

I have had the privilege of being a DSP for the last three years at the St Helens group home. Before this job I had no idea what a DSP was and what it meant to be one.

My first three months here I questioned my job and I questioned whether or not I had it in me to be a DSP. This job is not only mentally hard but also emotionally hard. I quickly learned that you don't do this job for the money you do it for the individuals and knowing that you are enriching the lives of each individual we support. DSPs are not only caregivers, we are so much more than that. We are their friends and their family and for some individuals the only family they have or have ever had. They heavily depend on the care, emotional, and physical support that we as DSP are able to provide. Each individual has a story and I'm glad that I get to be included in these chapters of their lives.

The care we provide as DSPs has changed so much over the years. We have gone from caregivers that just do things for the people we support to helping them learn how to do these things independently. I strongly believe that because of the support of DSPs we have shown them quality of life. As a DSP I've had to learn about medications, learn to give insulin shots, and learn how to check CBG levels. DSPs are not recognized or paid the way we should be for the supports that we give.

The wages are a huge reason for our turn over rate and can make the decision for someone who could have great potential turn away because of personal financial reasons. I have watched some of our best DSPs leave because of needing a better paying job to support their family.