



**RESIDENTIAL SUPPORT WORKER
(WORKING WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG ADOLESCENTS)**

Background to working with adolescents and children with challenging behaviour

Children and adolescents who are in care are not there by choice, but because of a combination of circumstances where their lives have become severely disrupted. There are a very wide number of reasons for this, and so each individual service user will be treated as a specific and unique case, and will normally have a qualified social worker (QSW) assigned to them. The care of children and adolescents is a highly regulated area, and very largely falls within the responsibility of local authority (council) social services departments. As well as general procedures and rules laid down by the council, each individual unit or home will usually also have its own operating procedures. These will normally responsibility of the manager of the home.

As a Residential Support Worker you will be expected to make yourself aware of and follow these processes and procedures, being conscious at all times of the need to maintain the highest possible standards.

Overview of job

Residential Support Workers work with children and young adolescents (service users) who are in care. It is a demanding role, where many of the looked after children will exhibit challenging behaviour and are very vulnerable. You must know how to deal with all types of children's behaviours, and be able to follow the correct and accepted procedures in dealing with the challenges that these behaviours present. Day-to-day the role can change depending on such variables as which child you are supporting or the time of your shift.

The focus of such care is to create an environment which provides continuing support for the child, and some form of structure to their lives. Activities often involve taking the child out for the day and some may often include general duties around the home such as helping them learn, making them food and encouraging them to have personal care and independence. Resident Support Workers are often needed to work overnight in the unit as looked after children must be supervised at all hours of the day. Night duties will include ensuring that all the children are asleep in their rooms, and dealing with problems that may arise in the night.

Service users are regularly assessed. Where appropriate, Residential Support Workers may also be required to participate in the assessment process. When completing such assessments you should demonstrate good written skills and be able to clearly state what you have observed.

Person Specification

To be a Residential Support Worker working with children and adolescents, you need be able to demonstrate a number attributes and skills, including:

- Good understanding of the principles of care when working with children and adolescents
- Ability to follow procedures set out by the home/unit and by law
- Suitable experience and qualifications (see below)
- Effective communication skills – especially a good and empathetic listener
- A caring nature – this really should be work you choose to do
- Respect for people who are often challenging and vulnerable
- Comfortable interacting with people from all areas of the community
- Able to use personal initiative when required to do so
- A team worker able to establish effective working relationships with co-workers
- Flexibility and adaptability to respond to changing demands and requirements
- Committed and reliable - people will depend on you to be there
- Ability to cope with change and pressure
- Good planning skills
- Level-headed and patient
- Have good discipline skills

Qualifications

Our residential support workers must have at least 12 months experience working with challenging children in a residential setting, have a NVQ Level 2 in Health and Social Care, or have a Degree or qualification at the same level in an appropriate field. You should be familiar with current guidelines on areas such as restraint techniques when working with children.

All residential support workers are expected to provide 3 professional references these must be from either an employer, manager or from an educational source.