



Harry's Story

We provide 300 hours of respite care every week to give informal carers a break to recharge their batteries and do the things that can be difficult if you are caring 24-7 for a loved one.

One of our team of Home Care workers, Harry, is sharing his perspective on how respite care should enrich the lives of the people needing care and how he approaches his vocation.

"I've worked for Age UK Leicester Shire & Rutland for five years and regularly visit six people with dementia providing companionship and respite support for their informal carers. My visits are all about keeping clients' minds active and taking them out to enjoy the fantastic places that Leicestershire has to offer.

I always start my visits by asking: "What did we do last week?" because it helps people to remember their new memories. I plan a different activity each week which involves the respite client as much as possible in choosing the type of activity they want and where they want to go. This means that they look forward to their time with me and to the activities they will participate in.

I often take clients out to the countryside which gives them the opportunity to sit and listen to bird song

and watch people fishing. It provides a peaceful interlude for people with dementia which strips away the noise, hustle and bustle of the town and allows them a moment of freedom, a time when they can truly unwind. Over my time with Age UK, I've found some great places to take clients including Kings Lock Café on Wigston canal, a little oasis accessible only by foot which is a good resting point for a quiet coffee. The Farm Café on Burbage Common is another favourite spot for a drink, with staff that are very welcoming towards people with dementia.

In the summer I walk around Thornton reservoir where the paths are ideal for wheelchair users, and often visit Bradgate Park or Foxton Locks, taking different routes from different start points to add variety to each visit. Indoor activities are the focus for the winter months when we visit Leicester's Cathedral and museums as well as more informal venues such as the Baptist Church, the 3 'T's at the Pork Pie roundabout and Lutterworth church – the key factor in the choice

of destination being places which are welcoming to the people I support and have a cosy and comfortable place to sit and chat on a rainy day.

Where ever I can, I try to find a hobby or interest which a client has enjoyed in the past. I take one of my gentleman clients fishing every fortnight and have seen the great impact this activity has made on the gentleman's well-being. A normally quiet person due to speech problems, the common interest in fishing has sparked conversation between us and increased his confidence.

I keep my respite visits upbeat; they're enjoyable for me as well as the clients and laughter is an important part of our time together. I think this is the best job in the world. I go out to bless and be blessed myself".

To find out more about the Respite Care we can offer, please contact us on 0116 299 2266.

