

## Employer Case Study

### Health, Social Care & Early Years

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#### Bradford District Care Trust

Paul Donaldson is Ward Manager at Lynfield Mount Hospital, an acute mental health hospital run by Bradford District Care Trust. Paul started work in the health sector with no qualifications at the age of 32 but through the support of his employer he has gained qualifications whilst in the work place to build a successful career, becoming a qualified mental health nurse, and then continuing his professional development to move into his current post.

On leaving school Paul initially moved from job to job including plumbing and various sales jobs before giving up paid employment to become primary carer for his first child. His wife worked for Airedale General Hospital, and through her, he found temporary work as a driver for the rapid response team. Paul enjoyed the work and the environment so in the second year he took a job with the team as Support Worker. Then, inspired by a nursing colleague, he began to formulate a plan to become a qualified nurse.

*"It's not unusual to start a career in mental health at an older age, in fact maturity can be an advantage, but on applying for the training I discovered I didn't have the entry requirements. The University of Bradford told me that I would need an NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care or equivalent in order to be eligible. So I applied for a permanent post as Healthcare Support Worker with Bradford District Care Trust, based at Airedale General Hospital, working in an acute male in-patient facility for mental health. I worked there for four years before starting my NVQ which then took only*

*seven months to complete. My Ward Manager was very supportive and BDCT provided me with a mentor and an assessor. I then had six months before I was due to start the nurse training at Bradford, so in the meantime I completed my D32/33 assessor award.*

*“One of my placements during training was at Lynfield Mount which I thoroughly enjoyed so I applied for a job as staff nurse here when I completed my nurse training in 2004. After only six months or so I successfully applied for a post as Senior Staff nurse and seven months later I was the acting Assistant Ward Manager. I then completed my BSc in Advanced Nursing Practice with 1st class honours, and, after working as an Assistant Ward Manager for three years, I was promoted to Ward Manager on Maplebeck Ward, again working with acute male mental health patients.*

*“Without the vocational route, I would not have done it. I encourage others to consider training this way if they don’t have formal qualifications. I tell them my story, to show that it’s possible. As for the future, this year I will be applying to start my Masters...”*

Rosie Hawley, Vocational Services and Lifelong Learning Manager, at BDCT explained:

*“Bradford District Care Trust is keen to see staff progress. We believe that investing in people and growing your own has its rewards in producing loyal and dedicated employees. Secondment opportunities are limited but they are available to those who come with few qualifications but show they are capable of achieving through the early stages of their career, providing the opportunity for these employees to progress through to higher level study. BDCT is committed to Higher Education, because we know that employees who move on to HE will come back as more highly skilled workers. In short, for those with a flair and commitment for this work and who are prepared to study, there are opportunities to progress.”*