

Registered manager networks - Benefits of attending



Name: Rebecca Zartarian



Job title: Domiciliary Care Manager

Rebecca attends the Cheshire West and Chester network. She's the director and manager of her service, which provides home care and live-in care in the area.

Here she shares her experiences as a registered manager, and what she's learned by attending the networks.

Rebecca, tell us a bit about yourself...

I started my career as a primary school teacher. But after I'd progressed to a deputy headship, I fell out of love with education. My partner owns Bluebird Care Cheshire West, and he invited me to support the business. It's been a really good fit. I have an amazing team that deliver the care, and personally, I'm passionate about person-centred planning. I love working with compliance, getting things to a place where we're providing the right kind of care, the right way.

Personal care, medication support, meal prep, companionship...we also have children's services, for children with learning disabilities, so it's a broad remit. In fact, I think it's useful to say registered managers benefit when they've built up leadership and management skills from another career. I believe a broad range of views helps.

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With that in mind, had you taken part in networks before?

Yes, I'd set up a deputy-head networking group. I've always thought networking is just the best thing. It's about showing good practice and making connections with people, whether that's what you're watching on Netflix or what your latest policy updates are!

When I was coming into the sector, I knew I'd need guidance. But after changing career, more networking seemed natural.

What part of attending the registered manager networks do you enjoy most?


We celebrate the positives as well as grumble about the negatives, but there are so many opportunities for learning. Not long ago, there was a CQC medication inspector who came along to one of the meetings. That was great. Free training. Why wouldn't you want to go along and ask someone like that all kinds of questions? We've taken those learnings into the business, straight away. I mean, how often do you get a CQC inspector coming in to tell you what to look for and improve what you're doing?

Do you share the information you pick up at the meetings?

Yes, most of the networks have a WhatsApp group for sharing times and things, and whoever's leading the group sends out information. People can also share information between the events themselves that way.

Would you encourage other people to join a registered manager network?

I tell everybody to join the networks. I think it's really important. In fact, one of the managers I've just taken on was working for another very big company and hadn't heard about the Skills for Care meetings, which is interesting. The networks are all about developing camaraderie - we're all in it together and the more networks you can get into, the better. It's not only good for your own business or career in terms of sharing best practices, but it's also good for business promotion and recruitment. It's a win-win for a lot of things.



Can you give us an example of something you've learned through the registered manager networks?

Yes - I've learned the value of relationships and staying in touch with people who've been in the same situation as you. When we were inspected, I was really disappointed with the quality of the inspection. But because I'd built up some great personal relationships with people, I felt I could have a conversation about it. I'm quite vocal anyway, but I felt like I was in a good place to get some advice. In the end, we went through the right processes and had a different inspection. I felt I could open up about it with someone I knew. That was so good for the team, feeling we were actually in a good place - I'm not sure I could have done that in the same way, if I hadn't built up the relationships through the networks.

What do you think are the main benefits from attending a network?

The thing is, a lot of the benefits from networking are connecting and sharing best practice, that's the best part of networking for me personally. But I'm an outgoing confident person, so that's natural for me. What I would say, is this, it's not the same for everyone, I know that. I can put things into practice after the event. But not everyone can say, "Oh, that's a good idea, I'm going to do this or I'm going to change that". Not everyone has the authority, which might put some people off - but networks really are a great place to show best practice and hear about what other people are doing.

And if we're honest about it, then one of the really good things about the networks, is it's a chance to have a chat and a moan and learn something. Be honest - you can't always do that with a line manager. It's about opening up and sharing what you know, being able to talk about what's going on in a safe space. Getting things off your chest. Your life is a lonely place as a registered manager sometimes, so you need to go and have that chat with someone.

What's the top tip you'd give someone who isn't sure about attending a registered manager network?

I'd go back to my point about feeling welcome. If it doesn't work for you the first time, try again. It might just be a one-off. What's more, bear in mind that networks help in all sorts of ways, it's not just about learning something. Support helps, too. You feel less isolated. Sometimes, it's about being able to ask advice from each other that we wouldn't necessarily want to ask in a big group. We talk about what we're doing and how we're keeping our mental health and wellbeing going, just sit with a cup of tea and have an hour of chit-chat. We have Registered Manager meetings every six weeks or so, which is brilliant, but other little networks mean you can learn from each other all the time.

Local networks for registered managers and deputy managers

Our networks are a place for managers to come together with other managers in their local area.

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