

Staff story

Mandy Todd

Mandy Todd is a Care and Support Assistant at Tilmore Gardens in Petersfield, which is rated 'Outstanding' by the CQC and provides residential care and support for adults with a range of learning disabilities.



She tells us that Tilmore Gardens not only earns its champion status for going above and beyond for residents, but that it's outstanding in its commitment to staff, and that she feels lucky to have found such a fulfilling role with Sanctuary Supported Living.

It's no secret among Mandy's colleagues that she thoroughly enjoys her job, but what makes Tilmore Gardens such a great place to work?

Outstandingly well-led. The inspiring leadership at Tilmore Gardens creates a wonderfully positive workplace culture, with an open and transparent environment. I've never worked in a place where management were so approachable, supportive and genuinely interested in the team and our personal lives.

Understanding. I'm a social care newbie and I didn't have any previous work experience or qualifications, but that wasn't important. All I needed to get started was my personal qualities, and Tilmore Gardens could see that I was open-minded and passionate about making a difference to peoples' lives. For everything else, there was training!

Training. Sanctuary's Learning Academy has a specialist team for Sanctuary Supported Living and they provide advice and guidance for learning and development specific to us. Whether its online learning that I can access via the Learning Zone, or face-to-face training, every webinar or course I've attended has been an opportunity to upskill and progress in my role.

Support. You're never alone. Even if you're lone working on the night shift, there's a wonderful support network on hand. Management are always available – even out-of-hours - they're always happy to advise and support.

Teamwork. Due to the varied nature of care and support work, you need to be prepared to work closely with each other. At Tilmore Gardens, we're a close team and I really value how we come together to support each other and residents. When we're working together as a team, we're providing the best care and support that we can.

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Accommodating. People don't just need care from 9 to 5, which means shifts are available around the clock! Whatever personal or family commitments you have, there are hours to suit your personal schedule.

Nourishing. Since I'm new to the industry, I'm eagerly learning all the time and I'm so lucky to have access to such a huge library of information and experience in my fellow co-workers. They've been the greatest teachers and encouraged me to grow and have confidence in my abilities.

Dedication. Passion and dedication in social care is paramount. We work hard to make sure that Tilmore Gardens is more than just bricks and mortar – it's a wonderful, safe home for people to receive care and support, whilst maintaining their choice, control and independence, surrounded by family and friends

Inspiring. My job as a Support Assistant really is unique, and I support some of the most vulnerable people in society – it's a privileged position to be in. Sometimes I'll encounter challenges along the way, but on the days that I can help someone decide what to wear for the day, or help them bake a cake... If I could bottle that feeling you get when you see a resident beaming with pride from their achievements, well, I'd be a millionaire!

Natural. There is never a day that I wake up and think 'I don't want to go to work today.' Yes, social work can be demanding, but if you can build good relationships, set clear boundaries, and focus on what needs to be done, it's a hugely rewarding career. I've found my vocation for life.

Good humoured. Working with residents who each have unique personalities and life-experiences can be eye-opening and lots of fun. Although care and support work often involves helping people who are facing adversity, you'll be inspired by the human capacity to see the positives and humour in so many situations. As life-affirming jobs go, it doesn't get any better, and laughter truly is the best medicine!