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Interviewer: So, tell me a little bit about your role. Do you work for an organisation that provides like residential care work or are you more sort of domiciliary, how does it work for you?

Respondent: No, it’s residential, it’s pretty much all residential but we are quite a big company. It’s called (organisation), it’s predominantly based in, the head office is (organisation) but it’s kind of all round the (location/place), (location/place), there’s quite a few in sort of (location/place), (location/place) area, (location/place), even (location/place). But it’s learning disabilities, it’s mental health, sometimes it’s like substance abuse and things. It’s quite a broad range of different people that we support.

Interviewer: Brilliant. And is your actual job title care work or care assistant or what’s your actual…?

Respondent: My job title is senior care worker. Essentially, it’s a bit weird, I’m basically the home manager but they don’t call me the home manager. So, I essentially have a single setting so I support one person at the moment but I’m sort of in charge of the building and all the day-to-day paperwork and stuff.

Interviewer: Right. But your actual job title is senior care worker?

Respondent: Yes, that’s right.

Interviewer: Brilliant. And how long have you worked at your current provider for?

Respondent: Since February.

Interviewer: Where were you before that?

Respondent: Prior to that, I was with (organisation) so still basically a senior care worker but with children.

Interviewer: Brilliant, okay. And what brought you into the sort of care work industry, Cw9, what attracted you to work in care?

Respondent: Basically, it boiled down to wanting to help people, you know, I was in varying jobs for about 10 years and wasn’t really getting very fulfilled and had a bit of a sort of early mid-life crisis and thought, “What do I want to do with life?” And yeah, it boiled down to wanting to help people. Initially, I was with adults with very profound learning disabilities and never looked back, really.

Interviewer: Oh wow, amazing. And how did you hear about the job that you’re in now? Why did you come to work for this particular provider?

Respondent: I found them on Indeed. Essentially, with children, it is very pressured, you know. Obviously, children with behaviours that challenge and you’re racing about like a headless chicken. But I’d have quite a negative staff supervision so got home feeling rather annoyed with the company, with life.

I found this advert and it was probably the worst advert I’ve seen in a long while because, obviously, we do residentials with the sleeps, which, obviously, adds quite a lot to your salary and I didn’t want to lose that element of it but not a lot of adult providers do sleeps. And this came up and it wasn’t even clear if it was adults or children, it just said, you know, “Residential care, dah, dah, dah.” So, Indeed have a sort of “Apply Now” button so I just sort of chucked an application form in, forgot about it and then got on okay with my existing job.

But when I had the interview, you know, done no prep, nothing, rearranged it about five times, they were like, “So, what do you know about adult social care?” I was like, “Oh, okay, it’s with adults.” But actually, once I found out more about the position, it was a very good opportunity. It’s step up from where I was but at the same time, it’s a small enough setting. I can sort of find my feet and I can make it my own.

Interviewer: Brilliant, it sounds like a good move in that sense. So, do you mind me asking what your hourly rate of pay is at the moment?

Respondent: No. It’s a bit weird. At the moment, my standard hours, so my contracted hours are £12.60. But then any overtime I get, because they say that I can’t have overtime as a senior, I have to have overtime as a standard support worker, that’s £11.70.

Interviewer: Right, okay. How important do you think it is that people with more experience are paid more? Do you think there’s a role for experience in terms of paying more?

Respondent: Yeah, definitely. I think the salary definitely helps. We have the company, like standard support workers, they’re on, I think it’s £10.70 as unqualified but if they’ve got a qualification, it goes up to £10.90. So, it gives people an incentive to actually do more qualifications and do more work and actually progress.

Interviewer: Yeah, absolutely. And when was the last time that your pay was increased, if you don’t mind me asking? And how much was that by?

Respondent: They increased it in April. I think it was, it wasn’t huge but I think it was like 20 pence and hour.

Interviewer: Right, okay. And how do you see that your hourly rate of pay compares with other jobs that you’ve had or other jobs in the area?

Respondent: It’s less than what I was being paid when I was with the children. I think child care gets paid a lot more than adults. In terms of other companies, I think it is quite a good rate, hourly. I don’t know whether you’re investigating sort of sleep-ins, as well, but…

Interviewer: Yeah, I’ve got a question on that in a minute, yeah.

Respondent: I was going to say yeah, I think what lets the company down for me is the sleep-in rate but, obviously, I’ll wait until you get to that point.

Interviewer: Yeah, no, that’s great.

Respondent: I also feel, you know, I’ve had a very big argument about this, that my overtime rate ought to be my salaried rate, it shouldn’t be less because, at the end of the day, I’m a senior support worker and I’m still doing my senior support worker role, whether I’m on my contracted hours or not.

