

Katie Wheeler is studying for a BSc in Social Work at the University of Huddersfield. She is currently undertaking her 100 day practice placement in the Palliative Care Team in Adult Services within Calderdale Council.

I am a final year student on placement within the Palliative Care team, carrying out assessments and offering support to people who have additional needs due to receiving a prognosis of 12 months or less, as a result of a life-limiting illness.

The team here at Calderdale Council work closely with healthcare professionals and other social care teams to ensure that provisions of care and support equipment and technology are available for people to maintain independence and remain at home, if they wish, for as long as is practicable.

As part of my role here as a student social worker, I assist in planning packages of care, arranging funding and implementing services through referrals. Assessing people's individual needs is a fundamental part of the day to day role to ensure that services are relevant for individual needs and wishes.

The most enjoyable part of my role is the understanding that you can make a difference to people by arranging service provisions and offering support. As each person is different to the next, it is important to listen to individual needs and be aware of the services available to support those needs.

I did find the emotional side of working in palliative care very difficult at first and questioned whether I was in the right role. In order to address this, I have had fantastic support from my Practice Educator and other members of the team to put my feelings into context and to build resilience, so that I may better support people who I am working with.

The support that I have received on this placement from my Practice Educator, team members and other areas of social work has been outstanding. Prior to starting placement I had a number of reservations about working and learning within a local authority as my first placement had been within the voluntary sector. I had been led to believe that local authorities were too busy to engage with students or reflect what good practice is.

Calderdale Council have been exceptionally supportive with my learning potential and progression as a student. I have attended training and student support sessions organised by the Council and found these sessions informative and productive in my learning journey. This has been quite a contrast to my first practice placement as the focus on student progression is very much at the forefront to developing good practice for future social workers like me.