part of the job. I don't think you should ever stop



I care for who has Parkinson's and always brings his wife into the conversation when we talk. They were married for many years before she died, and it must be so sad for him to be on his own now.

The people I care for are like family to me. I like to think I'm a caring person. I enjoy supporting vulnerable people who can't do things for themselves. I really do get satisfaction from that.

I have worked in offices for most of my life and there's not always that job satisfaction. When you are a carer you

learning in life. And I like the freedom of being out and about. I never wake up thinking that I don't want to go to work.

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*I need these people in my life as much as they need me in theirs. I get back as much as I give.*

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Meg is a care assistant at Bluebird Care North Tyneside and works on a part-time basis. The customer names in this case study have been changed to protect identities.

## Shannen, Live-in Care Assistant



We really enjoy our evenings together, we have a cup of tea and biscuits and a chat on the sofa. She puts the blanket over our knees and likes to hold my hand while we are watching the television, it's a comfort for her.

Rowena is in her 90s and has Alzheimer's. She is such a sweet, kind lady, a lovely person.

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*It's like being with a friend. Sometimes I'm having such a good time with her, it doesn't feel like I'm at work*

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I became a care assistant after I was made redundant from Virgin Atlantic where I was a flight attendant.

There are two of us who take care of Rowena. I live with her every other

week and always look forward to coming back to see her.

I have noticed over the weeks how much her confidence has grown; she has become more engaged in conversations and likes to try new things. Recently I introduced her to Netflix which she absolutely loves and one of her favourite series is The Crown.

We have fun together, we always have a laugh, and when I see Rowena smiling it makes me happy.

We sing along to her favourite CDs and sometimes she starts dancing, having a twist. I'm not a great dancer but I dance with her.

Rowena looks forward to our daily walk together and we have gradually walked further, her appetite has also been increasing. I cook for her, she has forgotten how to do all that, although sometimes she helps me peel the vegetables.

I like to help her maintain her independence so she can still feel like she is running her own home. We also enjoy spending time in her beautiful garden or playing scrabble.

There are shelves of photograph albums, and we look through those together in her front room. Rowena tells me stories and I absolutely love hearing about her life. The wedding album is my favourite. There's a

beautiful picture of her in her wedding dress, and when I comment on her tiny waist and how gorgeous she looked she blushes and laughs.

Her husband died recently. Every day she walks past his portrait in the hallway and says: 'hello darling.' If she gets upset, I tell her to think about the wonderful memories they had



together and that always works. She is such a positive person.

Rowena absolutely loves her home. It's the family home and I think being here has helped and comforted her. It reassures her and is a familiar space. You can see she feels really safe which is nice. It would have made it so much tougher for her if she'd had to go and live somewhere else.

She can become confused and requires support and prompting for most things in her daily life. Sometimes

she'll forget my name, but she knows who I am.

When we go to the shops Rowena links my arm and won't leave my side. I'm the person she turns to for reassurance. If she is trying to choose between two different packets of biscuits she will say: 'what would I like?' That's what makes this job so rewarding. I have learnt to understand her.

I am there to support her and that puts her family's mind at ease. They trust me to look after her and I have formed a lovely bond with them. They have added me to a group chat so I can send them updates and pictures and they are always checking in and phoning. They are so supportive and it's brilliant how they have welcomed me in.

Starting a career in the care sector and working with someone who has Alzheimer's can be challenging at times. But the training and support I have been given by Bluebird Care has been brilliant. I never feel alone.

*“Working with Rowena has really been a blessing. I have found it worthwhile and so rewarding to see the difference I have made to someone else's life.”*

Shannen is a care assistant at Bluebird Care Cardiff and works full-time as a Live-in Care Assistant. The customer names in this case study have been changed to protect identities.

# What Does a Job in Social Care Offer Me?

Apart from unrivalled job satisfaction, working in the social care sector provides:

- Stable and growing industry
- Flexible working patterns
- Full or part-time
- Rewarding work
- Blue light card membership

In addition to this, working for Bluebird Care provides you with:

- Training and support
- Career Progression
- Competitive rate of pay



# Our Employee Promise:

## *Integrity and Collaboration*

Working with respect is one of the most important values we have and working with Bluebird Care means making a commitment to treat others well and behave in a collaborative way. All decisions and actions should be undertaken with integrity in mind, regardless of your role or status.

Our Employee Promise is underpinned by our values:

**We are Kind and Caring.** Bluebird Care employees put their customers first and we put our people first. We must treat each other with dignity and compassion. There will be no tolerance of any kind of discriminatory behaviour, harassment, bullying or victimisation. You must conform with our Equal Opportunities and Diversity and Prevention of Bullying and Harassment Policy in all aspects of your work and work-related interactions with others.

**We are Professional and Respected.** You must hold personal responsibility for the protection of our customers, our colleagues, and our business, including complying with all relevant legislation when performing your duties. We always expect employees to act ethically and responsibly when working on behalf of, or representing Bluebird Care.

**We are Fun and Passionate.** We are proud of our work and proud to be part of Bluebird Care. We find the positives in every situation and we strive to make a difference every day.