Interviewer: Absolutely. No, absolutely. Yeah, I can see why you’d think that. You mentioned that you’d had a pay increase in April, was that because of the shift with the National Living Wage? Do you know if that was related to the increase in National…?

Respondent: Yeah, I think we pay the living wage so it was increased to reflect that.

Interviewer: Yeah, I was going to ask, your employer, have they signed up to the Real Living Wage?

Respondent: They have, yes.

Interviewer: They have, okay great, that’s really helpful. All right. It’s such a relief to be actually talking to somebody I know is actually doing the job! (Laughter) How do you feel about any other sort of benefits that you receive in the role? So, do you get anything like sick pay or pension contributions or any other sort of bonuses?

Respondent: We get pension paid, there’s a pension scheme but I think it’s just standard because over a certain size they have to do it, don’t they? We just get statutory sick pay, which isn’t very helpful. But we’ve got like this thing called Medicash, you know, you get off dentist, you get money off opticians, stuff like that, which is quite helpful.

Interviewer: Is it quite a significant chunk you end up getting off, or how does it work?

Respondent: I haven’t actually used it yet but I had one, I had the scheme where I used to work with a different provider. You tend to get, it’s a bit like an insurance policy, you’ll get like £50 off your dentist or you’ll get a free optician’s appointment. I mean, it’s not going to set the world on fire but to me, it’s £100 a year that I wouldn’t otherwise be having, happy days.

Interviewer: Yeah, every little but it helps, doesn’t it? That’s great. My next question is about the sleep-ins. The first question is do you do sleep-ins and then are you paid for these?

Respondent: Yeah, we do and it’s £30 a night.

Interviewer: Is that on top of your normal hours that you would do?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: So, you’d get like, say you were on shift for like an extra eight hours, you’d get that and then you’d get the £30 on top of that?

Respondent: No, we don’t get the eight hours, we just get the £30 as a flat rate.

Interviewer: Oh, I see, all right, okay. So, you wouldn’t… I don’t know how it all works but say you slept in for like…

Respondent: Say, for example, I’m in tomorrow. So, I start at 9:30, I work until 11:00. So, I get my hourly rate from 9:30 to 11:00. Then, from 11:00 till 7:00, I just get paid the £30, which is the sleep-in rate.

Interviewer: Right, okay, yeah, that makes sense, that’s really helpful. Thanks, Cw9.

Respondent: That wasn’t too hard to explain…

Interviewer: No, no, no. No, you explained it really clearly, I’m just not myself completely familiar with all the different ways that people work. So now, you’ve explained it really clearly.

Then, in terms of other payments, has your employer paid for things like your DBS check, your uniform, any induction training?

Respondent: Don’t have a uniform so not an issue.

Interviewer: What about, like did you have to have a DBS check? Did they pay for that?

Respondent: They paid for the DBS initially but you pay… yeah, they pay for the DBS initially but then we pay it back in the first three or four months of working there.

Interviewer: Oh, I see, does it kind of come out of your salary sort of thing?

Respondent: It comes out of the salary, yes. And then, what was the other thing you said?

Interviewer: About induction training.

Respondent: Oh yeah, they pay for all that and it’s quite a thorough induction, as well. It’s like two weeks shadowing, which I thought was quite good.

Interviewer: Right, oh, that’s good.

Respondent: You get paid a full rate of pay for that, as well.

Interviewer: Right, so it’s kind of just part of your salary for that time?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: That’s brilliant. Thanks, you’ve given me some really helpful responses.

Respondent: I don’t know whether it is applicable but if I work at another place, they pay the mileage difference.

Interviewer: Right, okay, so if you’re having to travel between locations?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, no, yeah, that…

Respondent: I quite often go to (organisation) for their head office meetings and stuff and they will always pay the travel.

Interviewer: Is it like a mileage allowance you get?

Respondent: Yeah, it’s like 45p a mile, just the standard.

Interviewer: And if you’re having to travel between places, is that travel time also included in your hours of work, like it wouldn’t be seen as just separate?

Respondent: It depends on what it is. If I was like off and going in, probably not but if I’m on shift in one place and going there, I will put the travel time in because I’m at work.

Interviewer: Yeah, you’re still sort of in your working hours, aren’t you? Yeah, that makes sense. And so, how does…

Respondent: They’ve not not paid me as yet.

Interviewer: You know you’re doing it right. And how does it work in terms of the clients that you work with? So, is it literally like you would sign on to a shift and you’d work a certain number of hours and you’d see various clients or you’d be working with various different people during that one shift?

