

**St Joseph's is a 59-bedroom care home in Coleshill, split into four wings, three of which specialise in dementia care. But what's it really like to work there? We asked the experts: our staff.**

## James: eight years at St Joseph's

When I first walked through the door to St Joseph's and felt the atmosphere I thought, 'yes, I could work here'. Seven years down the line I'm the only person on the morning bus that has a smile on their face because they're heading to work.

The in-house training and outside courses you get here are really good. I've been working through my NVQs, one level at a time.

The residents are the most rewarding part of the job. I consider how I'd like my family to be looked after, and that's what I strive for.

I've got a good rapport with the residents. If a resident got upset or was struggling I like to think I've got a calming manner. I know if something did happen



there would be support there for me and my colleagues. We look out for one another and support each other.

## Aileen: six-and-a-half years at St Joseph's

I get residents up in the morning, assist them to bed at the end of the day, and support them to eat and drink. Each staff member is a key worker to a resident so you're in charge of their care, keeping their bedroom tidy, getting toiletries they need and supporting them throughout the day. We also do activities on the wing.

I love all of it! It can be challenging but it's really rewarding. You know you're doing good, supporting somebody who needs it.

The staff are really friendly and supportive. I work on a wing with a close-knit team and we speak outside of work as well as in. That shows, because when there's a good vibe and everyone's working together and getting on, the residents feel it as well.

You get all the in-depth training you need to do your job. My favourite is the dementia training. I'm still learning now despite my length of service. You learn something new every day.

The managers are very supportive. If you've got a

problem you can go and see them, either on the wing or in the office. You can also speak to your colleagues and sometimes just talking to them can help you find the solution yourself. On the whole it's ever such a supportive home.

It's not just a job. You've got to really want to do it and have that love for it. I loved it when I first started and I still love it now. Of course, some days are more challenging than others, but I can't see myself working anywhere else. If someone wants to give it a go then I say 'do it'. The staff are supportive and understanding. It's a nice place to work.

I like the fact that I know I'm helping somebody. They need someone that cares about the job. There's no point doing this job if you don't care. And knowing you're helping somebody with whatever they need to make them happy and get them through the day makes me feel... I just love it.!

**Like to join the team?**

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## Pauline: three-and-a-half years at St Joseph's

The most rewarding part of the job is the residents. You go into them in the morning and they're happy. Last night when I went in to give meds I was told, "I love you." It's really nice, really satisfying.

No two days are the same. We do flower arranging with the residents and we have entertainers come in.



When there aren't activities going on downstairs we do activities on the wing. It's non-stop, but it's good. We play ping pong with the residents and we throw hoops onto sticks. They love that because they can sit down to do it. It's really fun some days.

You do get challenges in care. Some residents have challenging behaviour, but you've got to treat them with the utmost respect because it's not their fault. And when they come round it's good to see we've supported them through it. Being a care assistant can be a hard job but it's really satisfying, really rewarding.

I feel supported by managers. I know they're there for me if I need them. I'm training in the office as well as working on the wing. I've come a long way in a short time!

I've worked in lots of care homes and St Joseph's is the best one I've come to. Teamwork is a priority because if you're working as a team and something goes wrong you're ready for it. Just care for the residents as if you're caring for your mum and dad, then you'll give the residents 110%.

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## Brenda: two years at St Joseph's

I love it. I love working here. I love knowing that, when I go home, I've made a difference to someone's day. It's very rewarding.

If I'm on in the morning the job entails getting them up, supporting them in the shower, giving them a choice of what they want to wear, and helping them with breakfast. I do activities with them and take them to appointments.

People tend to sleep in the afternoon. We do activities with those that are awake. Some of the ladies like to sit and talk, or listen to music.

The residents have books of their past and they show us pictures of what they did and how they brought their children up. One lady was quite fashion conscious when she was young. She asks me what sort of thing I like to wear and talks to me about what she likes to wear. It's nice to know she wants to listen to what I've got to say. And I enjoy listening to what they've got to talk about.

Because I work on a dementia wing, sometimes they don't know where they are. It's upsetting when you come across someone who's crying. I try to console them. You've just got to let them know that you're there for them. And hopefully it makes a difference for them.

I've done shop and bar work all my life and I got to a

stage where I wanted a challenge. I came for an interview and haven't regretted it since.

I get a lot of support from staff and management. We get regular training. If I've got any problems I know I can go and talk to them. The care manager is on the wing quite often to see if there's anything to report or to assist if we've got any problems. If I had a problem the managers would help me as much as they could.

To someone thinking of working here I'd say, 'do it'. It's an experience you'll not forget. It makes a difference. Everybody needs help and the people who live here need it more than those outside. My only regret is not doing it years ago!

