



**Louise Bentley**

**Clinical Nurse Specialist**

### **Meet Louise**

It's important to me that our customers at Helping Hands have the chance to be open to every possible opportunity. I try and remove barriers which may be preventing that from happening without compromising their safety. After all, everyone deserves to have a choice when it comes to the care they receive and to retain their individuality.

### **Career Pathway and Professional Development**

I decided to join Helping Hands because the person-centred ethos of the company was something I could easily tap into. I really enjoy helping people enjoy the life they may not have been able to have in a hospital or care home. As a Clinical Nurse Specialist, I am responsible for writing support plans for those with advanced care needs as well as training the carers and other staff members involved on how best to support the customer's needs.

Prior to joining the team, I gained over 20 years' experience within the care sector, including holding key positions such as a Head of Clinical, and as a Care Quality Commission Registered Manager. My extensive experience has left me with a strong skillset and a keen interest in providing person-centred care.

I've lived in the Kent region for most of my life and first started in care many years ago, supporting people with learning difficulties. I then took a job as an agency carer, where I was involved in helping people with high level care needs, both in the community as well as in hospitals and nursing homes. After four years of doing this role, I decided to do my nurse training and have been a qualified nurse for over 12 years now.

When I first qualified as a nurse, I decided to go into critical care, working in theatres and intensive treatment units before becoming a continuing care team leader. At the same time, I was able to work in the paediatric sector with children who had been diagnosed with complex conditions and life limiting illnesses.

I have also been in the position where I trained other nurses in complex tasks. For example - how to care for children who required the use of a ventilator.

Throughout my career, I have worked with many different companies and each one has helped me to progress further. From starting up a complex care division through to becoming the head of clinical care for them and a registered manager.

After working within the nursing care sector for such a long time, I have gained some great memories - I have had the pleasure of being able to support many different individuals throughout my varied career.

One of the many people I've supported was a young lady who at the age of 13 had a C1 spinal injury, caused by a virus. This young lady was eventually discharged out of hospital at the age of 17 but needed to be ventilated 24/7 via tracheostomy and had complex moving and handling needs.

It was important to remember she was still a young lady who wanted to go out and live her life. When she turned 18, I had the opportunity to take her out to a night club and was there for her on her first date. I also took her shopping for clothes etc. and generally allowed her to maintain her independence and the chance to make her own choices.

This person-centred and individual approach is something that I bring to Helping Hands. Alongside using my extensive clinical, leadership, and care knowledge to make sure their needs are met, I always want to ensure that at the end of the day, the person we are supporting is happy.