

Hannah Martin's story

Hannah is not a real person, but she and her story are based on the stories of real life people.



Hannah Martin had a dream: she wanted to become a social worker. As the mum of three children and a carer of a son with learning difficulties, the dream felt a long way off. Nonetheless, she hoped that her caring and friendly nature – and her life experience – just might make it become real.

Hannah knew that to become a social worker she first needed to get experience as a support worker. So she drew up a CV. She found this very difficult. She had been out of employment for a long time and had lost confidence. Take a look at the [CV](#) she came up with – you can see it says very little. It sounds abrupt, almost as if she doesn't care. It's certainly not got enough in it to convince an employer to pick it out from a pile of CVs.

Hannah knew that an employer would be more likely to take her on if she had voluntary experience. So she started to think about what volunteering she might do. And she realised – as a mum and a carer – she had many more skills than she had realised (or included in her CV): skills in listening, understanding individual needs and teamwork. This gave her more self-belief. But she still felt shy and under-confident. Was it just a dream to think she could become a social worker?

Still, she decided to give volunteering a go – first at a one-off event for older people around energy saving in the home. She felt very anxious about standing up and talking in front of a big group, but she overcame her nerves and helped deliver the session. She thought she did OK and was really chuffed when the organisers of the event told her she was brilliant: caring, patient and organised. This gave Hannah a real buzz.

Bolstered by this, she moved on to a volunteer role as a 'befriender' with a charity supporting people with mental health problems. This role required quite a long training and was more responsible and ongoing.

As a 'befriender', Hannah got a lot of positive feedback from her volunteer coordinator. She began to see how much she was gaining through finding new ways to communicate and offer support. She was now much further along the road to becoming a support worker and ultimately making her dream of becoming a social worker come true. She re-did her CV to reflect her new found skills and confidence. [Take a look](#). You can see how much more she has to say now she is a volunteer. And see how much more strongly she conveys the experience and skills she brings from being a mum and a carer.