I’m a Care Worker with Home Care. I provide support to a number of people so that they can remain living in their own homes. Everyone has different needs but about 60-70 percent of what I do is the standard domestic type tasks like vacuuming, washing up and laundry. This takes about an hour to two hours work at a time.

The work I do falls into three distinct areas. The first type of work is for the largest amount of people and involves maintenance of clients’ homes. This is basically straightforward housework.

The second group need more personal care which involves preparing meals, showering, and dressing clients as well as providing some respite relief for their carers. I’m not necessarily doing these things all at the same time and the work itself is very varied. For example, I provide care for a number of clients who have an intellectual disability of some sort or another. One client has schizophrenia and his care is a bit more involved because I help him to manage his budget, work out his shopping and that sort of thing. Care Workers have to be very careful on how much advice to give as there is a fine line here between care and being legally responsible for someone but there are policies and rules that Care Workers are expected to abide by, and these are fully explained.

The third group for me are clients that need physical care. For example, I’m currently spending a whole day and a part of another day doing exercise classes with clients. One client requires me to support him while he attends an exercise class. The exercise class consists of about a dozen people that are supervised by a trained physiotherapist. My client has a hearing impairment and is overweight so I’m basically his right hand man while he is trying to do his exercise. I also had another client – a woman in her 70’s who had suffered a stroke and I supported her in a similar way, in a smaller class of people with high needs. Both clients needed me to drive them to the class, dress them, and assist them while they take part in the class. Then I get them out, shower and dress them and transport them back home. The whole scenario takes about a half day for a one hour class.
How did you get there?

I come from a Catholic background, and my father works for the Church in aged care, nursing homes, hostels and retirement villages. This exposure to the work that my father was doing from the time I was at school in both a paid and voluntary capacity, gave me a lifetime of exposure to this type of work.

I used to work at a major brand name Department Store in a sales person capacity. I saw an advertisement in my local paper which said they specifically wanted males to work in Home Care. My child was only 2-3 and we were having a difficult time juggling work.

My wife wanted to continue to work and I don’t have any family in Sydney so we were having a hard time trying to hold it together, particularly not being able to afford child care.

Home Care provided me with the flexibility that we needed so that both my wife and I could work, but still be able to look after our child. It was just something that was so easy and I thought I had the skills, temperament and empathy needed to do the job.

Why do you think ADHC is a good employer?

ADHC allows you to be in control of your own work, offers its employees flexibility and it’s a secure job. They give you a choice in how many hours you work. From a social point of view they are a very good bunch of people to work with and for. The most rewarding thing is making a difference to the quality of a client’s life which could be anything from helping them to do exercise, maintaining their house, or providing some respite to other carers. The fundamental aspect of just being there for someone is very personally rewarding as some clients don’t see anyone else other than me. What attracted me was the flexibility and the ease of the work.

Why do you like working for Government?

I like the security and workplace policies. We are also supported with holidays and maternity leave.

I’ve never been motivated to work for a private sector care organisation because I don’t think they offer as much security, flexibility or good working conditions as government so while the pay isn’t fantastic the conditions more than make up for that.

Would you recommend the work to someone else?

I have actually recommended it to a number of people but think there is some negative attitudes about the work on offer because there is not a great understanding of the role involved. It’s not like a commercial cleaning job, there is a lot more investment in the client’s lives and therefore the rewards are a lot more personal.

It’s a job that doesn’t really need any formal qualifications at all so anyone can do the job. There are some basic requirements but Home Care provides training in these, and trainees are often taken out with an experienced Care Worker and get to really see what is involved.

What do you see in your future with ADHC?

I would be interested in going into something that might involve organising recreational activities for younger people. This job allows you to have this amazing personal contact with people and gives you an amazing range of skills, responsibilities and life experiences to draw from and move on with your life.

One of the greatest things is that if I were to leave it tomorrow and took a break for years, and fast forward 50 years, that I know that Home Care would welcome me back no problem at all.