

## **A day in the life of a.... Residential Social Care Worker in Oberstown\***

### ***1. What do you love about your job:***

I have been working in Oberstown for almost four years now and I have to say it has been the best experience that I have had working with young people. To start with, the great thing about Oberstown is that you get to meet so many different people and personalities. Oberstown has a state-of-the-art school and gym and offers education and evening activities to young people, including textiles and wood-burning to name a few. Staff are able to participate in these activities, which is great for relationship building with the young people and I always have a great time with the young people and staff on shift. From experience, in my time in Oberstown I have had fantastic managers who always offered their support and guidance and also facilitate time off when family issues arise/ appointments and so on. Oberstown offers training to staff on an ongoing basis and also supports further education if staff want to upskill.

### ***2. What is a typical day like on the unit:***

When my shift starts at 8am/9am a handover takes place before the young people get up for school. The young people and staff sit to have breakfast, then go to school. They return to the unit where they have lunch with staff and return back to school. Throughout the day, young people can be called to the medical suite/dentist, may be due in court or have visits with family or professionals. During the time young people are in school, staff have the time to do their paperwork and chat to their colleagues. When young people return from school they are able to relax for about one hour before activities start at 4pm. Staff can also participate in these activities. At the weekend the days tend to be long as there are not many activities, however I get by on my long shifts by planning what I can offer to the young people myself for example. I love dancing, baking, playing cards, bingo etc, so at the weekends I try to offer these type of activities to the young people.

### ***3. What are the challenges faced:***

The biggest challenge that I always face on a daily basis is whether my shift is going to be successful or not, meaning my colleagues, the young people and I have a good day. If, however, for any reason I am injured or just need emotional support I know there are staff available to chat, through the peer support team on campus or the EAP service.

I feel that keeping young people busy is the key to a successful shift. It also helps to build a strong trusting relationship with them. To date I have never been in a restraint with a young person, not because I don't challenge them, but because I feel I have a relationship with them and they seem to take direction from me possibly as a result of how I work with them. Use your skill, build a relationship, keep young people busy and enjoy your day

*\* This care worker has been working in Oberstown for more than three years.*

**1. What do you love about your job\*:**

What I love about the job is multifaceted. There is a great sense of humanity here. I have a positive, grounded approach to my life and this helps me keep centred here. Oberstown is a unique environment with unique experiences. The challenges faced with the role of a residential care worker are as individual as the person working here, therefore teamwork is a key factor in creating a healthy space to work in.

**2. What is a typical day like on the unit:**

A typical day consists of Routine, Routine, Routine. This helps both staff and the young people establish a sense of their environment and what to expect from it. Coming from a world of self-reliance and / or chaos, routine and consistency lend towards the stabilising of the young person.

**3. What are the challenges faced:**

The client group here can strike out verbally at those closest to them when they become overloaded with emotion. The presence of physical assaultive behaviour is a concern not to be ignored, but occurs on a much lesser scale. Not taking things personally is a skill borne over time and with good mentoring.

Those lucky enough to gain employment here will have exposure to personal development through the many on-campus training modules. Those applying for care positions will already have had exposure to the role from their experienced backgrounds. There is a potential to build upon this through the multi-faceted tasks we face each day here.

*\*This care worker has been employed in Oberstown for more than 25 years.*