

3.3 Story 3: Lydia Thornton-Clark, Manager, Ilsham Valley Nursing Home

Ilsham Valley Nursing Home provides nursing, residential, intermediate and respite care to its residents. The home aims to take an innovative person centred approach to care planning to ensure that residents are treated with dignity and respect.

Lydia has been working at Ilsham Valley as the manager since 2015, having first encountered the setting in 1997 where she spent a year working as the kitchen manager.

Lydia's Story

I've been manager here for four years. I love the home I'm very passionate about it. It's a clean and happy home with dedicated staff.

When the opportunity to get involved with this programme came up I was immediately interested. I love creativity. It was offering an opportunity to come out of my environment and have some time to look at what I could be doing *differently*.

As a manager I want to encourage my staff to take on board responsibility. I really like to give everyone the opportunity to lead in their own area of expertise and reap the benefits of their creative and responsible working practice.



I learnt on the programme through the *experience of doing things*. By taking part in the physical tasks I realised how beneficial it could be to bring some of it to staff and

residents. It helped me *re-engage* with ideas; learning practically like that definitely helps me to remember it more clearly.

The programme made me *think in different ways*. It was good to be reminded of how important it is not to lose sight of things we can put in place to support our environment ...*what we hear, what we see, what we smell*, and to remember how that *impacts on our residents*. I was reminded of the idea of *trust and empathy*, and to *compliment my staff* more, to nurture them creatively.

I was reminded of things I had forgotten, but that are at the *heart of care*, thinking about *individual care*. I've attended lots of courses that have given me what I needed to know, but they didn't show you how to *open your mind*, allow your perimeters to open up and *learn in a different way*.

I really appreciated the opportunity to network with other managers, we are so isolated as managers, there's *nobody that shares the space with you*, that's the loneliness of the role. I felt a sense of personal nourishment and nurture through being connected to other managers, and a sense that through being taken out of myself *I became more energised* – I really valued that.



Our mini commission focussed on looking at how to cement relationships between residents and staff. We worked with a dance artist and she designed a set of activities for one of our residents who requires regular support to help him move in particular ways. The way she engaged with him and helped staff understand how

they could carry on the work was good. He responded really well to the social and physical aspect, and I think it is something staff will be able to replicate.

The commission reminded me how vital it is to make sure residents' personal needs are being met as much as possible, and how important it is to explore how that can happen. I really appreciated the thought our artist had put into making the activity something we could take on board and do ourselves. We don't have the budget to bring in lots of activities so this was really important to us.