Respondent: At the moment, I’m in a single setting so there is literally just one bloke. So, we just work with him full time but we are in the process of getting another guy in. The issue is, at the moment, [\*\*0:11:39] so I’m just trying to recruit staff. It’s a bit of a chicken and egg situation, you know, we’ve got the guy, we want the guy but we haven’t got people to support.

Interviewer: Yeah, of course. Do you have to kind of like sign anything to sign into your hours or anything like that?

Respondent: We’ve got like an app on our phone and we’ve got a bar code in the property so you just scan it to sign in.

Interviewer: Do you find that quite an effective system?

Respondent: Yeah, it’s reasonable. Yeah, it’s remembering to do it.

Interviewer: Yeah, of course. And then, in terms of, you mentioned about your mileage allowance, does that just appear on your wage slip as like an extra kind of figure or can you always see on your wage slip what you’ve had extra for your mileage?

Respondent: We get like a pay email and it comes weekly and it’s got on it like contracted hours, hours worked, any sleeps you’ve done and then it will have like holiday hours or mileage, as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, that’s really helpful.

Respondent: We have to submit the mileage separately.

Interviewer: You do? Right, okay, and then you get reimbursed for that. And how much time, Cw9, would you typically have to spend travelling between different locations? Is it like a daily thing, is it every once a week? How does that work in terms of having to go to other places?

Respondent: It’s not massively often. I’d say it’s probably once a fortnight.

Interviewer: Right, yep.

Respondent: And the thing is, with me being a senior, I think it’s because I have more training and stuff to do. The regular support workers probably wouldn’t go as much.

Interviewer: Okay, no, that’s fine. And then, how is your rota kind of organised? Who does the staffing and the organisation?

Respondent: Me.

Interviewer: You’re the one who does that?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: No, that’s really, really, that’s helpful. And so, in terms of your rate of pay, would you say it’s good for a care worker in the local area? That there were other kind of better paid jobs available? Do you think it’s good for a senior care worker? How would rate your rate of pay? What are your thoughts around that?

Respondent: I don’t think the senior care worker’s rate is bad but like I say, I think, to me, any overtime I do should also be paid at the same rate. I don’t agree with them reducing it, I think that’s just unfair. I mean, I know why because the company’s made a big loss over the past few years and essentially, if they paid me the rate, they’d have to pay everybody and they wouldn’t be able to afford it. So, I’m sort of gritting my teeth and agreeing with it for the moment because they’re a good company in a lot of other respects. But that is a big bugbear.

And the sleep rate, they basically only pay £30 because some of the local authorities only pay £30. However, to me, there will be local authorities that are paying £75 a night for somebody to sleep. So, they ought to actually be…

Interviewer: Comparable.

Respondent: …averaging it out over the whole company because £30 a night for a sleep is very low. Most companies, these days, pay a minimum of £50 and I know there are some who pay £65 or £75 a night to support workers.

Interviewer: Yeah, it’s a lot of extra responsibility, isn’t it and during that night time period, yeah, it’s a completely different kettle of fish to day shift, isn’t it?

Respondent: It is. In terms of the support work, I don’t think we’re badly paid for support work, like I say, they do do the minimum wage and the support worker overtime is also paid at £11.70. So, obviously, that’s quite a big hike from the standard hours, which is good.

Interviewer: Brilliant. And do you mind me asking if your income is the main income in the household?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: It is. And are you in receipt of an in-work benefits or anything that you’re entitled to that you can also claim whilst you’re in work?

Respondent: In terms of like what, sorry, I don’t get what you mean?

Interviewer: I’m not sure, really, like some people kind of work part-time and then they get some benefits, kind of top up…

Respondent: No, no, nothing like that.

Interviewer: And then, thinking about your weekly income from your work in social care, do you feel like it meets your needs and your household needs?

Respondent: Mostly, yeah. I mean, I think, I always tend to do more hours than my contracted hours. I don’t know whether it would meet my needs if I worked 37.5 hours a week but working, probably 50 hours a week, yes, it does.

Interviewer: So, you’re having to kind of top it up with those additional hours to do that?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And has the rising cost of living impacted you in any way?

Respondent: Yeah, massive, massively. Everything’s gone up by about a third so, yeah, fuel, food, you name it…

Interviewer: It’s crazy, isn’t it, everything’s going up. To what extent would you say you’re satisfied with your pay? Do you think that your pay is reasonable for the work that you do or not?

