



RECRUITMENT CASE STUDY

Claire Miller ...

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Supporting opportunity, choice and success

Claire Miller

Manager, Perrywood House

Having forged a career in the hospitality industry, Claire as general manager of a hotel found herself being made redundant in November 2012. She saw it as a positive opportunity to really think about alternative careers and her next step. Working in hospitality had 'just happened' and with a chance to start over, at 28 years old she felt a lot of pressure to make the right choice.

After just four weeks with Consensus Claire just knew it was where she was meant to be. Here, Claire shares her journey into social care and her career progression with Consensus.

"I started working for Consensus in March 2013. My mum had been employed with Consensus for some years and I always felt envious of the rewarding experiences she was getting from her role. She mentioned Gretton House, (a specialist service that supports people with the rare genetic condition Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) were looking for relief staff. I registered my interest for one of these positions and seven years later, here I am as Service Manager of another PWS service, Perrywood House!

By the time I had finished my four-week induction programme I went from a relief staff member to full time. I just knew that this was where I was meant to be and any

worries I had about it not being the right job for me were dissolved almost instantly.

I was made to feel so welcome by the support team at Gretton House and the supported individuals were just the most incredible people I've ever met. Everyone was so supportive to me and I felt like I was part of this special working environment and I felt very privileged to be there.

I must admit, in the early days, the freedom I felt of having no management responsibilities was a breath of fresh air and I completely embraced the role of Support Worker and all the activities that came with this. However, I soon started to feel that I had more to give. In April 2015 an opportunity came up as a Team Leader at Gretton House. I was successful in securing this position and enjoyed leading a shift team and having responsibilities again.

I soon realised I wanted to develop further with Consensus and I really liked learning the different aspects of support from a line manager's point of view and was eager to continue with this. The opportunity for further experience came and in October 2016 I was successful in the position of Team Co-Coordinator at Parvale House. This role gave me the opportunity to develop and gain further skills in the management of a support service.



In July 2017, I became the Acting Service Manager of Parvale House due to the Service Manager going on maternity leave. I knew I would be taking on a position that would be hard work, difficult at times even, but I knew I would be able to do it and wanted the opportunity to do so. I gained so much confidence and experience during my time at Parvale House, in both my roles, and it was a really key part of my development.

In May 2018 I went back to Gretton House to commence a new role as Care Manager and fully expected to build up my career from there, but Consensus had other ideas - In October 2018, I was approached by Adam Henderson, our Divisional Director who asked me to consider becoming Acting Service Manager of Perrywood House. I took the role until February 2019, supporting the Service Manager as she transitioned back into the service before returning to my role as Care Manager at Gretton House.

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In September a permanent role as Service Manager at Perrywood House became available. I decided to go for it and was delighted to be successful in securing the role. Having run the service previously, I already has lots of ideas on how I could maximise its potential.

The support I have received from my Consensus colleagues during this time has been fantastic. They have always encouraged me to develop and succeed and I couldn't ask for anything more.

Shortly after joining I was fortunate to welcome Abbi, an experienced team leader at Gretton into the role of Team Coordinator at Perrywood. It was great to have a full management team in place. Abbi and I are very similar in terms of our approach and both have very high standards. We are ideas



driven and focused on innovation, so we immediately had ambitious plans and put together a list of short, medium- and long-term goals for the service that included overhauling the system, reporting and operations as well as focusing on training.

I still have these goals pinned up in the office! It's great because you can get bogged down with the things that haven't been done, but when you go back and look at the list, you can take a step back and be proud of how far you have come and what you have accomplished.

There have been some challenging times but we have achieved a huge amount. In June 2019, the service had its CQC inspection. We were able to show the inspector our plans and goals for the service as well as the improvements that had been made and were delighted to be awarded a 'good' overall.

We have also worked really hard to improve the service's training stats which are now at 100 per cent for mandatory and 95 per cent for service specific training. It doesn't sound like a big achievement but our support team are the backbone of our service so there is real value in supporting them to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver the highest quality care.

I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience a variety of different experiences and roles within different settings in Consensus. It has been invaluable to my development and has shaped me into the Manager that I am today. Having gone through the full spectrum of support roles, I can understand situations from different perspectives and viewpoints, which

has really informed my style and approach as a Manager.

Every service is unique, with its own environment and culture, and while your previous skills, knowledge and experiences are relevant and valuable, the way you apply them is always different because you need to flex and adapt to the new service.

Initially you can have that fear, especially when you come in at line management level because you want to put your mark on it, but when you look back and see what you have achieved, it's really rewarding!

The support I have received from my Consensus colleagues during this time has been fantastic. They have always encouraged me to develop and succeed and I couldn't ask for anything more.

If anyone is thinking of doing something like this and is completely out of their comfort zone I would say go for it! You will be given so much support and opportunity to develop and I don't think you will look back only forward, whatever role and aspirations you have.

It sounds over dramatic but walking through the doors of Gretton House five years ago changed my life in so many ways. I love my job, it can be challenging at times but the people I work with and of course the individuals that I support, they are the reason why I'm here and I love seeing all the different things that they achieve on a daily basis and I feel honoured to be a part of it."

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