

CELEBRATING THE ROLE OF NUTRITION LEAD AT NELLARSAR

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One of the things I am most proud and passionate about in my work with Nellsar is the **Nutrition Lead** job role I created and developed over the last few years. The role is **completely unique to Nellsar**, and its sole focus is on the **person-centred nutrition and hydration needs of residents**, with **holistic wellbeing and dignity** at its centre.

We currently have **four established Nutrition Leads across the company** and I'm hoping to develop more in time. This is an introduction to two of our very special team members; **Allann** and **Katja** have **both completed their Level 3 Diploma in Diet and Nutrition** and are working wonders in their Homes supporting residents' holistic nutritional needs.

In a future post I will introduce **Sarah** who is a Nutrition Lead within one of our Dartford Homes and you can read all about **Adelina's** brilliant work at Princess Christian Care Home in our [Nellsar newsletter](#).

I am very proud of each of our Nutrition Leads for their determination and dedication to this initiative. I thought I would put a **questionnaire** together to introduce Allann and Katja.

Leni Wood

Head of Nutrition and Wellness



Allann

Nutritional Lead, Relief Team Leader and Care Assistant

Woodstock Residential Care Home

What made you joined Nellsar?

I joined Nellsar as I always wanted to work with other individuals, caring and supporting.

What does your Nutrition Lead role involve?

It includes supporting team members and residents by promoting healthy weights and diets. I monitor food and fluid intake and communicate with colleagues and family any diet changes, or texture modified food changes. I also record and monitor residents' weights and MUST (nutrition) scores.

What skills do you need to be a Nutrition Lead and what made you interested in the position?

I've always worked in the food industry, so coming into Care was a big change, however I still have a passion for ensuring residents eat well and enjoy their food. Being a Care Assistant, it's my duty of care to ensure residents are eating and drinking well. When I see a resident losing weight, I find ways to encourage them to eat; this is why I decided to take on this role, as I am enjoying the best of both worlds.

What elements of your Nutrition Lead role do you most enjoy?

I enjoy working with a resident who doesn't have much interest in food or interacting with other residents, to help build confidence and bring them out of their shell. This includes building a diet based on foods they enjoy and seeing how much they progress. My favourite part of the job is seeing results! There is no better feeling than working alongside a resident who has a dangerously low BMI, to reaching a normal range and seeing how much better they look and feel.

Have you had any training to do your Nutrition Lead role?

Yes, I've received in-house training from Leni and I've completed a Level 3 Diet and Nutrition Diploma.

Do you have any future training or career aspirations within Nellsar?

I would love to be offered the chance to work in other Nellsar Homes, to help support them and give guidance.



Katja

Nutrition Lead

Lulworth House Residential Care Home

What made you joined Nellsar?

I have always enjoyed working with older people. When I was young, I used to go to the Care Homes where my grandma volunteered and visit with people. When I was looking for work fresh out of 6th form, I spotted one for a Carer position at Lulworth House and I applied right away. I joined in 2005

and have been here ever since! I've had a number of job roles within the Home; from Carer I moved on to a Senior Carer position, then joined Activities for a period. I stepped up to work as the Cook for a while when needed and I have also covered shifts in the laundry. Since starting as a Nutrition Lead, I have found my calling, and have been in the role over four years.

What does your Nutrition Lead role involve?

Being the Nutrition Lead at Lulworth House includes a lot of different tasks. I work out residents' MUST scores (linked to their weight) and refer our residents to the Dietician Team or Speech and Language Team (SALT) as needed, dealing with the professionals for each review. I can start food and fluid monitoring for those in need, and I can start the 'food first' approach for anyone at risk. I can also change the amount of fortification people need. I inform our Care Team of all changes, and I review their entries in the food and fluid monitoring to try to ensure adequate fluids are offered and choice is being encouraged. Previously I wrote our menus using our residents' likes and dislikes, but we are currently involved in a trial menu with some other Nellsar Homes, so I am supporting the Chef and kitchen staff with their tasks. I keep our residents' nutrition care plans up to date by reviewing them each month and I enjoy supporting the Care Team during mealtimes, supporting resident choice in all forms, including being able to request things not on the menu.

I work closely with our Activities Team, Catering Team and other champions in our Home to help plan and provide activities linked with food. I also enjoy decorating birthday cakes for our residents when I'm on shift. I run trials within our Home with Leni and am currently in the pilot of the 'Manual for Mealtimes' initiative run by the Kent SALT and Dietetics teams. I have also recently started learning how to do audits for Leni and she is supporting me with setting tasks which I am able to complete around my own work.

What skills do you need to be a Nutrition Lead and what made you interested in the position?

Listening and understanding our residents is a very important skill. Ensuring choice can be made whether it is a verbal choice, or a choice made using facial expressions. Time management is important too, as there is a lot of admin work linked to this role and I can get carried away doing that. An understanding of weight, MUST and fortification is also very important.

What elements of your Nutrition Lead role do you most enjoy?

I most enjoy the unique relationship I am able to have with our residents. We are able to enjoy chatting during mealtimes and spending a lot of time together and they often come to me for comfort, cups of tea/coffee and use the dining area as a quiet space between mealtimes. They know and appreciate that I am always available to give them time, as well as finding solutions for their problems or ordering in something that we don't usually stock.

The most rewarding thing about my work is when someone really enjoys their food. Food is a love language for me so I love it when someone asks for something, and I can provide it for them. Just the other day someone joked about having a bacon sandwich for breakfast; I replied that they could

have one, or order it for the next day, and they really enjoyed their bacon sandwich the next morning, even though they couldn't remember ordering it!

Have you had any training to do your Nutrition Lead role?

I have received a lot of training over the years. I have completed all the mandatory training which covers a wide variety of roles through the Home. I have had training from Leni which focused on the nutrition side of my job, this included becoming Hydration Champion and more recently completing my Level 3 Diploma in Diet and Nutrition. I also enjoyed taking part in the Nellsar Chef Masterclasses on Zoom. I get a lot of support from Leni regularly, whether it is a reply to an email or her coming in to see us. She provides small sessions that are like mini training courses, and she sets me bite-sized tasks to complete.

Do you have any future training or career aspirations within Nellsar?

I would be interested in more training and supporting others within Nellsar. I want to focus on being the best I can be and giving all I can to support our residents to be as happy and healthy as possible.