**We are Innovative.** Where others see a problem, we see an opportunity. We know the world is changing and so we evolve too. We embrace the new and the different. We find solutions.

**We are Supportive.** Collaboration is at the heart of our business – we support each other, we support our customers, and we support Bluebird Care. We are friendly and open-minded, and we know that we are stronger together.



# What Skills do I Need?

At Bluebird Care, we see people from many different walks of life come to us and flourish. Whilst our care assistants have vast differences and backgrounds, the one thing they all have in common is unsurprisingly, being a lover of people.

We look for key personality attributes in our care team members rather than specific work experience or qualifications. We can help you attain qualifications and provide you with experience, but no-one can 'teach' someone how to be naturally kind and caring.

**Ask yourself the following and if they resonate with you, you may have found your next career move:**

- Are you a people's person?
- Are you at your happiest when giving to others?
- Do you love to look after people and make them feel good?
- Do you want to make a difference to someone's life?
- Do you have a desire to spend your time doing something really worthwhile?

All care staff will need good English along with number and digital skills as well possessing strong listening and communication skills.



You don't necessarily need any qualifications to become a care assistant. What's more important is that you have the right values and behaviours to work in social care. Key attributes of a good care assistant are:

- Caring
- Friendly and pleasant
- Patient and resilient
- Calm under pressure
- Positive and energetic
- Happy disposition
- Sensitive to different needs and cultures

At Bluebird Care, all of our care staff complete the Care Certificate as part of their induction. In addition all of our care teams are trained in Basic Life Support. Longer term, it might be helpful for your career progression to have a social care qualification such as Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care which is something we can help you with once you're on-board.

## What about Career Progression?

There are careers to be had in social care! At Bluebird Care, we aim to grow and develop our staff by providing continual personal development and training opportunities. Many people join as a care assistant and go onto become a care supervisor or manager among many other roles. Read on to hear Harriet's story on the next page:



# Harriet, Head of Recruitment and Marketing



I'll never forget her face when I walked in with the Christmas tree. Margaret had Alzheimer's, and even though it was Christmas she didn't have any decorations. She was over the moon when she saw the tree and helped me to decorate it. 'Let's get into the Christmas spirit,' I said as I put on a Christmas film for her, and that evening I stayed late so we could watch it together.

I absolutely love my job at Bluebird Care. I joined at 18 and it was the best thing I ever did.

“

*I had people who needed me and depended on me. It made me realise what I wanted to do in life. I wanted to help people!*

”

My teenage years were difficult. I was sexually assaulted aged 13, by a friend's step dad at a sleepover. The aftermath was traumatic with school bullying, police interviews and a court case. I was affected by the event for many years to come and I struggled to get my life back on track.

At 15 I became pregnant. I remember sitting on my bed, crying, feeling totally lost. When my little boy was born, he was the light of my life and I knew I needed to provide for him. I started working as a care assistant when I finished college.

I loved my customers and was excited to see them every day. I cared so much for people and never wanted anyone to feel as lonely as I had done. I wanted to be their friend and the person they could love and trust, and I was. That feeling is like no other.

Patricia was the loveliest lady you could ever meet. She was like me, bubbly and outgoing. I looked forward to seeing her every day. I'd take her to the hairdressers to have her hair permed and she loved that. I'd take her chocolate and pop in on my weekend off to see how she was getting on.

The other day I found the order of service from her funeral while I was going through a memory box under my bed. I gave it a little hug. I know I made a difference to her and she really appreciated it.



Joseph was 99, and we used to dance together in his kitchen. We'd sing *Jolene*, his favourite song, he'd take my hand and spin me around. He danced around with his walking stick and we had such a lovely time. When Joseph went into hospital I visited him. I brought him his favourite treats and some new pyjamas and slippers, and I shaved his beard. He always loved my shaves.

I liked to have a bit of a laugh and joke with the people I cared for. I built such a massive bond with them.

I really got to know them and they were like my own family, that's how I treated them. I felt worthwhile, I had a purpose in life and it didn't feel like I was working. I have so much love to give.

I worked hard and after two years I was offered a position as care coordinator. I went on to become a recruitment officer, then recruitment manager and I was then promoted to my current role.

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*I never thought I'd be in this position when I was younger.*

”

I get to give people their dream jobs and support them along their way. I'm very passionate about taking on the right people and I have high standards. They have to be caring.

Finding people who are right for the job is fantastic, watching them start their journey and grow with us - that excites me. I'm motivated to do the best I possibly can.

I'm not saying that being a carer is easy. There are days when it can be difficult and tiring. But you have a job that has meaning, a job that is needed and a job that is so rewarding.

“

*Now I am Head of Recruitment and Marketing for Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire. If I can get to where I am today, anyone can.*

”

Caring is about making a difference to people and having fun while you do it.

I remember lying in bed at night going through what I had done that day. I'd think about how I'd had made Belinda laugh, or made Margaret her favourite dinner and I'd heard all those stories from Joseph and we'd had a nice dance. When I thought about what I had done for them, about how many smiles I'd seen that day, it made me feel good.

