

Registered manager networks - Benefits of attending

Name: Rosaline Mbaya

Job title: Domiciliary Care Manager

Rosaline attends the Staffordshire network. Her service, based in Burton-on Trent, provides home care, live-in care, respite care and other services.

Here she talks through her experiences as a registered manager, getting direct support from people in the networks who've been through similar experiences.

Rosaline, tell us a bit about yourself...

I've been working in healthcare since I was about 18. I started as a carer and a support worker and then worked my way through to be what was once called an assistant practitioner. I took some time out, but came back to care a couple of years ago. It's a story that'll sound familiar to many people. I have family with a few health issues, and it was clear to me there was something missing in the market. I did my Level 5, completed that this year, got my CQC registration - and here we are. My business offers personal care calls, helping with meal prep and medication, day-to-day companion calls, giving carers a break...a wide range of things.

So what was your perception of networking, before your current role?

I hadn't done that much networking before, partly because of COVID, but since I became part of the network I've been doing quite a lot with other registered managers, service providers and local authorities, too.

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Where did you hear about the registered manager networks?

Eventbrite. I went along to one of the meetings held by my local network for registered managers, and realised there's a lot more to it than just the meeting. My network has a WhatsApp group, there's support from the Approved Social Worker (ASW) network, and from nominated individual networks - lots of contacts, all from one meeting.

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

When I was a carer, working with social services legislation, things were very different. We've had COVID. That's kind of thrown a curveball into the mix of health and social care. When you do the course to become a registered manager, it's very academic. But the practice is completely different. The network really helped me get up to scratch with current legislation, current knowledge, current experiences and changes in training that are going on all the time. Things like how audits are done in practice, not just the theory.

What's really good about it, is that you build up connections with people. You can always say, "Hi, I'm struggling with this or that. Has anyone had any experience of it? Has anyone found a way around it, or how to handle it better?" If it wasn't for the networks, for example, I would probably have had lots of questions still around training for medication competency. Some of these things sound simple, but it's not until you get an inspection you find out you're expected to do things a different way.

There's being connected to people, of course, but the thing that really stands out to me is funding. There's a lot of funding out there for healthcare providers, and if I wasn't part of the Skills for Care network, I'd have had no clue about it. I'd never have known. There's also a mentorship programme, and I'm waiting to see if I'll be allocated a mentor - but the thing is, I've already got this sense there's no question that's a silly question. I can just pick up the phone and ask for information. There's support there, all the time.

You'll always learn something new about registering, legislation - especially with all the changes with CQC - it's very important to network. The other thing is, we get guest speakers. Unlike the Zoom meetings, they're still there in person at the end of a network meeting, so you can just have a one-to-one chat with them.

And do you share what you've learned, with your team?

Yes, I share the information in two ways. We send out emails regularly, but we also include things we learn in our induction package, in a PowerPoint presentation that shows all the information gathered from networking with other managers.

How will you be getting more from the registered manager networks yourself?

I need to proactively get out of my comfort zone sometimes, to talk and mingle with other people. But I've already learned, I can always contact someone afterwards in the network and not feel I'm going to ask a silly question. There's no such thing. I mean, with the networks being such a safe place to talk to people, you can always say, "Hey, I think I've messed up a bit, can anyone help?"

So, what's the top tip you'd give someone who isn't sure about networking?

Just go along. The best thing about networking is you will always learn something new, and if you're struggling then there's somebody there who can say to you, "I've gone through that too, here's my contact details, let's have a chat about it."

And you'd encourage other managers to join a network, too?

Yes, definitely. It's been an amazing journey, particularly getting to meet people in the network. You always learn something new. There are things you can read about, and there are always Zoom training calls you can join, but the practicality of doing what we do is different. Go out, and network with people who've been through those situations, have discussions with them. You won't regret it.

Local networks for registered managers and deputy managers |

Find out more at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/networks