Respondent: I think it’s reasonable. I think there are definitely improvements that could be made. Like I say, I’m probably a six or seven out of 10 on the satisfaction with pay. You know, it’s copeable with but there’s definitely stuff that they could do that would make me happier.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. And what type of contract are you on, Cw9? Is it like a permanent contract, is it zero hours?

Respondent: Permanent.

Interviewer: And is it a kind of guaranteed hours contract, are you guaranteed a certain number of hours?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: So, like I said, 37.5 but how our rota works is some weeks we’ll do sort of 30 and other weeks we’ll do 45 or 50 so over the month, it’s, I think 140 or 150? I can’t remember what it equates to.

Interviewer: No, that’s brilliant. And have you been on the same contract throughout your time in this organisation?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And in your opinion, do you feel like you have enough hours or not enough hours? I know you said you work quite a bit of overtime, what are your feelings around the kind of availability of hours, I guess?

Respondent: There are plenty, currently. My issue is lack of staff, meaning I’ve got to cover a lot more hours, sometimes more than I want to. You know, I don’t want there to be no overtime because then I would struggle pay wise but equally, being the senior, I have to, basically, make sure the house is staffed so, it can sometimes be a bit like, “Oh look, I’m in work again…”

Interviewer: “It’s me again. I’m here again.” Obviously, you said you’re responsible for kind of the staffing and stuff, the question is are shifts ever cancelled and how much notice do you get? But, I suppose, if you’re the one that’s doing the organising of all of that, do you ever cancel… is that part of your role? No, you’d never cancel shifts.

Respondent: To be fair, the client that I support, for a variety of reasons, he can’t have agency staff so we do pretty much just rely on our staff team. So, if anybody’s ever ill, we tend to cover it internally. So, I don’t think I’ve ever rang somebody and said, “Don’t come in.”

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, so you’d never cancel, cancelling shifts is not really a thing because of the nature of the work.

Respondent: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: And then, in terms of the hours that you’re doing, you mentioned that you’re contracted for the 37 but you tend to do about 50, is that kind of standard and are those hours spread quite equally during the week? Or does there tend to be some days that are much longer?

Respondent: How our shift pattern works, well, how I prefer doing it is, basically, because we’ve got the sleeps and I live, probably, 30 miles from work, I tend to just do two days in with two sleeps and then another day later on in the week. Or sometimes, I’ll even do three days in with three sleeps…

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: …then I’ve got like five days off before I’m back in again.

Interviewer: And how does that work for you? Is that kind of what you’d prefer? Or is it more you’re doing that in order to meet the demands of the service? How do you feel about the shift pattern that you’ve got?

Respondent: I tend to prefer it like that just because, obviously, then, you’ve got all your hours in and then you’ve got a bit more time at home and you can actually do your own thing, as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, it’s like kind of, what do they call it? You’re working really long hours, compressed hours, isn’t it, where you’re doing really long hours and then…

Respondent: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: Is part of that kind of structuring of things? Do you have to do many weekends?

Respondent: Again, it varies. I do quite a few. I try to split it between the team because we’ve all got various bits on. So, you know, we take it in turns.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. And so, does your income tend to stay quite stable week to week or is there much variety? You said you’re doing overtime each week…

Respondent: I mean, I don’t really do weekly, I’ll be honest, because I get paid monthly. Probably the most it varies is by about £400, give or take, just purely because it is how much over I’ve done.

Interviewer: Yeah, I’ve got you, okay. And in your opinion, Cw9, what would you say is more important, having higher pay or having choice over your hours? What are you drawn more towards?

Respondent: I must admit choice with my hours is a big one for me but, like I say, I’ve kind of got that because I do the rota. But I do try to do that with my team, as well, like if anybody needs time off, I always send a text round going, “Right, I’m about to start November rota, apart from leave, are there any days anybody needs off?” because then, at least, I’m offering them that slight flexibility. But, obviously, pay, you work to live.

Interviewer: Absolutely, yeah.

Respondent: It’s a balance. The company, like I say, I’m not overly happy with the rate of pay but then there are other things that the company offers me. They’re very good on training, they’re about to put me onto my Level 5. There’s a lot of sort of career development that I can do with the company. So, that kind of outweighs the pay for me at the moment.

Interviewer: That’s really interesting, actually because that’s one of the things that we’re interested in exploring. I’ve got a couple of questions on training in a moment. Yeah, because some people are saying that because their organisation is offering good development opportunities and things like that, that’s a factor that’s retaining them in the sector. Whereas others are leaving the sector because the pay isn’t what they need but also, they’ve not got those additional kind of benefits. So, it’s interesting that you’ve said that.