Harriet works full-time as Head of Recruitment and Marketing for Bluebird Care Lincoln. The customer names in this case study have been changed to protect identities.

# I want to work in Care. What next?

Now that you've made up your mind that working in care is for you, the next step is to think about the type of role you'd like to do. For example, are you interested in becoming a Live-in Care assistant who is dedicated to supporting one person or couple and living in their home with them, or would you prefer to be a Care Assistant that has various customers every day?

You'll then need to search for available jobs in your area. We recommend the following places as a starting point:

- **Bluebird Care Careers Website**

We have a dedicated careers website where you can find plenty of tips and insights into us as a company and the work we do. We also advertise all of our jobs here. You can search by the postcode in which you currently live, or by job type. We take applications

direct from our website so applying couldn't be easier.

[www.bluebirdcarecareers.co.uk](http://www.bluebirdcarecareers.co.uk)

- **Indeed**

Indeed is a free service to job seekers, where you can upload a CV, create job alert emails, search for jobs, save them and apply to them directly.

[www.indeed.co.uk](http://www.indeed.co.uk)

- **Totaljobs**

Total Jobs the UK's largest hiring platform, we have over 280,000 live jobs adverts on our site, helping you to find any type of job, in any industry, wherever you are based.

[www.totaljobs.com](http://www.totaljobs.com)

- **Every Day is Different**

This is a Government run job site specialising in adult social care.

[www.everydayisdifferent.com](http://www.everydayisdifferent.com)



# The Bluebird Care Recruitment Process

You've searched our careers website and found a job you'd like to apply for.

What happens next?

As you can imagine, we need to make sure the right people join the Bluebird Care team and therefore, we use a very thorough recruitment process.

The steps you'll take are:

- Apply online via our website by either uploading your CV or by completing the application form.
- You'll then be contacted by the relevant local office for a screening interview, during which we'll answer any of your questions about working in care and find out more about you.



- If you pass the screening stage, you'll be invited for a face to face interview.
- The recruitment manager at your local office will be in contact to let you know the outcome and next steps.
- We thoroughly vet all of our potential staff before they can start work with us. This includes checking records at the Disclosure and Barring Service.

# Interview Tips

Preparing for your interview will make you feel at ease and give you the tools to answer any difficult questions you might be faced with.

You may be concerned that you lack actual care experience or qualifications, but at Bluebird Care we're more concerned about recruiting the right type of person; someone that has person-ability, engagement, listening and communication skills.

The following tips will help you in preparation for your interview:

1 - Read the job description of the position you're applying for thoroughly and make sure you understand the responsibilities that would be expected from you.

2 - Think about your previous experiences either from work placements or your life in general that may help you with work in care.

3 - Relax, be yourself and let your personality shine through!

You will be asked specific questions relating to the role for which you've applied. For example, for a Care Supervisor role, you may be asked specifics on completing a customer needs assessment.

Here we outline things to prepare for if you're applying for work as a care assistant and have no relevant

previous care experience. Wherever possible, select real-life examples to demonstrate your abilities and skills.

## • **What Qualities do you offer?**

Are you a good listener for example? Can you easily put people at ease or making them laugh? Think about the softer skills you have in the absence of experience or qualifications.

## • **Are you a team player?**

Care can be a pressurised environment and relying on team-mates is paramount. Have an example of when you've been reliable and helped out another team member.

## \* **How do you deal with stressful experiences?**

Think about any life or work experiences where you have coped and overcome a stressful situation. These experiences provide extra empathy with customers.

## \* **Have you cared for anyone before?**

Maybe you've done some voluntary care work before or maybe you've simply used your care skills to care for friends or loved ones and can draw on this knowledge and experience.

Enthusiasm goes a long way so let your excitement for care shine through!

Good luck!

# The Bluebird Care Training Academy

The mission of our Training Academy is the creation, dissemination, and sharing of knowledge.

Through our induction process, you will take part in these mandatory courses:

- Moving & Handling/People Handling
- Medication Administration
- Infection prevention & control
- Safeguarding Children & Adults
- Food Hygiene & Preparation
- Health & Safety inc COSHH
- Basic Life Support
- Fire Safety Awareness
- Mental Capacity training
- Information Governance

During your induction period you will meet customers through shadow calls with senior care assistants. This enables you to learn the required 'on the job' skills.

The induction period runs alongside

your probationary period and you will be given an allocated supervisor who will meet you on a weekly basis.

Once you have completed your induction training, we offer further professional development for your career with us.

You will have the opportunity to take up a Diploma in Health & Social Care, Lead Adult Care Worker, and Leadership & Management.

Alternatively, if management isn't for you, you can still enhance your knowledge by becoming a Dementia Champion, Mental Health First Aider, Autism Champion or a Falls Prevention Champion.





*We are often referred to by our customers as 'lovely blue angels'; can you become one of them?*

[bluebirdcarecareers.co.uk](https://www.bluebirdcarecareers.co.uk)