

Amanda Squires

From kitchen novice to certified chef, Amanda has tuned her passion into a profession with support from her colleagues at Wimborne House, a Sanctuary Supported Living retirement community in Kent.



Amanda, otherwise known as Mandy, had never worked in a kitchen before she took a job as a general assistant, so her rise to production chef is nothing short of inspiring.

After being made redundant from her retail job, Mandy thought it was time for a change of scenery and applied for a role at Wimborne House, which provides apartments and communal facilities for over 55s.

Initially, her responsibilities included being front of house serving lunch at the on-site Taste restaurant, looking after customers, and keeping the kitchen clean and tidy.

Soon, her curiosity in cookery piqued and Chef Manager, Kay Boakes, offered to be her mentor - slowly showing her the ropes with cakes and sauces and other basic recipes. It fast became apparent that working in the kitchen came naturally to Mandy and before she knew it, she'd made her first successful sponge. As testament to her progress, the cake didn't last long and was highly complimented amongst her colleagues.

Recognising her passion and potential, Kay recommended that Mandy enrol on a professional course to become a qualified production chef and with additional support from Sanctuary Supported Living's Head of Hospitality, Will Childe, Mandy embarked on her formal culinary education journey.

Despite facing a significant health setback during her course and being absent for nearly four months, Mandy's resilience saw her through to the end – and she successfully completed her production chef course with a distinction and a pass.

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STAFF story

Mandy said: “I’m really chuffed at how far I’ve come. You should have seen my cakes before – they were more like pancakes; they were so flat! You wouldn’t believe that I’m chief baker in my family now. I make all our celebration cakes.

“I’m so thankful that I was given the opportunity to better myself. I really couldn’t have done it without the support of Kay, Will, and the rest of the team at Wimborne House. Even though I was a total novice and unfamiliar in the kitchen, they saw a spark of ability and gave me all the tools to flourish and be my best at work.

“Receiving a certificate in front all my colleagues who’ve been cheering me on from the start was really special and probably my proudest moment to date.

“Anything is possible with the support of Sanctuary Supported Living – you just have to believe in yourself.”

We can’t wait to see what she does next!

All our Taste restaurants are open to family and friends, and many are open to the public, where everyone is welcome to enjoy our delicious, freshly prepared meals at great value prices.