So, tell me a little bit about what your job involves on a day-to-day basis, like what would a typical day kind of look like?

Respondent: It’s very varied. I mean, the gentleman I support has learning disabilities and autism and he’s also, I don’t know if you’ve heard of forensic but…

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: Basically, he’s an ex-offender so he was accused of a crime in the past so, obviously, we’ve got to manage risk of, you know, where he’s going and what he’s doing and make sure that we’re careful with him. It’s fairly minimal now but it’s still a factor, which is why there’s no agency [workers].

But basically, my normal day, go in at 9:30, have a handover, he normally goes out for an activity about 10:30. He’s out till, probably 1:00 or 2:00. We come home, he then has some chill out time, he’ll just go and watch telly, make lunch, whatever. I then try to catch up on as much paperwork as I possibly can between sort of 1:00 and about 4:00 and then sort his tea out and whatnot before his activities.

And then he tends to go for another activity between sort of 6:00 and 9:00 at night, at which point, we come back, do his evening routine with him. He doesn’t need personal care but we have to run his bath.

And then he goes to bed, I go to bed, and then get up at 7:00 and from sort of 7:00 till 10:00 is normally quite a good period where I can try to get all my paperwork, because I don’t get allocated office hours, which is a real bugbear because I think I ought to because I’m doing all the support plans, all the paperwork, all the rotas, everything, basically. And then trying to do that while I’m on shift supporting a client is an absolute nightmare. But from sort of 7:00 till 10:00 is quite a good opportunity to sort of crack on with what I need to.

And then it’s a very similar sort of schedule, repeat the activity or do whatever.

Interviewer: So, if it’s just one person, is it kind of based in his home or is it like a residential unit where there are other people, as well, and you just look after this one person?

Respondent: It’s a home, it’s a mental building, it’s like, probably a quarter of a million pound house, massive wooden beams, medieval well in the kitchen. I cannot get over that it’s social housing, it’s insane. But at the moment, there’s only him in there but there used to be another client and there is room for another person to come in, which is why somebody else will be coming. But it’s a home, it’s not like a purpose-built residential unit, it is a home but it’s not built as a single setting, it’s built as a sort of a double setting. It’s just a case of we’re between people at the moment.

Interviewer: Got you, yeah, that makes sense. That’s really interesting.

Respondent: The problem was the old client left and then they didn’t have a senior. So, without a senior, they just kind of needed to have the one person because, obviously, there was nobody there to do the day-to-day stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah, interesting. It’s really fascinating, actually, because the more people I speak to, there are so many different models of care, aren’t there? It’s just fascinating.

Respondent: I mean, we’ve got that because when we visit other places in the company, they have like custom-built units of like eight or 10 flats and I’m just like, “It’s so different, it’s unreal.”

Interviewer: Yeah, I can imagine. And what do you enjoy most about your job, Cw9? What are the things that really fulfil you?

Respondent: I enjoy the interactions with the client and seeing how he’s making progress and the stuff that he enjoys. Plus, it’s the sort of… he does a lot of the same sort of things but no day is quite the same. You never quite know what’s going to be thrown at you. And at least you’re sort of out and about, you’re not stuck in… I couldn’t cope with just being stuck in an office all day. That just would not… it wouldn’t work.

Interviewer: Yeah, a lot of people have said the same. It’s that sort of freedom, isn’t it? You’ve got a lot more autonomy than sort of working in…

Respondent: Yes, and it’s challenging in terms of doing the senior role because, obviously, I’m doing a lot more paperwork and I’m being a lot more involved with the social workers and with the appointees and the minutiae of it all, which I enjoy.

Interviewer: And what are the things that you enjoy the least, what are the negative aspects of the role?

Respondent: Trying to juggle the staff and manage the staff effectively. And also, the big one is, because it’s social housing, we have a social housing provider who are absolutely useless and it’s so frustrating because I’m trying to get things repaired and put into place and it’s just like banging my head against a brick wall.

Interviewer: Do you find that there’s quite a lot of stress in the role? Like is it kind of a high stress job?

Respondent: You’ll probably think I’m controversial here but not really, to be honest, because I’m used to dealing with high-end kids who will kick you and batter you, you know? The guy I look after now, he might tell you to F off every now and again but it’s fairly minimal compared …

Interviewer: Is it? So, by comparison, it’s less stressful?

Respondent: Yeah. The bit that’s stressful is trying to juggle the paperwork and getting everything done with being on shift all the time. I think the job would be transformed for me if I’d have six hours’ office hours a week.

Interviewer: Yeah, you can catch up on all of that stuff.

