

# See Life Differently.↓

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# Are you looking for a life-affirming role where your values matter?

You can bring your can-do attitude and responsible approach to support someone else to live their life to the full by supporting someone living with a disability, long-term health condition, or both, to live life their way, doing the things they want to do.

During the pandemic, we've put plans in place to keep our employees and the people we support as safe as possible. We have a full complement of PPE and testing kits and have supported people through shielding and returning to work.

For people who are passionate about people, we offer full and part-time roles, fantastic training and a package of benefits.

See your life differently. See the difference you can make. Join our great team.



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## What's in a name?

Personal assistants and wellbeing practitioners are the job titles we use for Thistle employees who support people with disabilities to live the lives they want. We don't use the term 'care workers' because we put what matters to the person we support at the heart of what we do - supporting them to have as much control as possible over their own lives.

Our employees are as diverse as the people we support. Everyone has different interests and life circumstances and we work hard to make sure there's a good fit. We support many people to do their own recruitment which is a great way to make sure it's right.

We can offer full and part-time roles because some of the people we support need 24/7 assistance and some just a few hours a week. Some of the people we support have a team working with them, others just one person. Our roles are many and varied and all are posted on our website and Facebook jobs page.

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# What makes a great Personal Assistant or Wellbeing Practitioner?

“Listening skills and empathy are really important. Plus a willingness to do things the way the person they support wants them to be done”. Emma McKendrick, who is supported by Thistle. Emma is also employed by Thistle to train staff.

Thistle believes that the best attributes for a role supporting someone to live the life they want is a can-do attitude and responsible approach. It’s absolutely fine if you don’t have previous experience as we provide comprehensive training.

“It really doesn’t matter how old you are at all,” explains Emma, “we have some great personal assistants who are still studying at college and we also have great people who have retired from their first career.

“A caring and supportive attitude and a willingness to talk openly and honestly are really important and if you canna have a laugh, it can be a really long day!

“Of course, reliability is essential. I work, so it’s important to me that I get to the office on time and I can only do that if the person supporting me is also on time.

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## Tracey's story

Tracey is part of the team that supports Emma to live the life she wants. She is a Mum, lives some distance away from Emma and also runs her own travel consultancy business.

Tracey feels being the mum to three boys was good preparation for her role. "You're always having to listen, think ahead, adapt plans and deal with the unexpected. That gave me confidence," she explained.

To support Emma, Tracey generally does a 24-hour shift which include a sleepover as Emma may need support during the night. "That routine fits well for me, the rest of the team and Emma.

"I still work as a travel agent and learned from my Thistle experience. One specialism I've added is that I now offer accessible holidays for people with disabilities.

"However, the most rewarding thing is helping Emma live the life that she wants. We do have lots of fun and laughs together."

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## “It’s hugely rewarding”

Many people successfully make the transition to a new career.

Gill’s route to becoming a Personal Assistant (PA) is unusual as she already worked part-time in Thistle’s fundraising team.

“My family was growing up and other voluntary work coming to an end and I had a few extra hours each week. I wanted to do something a bit different. I noticed that we were recruiting PAs and thought ‘that might be interesting’...so I applied.

“I’m supporting a sociable chap who likes to have fun. Restrictions during the pandemic interrupted some of our usual activities, but when we still go to cafés and are looking forward to getting back to adapted cycling, playing pool, badminton and going to comedy gigs. We chat a lot, discussing all sorts of things, although we don’t necessarily agree on everything!

“Liking to do the same sort of things is part of why Peter picked me to join his support team. Peter not only likes activities which help him keep fit he’s also interested in eating more healthily... so, we do some cooking.

“Previously he asked for help so he could better manage his money so we worked on that too. And Peter introduced me to LaserQuest!

“It’s great seeing someone develop the skills and confidence to do something they want to do. As a PA you spend a lot of one-to-one time with the person and you really do get to know them – for me it’s hugely rewarding supporting someone live the best life possible.”



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## Training and Development

Everyone who joins Thistle receives excellent training on full pay. We have our own in-house team who not only train employees but who also train staff in the NHS and local authorities.

Training sessions are delivered in-person and online and are attended by employees from across Thistle including our supported living, health and wellbeing and those who work in central functions such as finance, fundraising and business support. Our training is also often co-facilitated by people we support.

Thistle gives people the opportunity to develop personally and professionally with a structured training programme. We have induction training and further training that's both role-specific and more general such as our course for leadership development.

We pay for SSSC registration and support every personal assistant and supported living wellbeing practitioner to gain Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) level 3 accreditation in Health and Social Care.

All employees have supervision and support to succeed in their roles.

# Employee Benefits

- Fully paid, sector leading training
- Support to achieve SVQ level 3
- Contributory pension scheme
- 30 holiday days per year, increasing one day/year to 35 days.
- Free membership at Thistle Gym
- Refer a Friend scheme, paying £250 for successfully referring someone to work with us
- HSF Health Plan membership, offering cashback for a range of health costs as well as a wide range of retail discounts.

And, perhaps the greatest benefit of all – see the difference you can make in your own life and those of the people you support!

So, why not take the opportunity to find out more about what we offer and have a look at the range of roles available on our website: [www.thistle.org.uk](http://www.thistle.org.uk) or on Facebook @thistlejobs.

## About Thistle

In addition to supporting over 100 people living with disabilities to live more independently, we are a charity supporting people across Scotland living with long term health conditions or facing challenging life situations.

We offer one-to-one wellbeing coaching and group-based courses either in-person at our Centre of Wellbeing (with changing-places facilities and accessible gym) or online. We also run accessible exercise classes, Tai Chi and Mindfulness courses.



Find out more about what we offer and have a look at the range of roles available on our website: [www.thistle.org.uk](http://www.thistle.org.uk) or on Facebook @thistlejobs.



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