

A day in the life of a Support Worker

My name is **Heather**, I work casually and my schedule is organised according to the client's requirements. I work at different times in the day and work a varying number of hours each day. Sometimes I have some hours off in the middle of the day and sometimes I only work in the morning. I enjoy this flexibility because it gives me time to meet up with friends or do some shopping etc. It does mean, though, that I need to be organised and 'live by the clock'.

Generally, I reach the home of the first client for the day at 8am. The earliest visits are usually with clients that require assistance with their personal care needs i.e. toileting, showering, dressing, shaving etc. Most people like to have a shower early so they feel more able 'to start their day'. Some mornings can be very busy with showers but on other mornings I may only need to help one client with showering.

For the rest of the day I usually am assisting clients with domestic duties. This can include vacuuming, mopping, general cleaning or doing the laundry and ironing. Most clients are very appreciative of the help they get and often offer a cool drink or a cup of tea when the work is finished.

I also have times in the week when I provide respite time for the carer. This involves staying with a client while the carer (husband/wife/son/daughter etc.) has a few hours out of the house. During this time I may be required to prepare meals, help the client with craft work or crossword puzzles etc, watch TV or just sit and chat. Sometimes I take the client out – maybe for a coffee or for a walk in the park, so that they can have a break from their home environment.

The clients that we visit are usually quite elderly, often with failing health and therefore receive regular visits from an RDNS nurse. The nurses provide fantastic support to the Support Workers. If a medical problem or query arises with a client, or there is a change in the client's needs, the nursing staff are very supportive in giving advice and guidance to us.

Sometimes we pre-arrange to meet a nurse at a client's house, usually when the client requires two people working together to meet their particular needs. Sometimes this occurs on evening rounds. On these occasions I have always found the nurses to be friendly, appreciative of my help and ready to give me guidance where necessary.

I think that the key words to sum up the job of a Support Worker are: variety, flexibility and multi-skilling. I meet many different people, work differing hours and times on different days and do a great variety of tasks each day. I find the work satisfying and challenging and am sure that I will enjoy working for RDNS for many years to come.