Respondent: Then it would be my ideal job. It’s trying to do, you know, I'm going in, I’ve had a week off and I’m going in tomorrow and I’m taking the guy I support on holiday to (name of place) for four days. But then, that’ll take me to Tuesday, then I’m not back in till Friday. But then, I know when I go in on Friday, I’m going to have two lots of weekly audits to do, two lots of three-weekly audits to do, two lots of petty cash receipts and dah, dah, to do. All the monthly audits will then be due because it’ll be like 6 October. The November rota needs to be done. And in the back of my head I’m thinking, “Oh God, this is going to be a huge to do list.”

Interviewer: Yeah, and as you say, not having that designated time to be able to do that.

Respondent: Exactly, that’s what makes it hard.

Interviewer: You mentioned that one of the things you enjoy is the relationship that you’ve built with the person that you care for. What does a good relationship kind of look like for you in that sense and how important are these relationships, being able to build a relationship with your client?

Respondent: It’s huge. I mean, it’s the whole basis of the job, really. And I always work on firm but fair so, you know, I’ve got boundaries, I make the boundaries very clear but at the same time, if we stay within those boundaries, I’ll be as flexible as I can and we can have a lot of fun with it. That’s always how I work and the guy I support seems to respond pretty well to that.

Interviewer: Do you feel like you’ve got enough time to… I suppose this question’s more for people who are kind of moving between people who they’re caring for but do you feel that there has been enough time and there is enough time to kind of maintain those relationships?

Respondent: Yeah, we spend…

Interviewer: All day together.

Respondent: “Hello!”

Interviewer: Yeah, “It’s me again.” Brilliant. I’m just going to move on to the last little part of the questions, which is about career development and I know you kind of alluded to this earlier so that was great. Do you feel like you receive enough training and development in your current role? And what kinds of training have you received?

Respondent: We have a seniors meeting once a month and that’s really good because there’s a lot of training within that. We do recruitment so it’s all about how we interview and things like that. And then, sometimes, we have one on supervision so it’s all about managing supervisions and things. And the company will pay, because I try to watch the ACAS webinars and stuff like that, that have quite a lot of useful advice but sometimes, I’ll register for it and I’m not on shift and they’re quite good. If I just put, “Watching such a thing,” they will pay if you’ve done something and you’re off shift. I just put it through and tell them what I’m doing and they’re quite happy to sort of organise it.

Interviewer: That’s good. Is there any additional training that you would like that you feel would be beneficial?

Respondent: A lot of the standard training is done online, which winds me up. So, I think I would like much more face-to-face training. I think that would be hugely beneficial round the company, really, because the support work, almost all of it is online.

Interviewer: Is it? What kind of face-to-face training would be beneficial? Any particular kind of themes or topic areas?

Respondent: Stuff like moving and handling. I mean, how the hell are you supposed to do moving and handling online? It’s beyond me. I mean, we do first aid face-to-face, medication training, as well. I think that’s massive. We do, obviously, the practical observations face-to-face. I think you need a face-to-face personal trainer, as well. But yeah, again, it’s just company resources.

Interviewer: And do you feel that there are opportunities to progress in your area of work? Do you feel like there’s kind of developmental opportunities? And do you want to progress?

Respondent: Yeah. At the moment, they’re in the process of signing me up for my Level 5, which I’m pleased about. I mean, the next level from where I am now could be an area manager and I could be in charge of seven or eight different units or different homes round the area and sort of supervising the seniors with what they’re doing and stuff.

And I’ll be honest, I don’t know whether I would want that role, you know, at the moment or ever because it’s 9:00 to 5:00, there’s a lot of driving, there’s a lot of stress. But, I’m glad that they’re doing my Level 5 because once I’ve done my Level 5, I have options of, you know, if, in five years down the line I think no, I want to do something different, I’ve got that under my belt to actually move if I want to.

Interviewer: What kind of things might prevent career progression? Are there any barriers you see to career progression? Is it just the availability of different roles or are there any other barriers that you see in terms of your career progression?

Respondent: I think that’s the main one, to be fair, just how the company is structured, really, different roles.

Interviewer: The next step only being the area manager, which you’re not sure if that would actually be for you?

Respondent: Exactly. But, you know, there is that route if I want to do it. It’s just whether or not I want to do it. I could, potentially, having got Level 5, move to be a manager but in a different company…

Interviewer: Just tell me, the level…

Respondent: …manager.

Interviewer: Oh, I see, yeah. The Level 5, is that, I’m not completely familiar with all of the different qualifications…

Respondent: I think it’s a [\*\* 0:35:06] level. You’ve got to have it if you’re managing, irrespective of… because you have to have it within child care, as well.

Interviewer: I see, and is that in health and social care?

Respondent: No, I think it’s in management.

Interviewer: Oh, is it, okay, so it’ll be a management…

Respondent: Yeah, I think it’s a management one because I’ve already got two Level 3…

Interviewer: Do you think you’ll stay in care work? Going forward, do you see yourself continuing as a care worker?

Respondent: Yeah. Like I say, I would like to sort of move toward management. Well, I’m sort of in management, really, but, you know, like registered manager, potentially, it’s the next obvious step. But then again, it’s salary dependent because I don’t want to be in a position where I’m earning less than I am now.

Interviewer: Is there anything that would prevent you working in a care role? Is it just the salary or are there any other factors that would kind of, not force you out but kind of strongly pull you out?

Respondent: I suppose the only thing that would annoy me is the shifts because, obviously, you are impacted with social life and things. I think the long hours could put people off. Personally, they don’t with me because like I say, I prefer to do it all in a block and then have more time at home. But things like that, obviously, if you’ve got kids or whatever, it does impact people.

And like I say, just the salary because, you know, it’s a hell of a lot of responsibility when you could be stacking shelves at Aldi.

Interviewer: Yeah, that’s the thing. And it’s that kind of weighing it all up, isn’t it? And a lot of people have said the same thing. But then they also like the freedom and the autonomy that they get with it. If you left care work, are there any other roles that you’d like to take on? Is there anything you’ve kind of thought about?

Respondent: I think it would be care adjacent, as it were. So, you know, I’ve looked at roles within the council, sort of family support worker, where you’re supporting kids who are at risk of going into care but you’re there putting steps in place to make sure that they don’t. Or a role which is like a social worker assistant that is sort of different. Those types of roles would interest me so it is still health and social care but it’s not directly the support worker side of things.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. My last question on the interview schedule is, is there anything else that you’d like to share with me about your role as a care worker that you think might be important for our study, which is, obviously about pay and reward in care work?

Respondent: Not really. The only thing I was going to ask, I don’t know whether you’d be able to but could I see a copy of what you finally come up with?

Interviewer: A hundred percent, yeah.

Respondent: We, as a company, and me personally, are constantly trying to recruit people and retain people. So, frankly…

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: …if you’re got any bright ideas, I’m all ears.

Interviewer: Yeah, absolutely. So, we’re at the moment doing all our interviews and then we’ll go through a period of analysis, which will be after Christmas and we’ll be writing some reports and so on. So yes, anybody that, I’ll keep a list of everybody that’s been a participant in this study and circulate anything that we produce as a result of the research. So, yes, I will absolutely share with you anything that comes out of it.

The only thing I was going to ask is, so, I’ve gone through all the interview questions, we’ve just got this little bit at the end. We’re trying to create a quality of working life tool for care workers and there are some questions on there that will probably take about four or five minutes. It’s literally just where I read out some statements and you just say how much you agree with them or disagree with them. I wondered if it would be okay to just go through that quickly?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: It shouldn’t take long at all, it’s just a series of questions. The first one is thinking about your role and the difference you’re able to make to people’s lives, which of the following statements best describes how you feel, Cw9? I’m able to make as much of a difference as I’d like / I’m able to make some difference / I’m able to make some difference but not enough / I’m not able to make a difference.

Respondent: I’d say some difference.

Interviewer: Thinking about your relationships with the people drawing on care, which of the following describes how you feel? My relationships are as good as I want them to be / good enough / not as good as I would like / not good at all.

Respondent: As good as I’d want them to be.

Interviewer: Thinking about how much autonomy you have within the role, I have as much autonomy as I want / I have adequate autonomy / I have some autonomy but not enough / I have no autonomy.

Respondent: As much as I want. That’s another good point of the role, that’s another massive point in its favour for me. They just leave me to get on with it and provide me support if I need it but I’m not micromanaged.

Interviewer: Oh, that’s great, isn’t it? Nothing worse than feeling like you’re being…

Respondent: I don’t think I mentioned that earlier so yeah, that is a good one to add in.

Interviewer: Brilliant. No, thank you for flagging that, that’s really helpful. And then thinking about the time you need to do your job well, which of the following best applies? I have all the time I need / I have adequate time / I do not have enough time / I do not have enough time and it’s having a negative effect on me.

Respondent: I have adequate time.

Interviewer: Thinking about how much you worry about work outside of work, I hardly ever worry about work / I occasionally worry about work / I often worry about work / I constantly worry about work.

Respondent: Often. The joys of being a senior. Well, the problem is I might not be worried about work and somebody’ll message me about work.

Interviewer: Right. So, you’re kind of having to switch on when you’re off sort of thing. Thinking about looking after yourself at work, so we’re interested in here about things like comfort breaks, time to eat, drink and rest, I am able to look after myself as well as I want / I’m able to look after myself well enough / Sometimes I am not able to look after myself well enough / I’m rarely able to look after myself well enough.

Respondent: Probably well enough.

Interviewer: Which of the following statements best describes how you feel at work in terms of safety, how safe you feel? I feel as safe as I want / Generally I feel adequately safe / I feel less than adequately safe / I don’t feel safe at all.

Respondent: As safe as I want.

Interviewer: Thinking about your professional relationships with the people you work with, overall, my professional relationships are: As good as I want them to be / Good enough / Not as good as I would like / Not good at all.

Respondent: Is this staff?

Interviewer: Yeah, staff, other family members of the clients that you work with, other care professionals.

Respondent: I’d say the first one, good.

Interviewer: As good as you’d want them to be?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Thinking about how supported you are in your role, I feel highly supported by management / I feel adequately supported by management / I do not feel as supported as I would like to be / I do not feel supported at all.

Respondent: Highly.

Interviewer: Thinking about the skills you need to do your job well, I have the skills and knowledge I need / I have adequate skills and knowledge / I have some skills and knowledge but not enough / I do not have the skills and knowledge I need.

Respondent: That’s a weird one because, obviously, as I say, I have the skills and knowledge but there’s always room for improvement, like there’s training I’d like on the stuff. So, probably, I have… sorry, this is probably too much in depth but I have the skills and knowledge, you know, I’d say I have most of the skills and knowledge, however, I’m still learning.

Interviewer: The sort of things that you could, as you say, yeah, you’ve got what you need but things that you might want to do to kind of…

Respondent: Yeah, improve.

Interviewer: And then thinking about your career aspirations, I have opportunities to advance my career as I would like…

Respondent: That one, that one. Save reading them off.

Interviewer: That’s great. And then, there are just two more. Thinking about your income from your work in social care, I have as much financial security as I want / I have enough financial security…

Respondent: That one, enough.

Interviewer: And then the final one is thinking about your role in social care and how valued you feel it is, My role is highly valued by others / My role is adequately valued by others / My role is not as valued as I would like by others / My role is not valued at all.

Respondent: In terms of others, are we talking like Joe Public or are we talking…?

Interviewer: Yeah, the public and sort of views in the media, people you know, that kind of thing.

Respondent: Probably not as valued as I would like.

Interviewer: We saw that with the pandemic, didn’t we, where it was all NHS and then…

Respondent: Yeah, totally. It winds me up, quite right, you get all these, at the moment, there’s all these doctors and nurses and people striking all the time. I’d love to strike and just leave my gentleman who is a risk to the public, to his own devices for five days, just let him roam, enjoy himself, do you know what I mean? I haven’t got the luxury of striking and I’m professional enough to not want to do that but it does mean that our wages, we’re just the forgotten sector because I would love to be paid what a nurse or a junior doctor gets paid.

Interviewer: Absolutely, yeah. And this is one of the reasons that we want to do this research and bring some of these issues to light because you guys are doing such amazing, valuable work and a lot of it is hidden, isn’t it?

Respondent: Well, this is it.

Interviewer: And invisible and not seen in the way it should be. So, that’s the end of my questions, Cw9. Do you mind if I ask you a couple of questions just about personal data just so I’ve got… because I’m trying to keep a record of how many people I’ve interviewed and who they are? Would you mind, you don’t have to tell me exactly, but tell me your age bracket?

Respondent: Forty.

Interviewer: And your nationality?

Respondent: White British.

Interviewer: Ethnicity, again, white British?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Any disabilities?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Educational qualifications?

Respondent: My highest degree or PGCE so, probably, I don’t know if that counts as a master’s.

Interviewer: And your household situation? I think you mentioned before that you lived alone?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And then, your organisation you told me was largely residential care, wasn’t it? Would you know if it’s like a larger organisation or a…?

Respondent: It’s quite large. We are an offshoot so we are (organisation) A Way Forward but they also have a fostering bit, they have (organisation) bit, they have something else, I can’t remember what the fourth one is but there’s four bits of us. So, I’m just, obviously, the adult social care bit.

Interviewer: Is it a charity?

Respondent: No, it’s private, limited.

Interviewer: Brilliant, that’s really helpful. I’ll stop the recording.

END OF AUDIO