

Professional Neighbours - Frequently asked questions

Is this different to a carer role?

The difference is that we are looking for you because you are a caring person who is not necessarily looking for a career in care, possibly have another job or are retired. We actively recruit caring, full- and part-time care staff all the time, this new title is aimed at people in our community who may have not thought about a job in care but would be good at helping our elderly clients.

Will I get training?

Yes! We will give you both classroom time and online training so that you are well informed and confident to help. We cover subjects such as manual handling, medications, and all the things our usual team must cover to make sure they and the clients know what we can and can't do, emergency procedures and Safeguarding.

How much am I paid?

Our pay per hour changes with the time of day, our staff have different level of expertise so depending on your professional background or experience we will give you a grade of pay per hour/per shift. We will let you know this as part of an informal interview process. Your pay is paid on 28th each month and you would be on our payroll system for tax, NI and pension purposes. All of this can be explained in more detail.

I can only offer a couple of hours is that enough?

We would love to have you on a regular basis!

Do I have to do a DBS check?

Yes, you do need a DBS check, you may disclose to us ahead of the check if you have any historic record which you can explain and we may have the discretion to still employ you.

If I can't work how much notice do I need to give?

Our customers need us, they need reliable regular support in their homes and they like to know who is coming and when, so we ask everyone to give us four weeks' notice for time off. Obviously, if you are unwell, we would have to work to cover your absence with another member of the team.

Can I offer to help temporarily or on an ad hoc basis?

We are always in need of stand in staff at the last minute and this may also suit you, so we may ask you to help on the same day or within a few days' notice. We often rely on the goodwill of our team to cover each other – having you on board will certainly help us with this.

Do I need a uniform?

Our "uniform" is a white, short-sleeved top and black trousers of your choice.

Is it safe from Covid?

We have maintained an excellent track record through the pandemic. With good handwashing, wearing masks, gloves and aprons for all calls and being careful not to come to work if they were unwell, we kept both our clients and staff safe. Vaccination has made our staff more resistant to the worst of the infection and to protect our clients. If you have medical conditions which make you vulnerable, we are happy to talk to you about this confidentially in more detail: those staff who were deemed high risk by their doctors at the start of the pandemic are now back at work and we are careful to not send them to a client who is positive (we have had very few of these), and we do not take on new clients who are known to be currently positive.

Will I be made to have a Covid vaccination?

No, we recommend it and you have priority to get it done along with the flu vaccine as a care worker but it is not mandatory.

Do I have PPE supplied?

Yes, currently masks, gloves and aprons are worn at all visits.

Is my petrol paid for?

Yes, our roster system works out the mileage and we pay travel time and petrol in your pay automatically.

If I am worried about a client/neighbour but not working, what should I do?

We have the team in the office manning the phones from 0600-2300 7 days a week so just call the office. Outside of these hours we would expect families to call 999 or 111.

We do not expect you to visit in your capacity as a PN at any time other than the booked times which are paid for by the client.

We would not send you to a near neighbour who you already have a friendship with as this would present professional boundary issues and make life difficult for you. Our professional neighbours will maintain a strictly professional relationship with those they meet through this work and all of this will be clear in our training sessions. As I have said so many times, "Visiting someone else's Mum (Dad, Granny, etc.) is so much easier than visiting your own!" – the expectation and demand is a friendly but limited relationship (no guilt or tugs on heartstrings!!)

I don't want my neighbours to know I am working; can you only give me people who are in another road?

Yes, as above, we want you to look after our clients and maintain a healthy distance emotionally, work as a team and be supported to deliver the care needed without becoming dragged in to more than you are prepared to offer. We will support you with how you maintain this professional distance.

What is the role NOT?

It is not a volunteer role.

It is not a neighbourhood watch scheme!

It is not a first response emergency scheme!

Client expectations/new referrals/problems with boundaries

Clients are paying for the service and will expect every Doris staff member to be well trained, checked and supported – this role will not be obvious to the clients, you are a very important part of their care team. If you hear of anyone who might like to have our services or needs help to access the social work team who assess local people for their needs, just let them have the office phone number and we will do the rest.

If my neighbours expect me to do more for them, what do I do?

We will train you in how to make sure that all requests for extra care time, visits, or tasks are channeled through the office before anything is added. Our expectation is not that you stay on longer or do extra things for anyone without it first being screened, assessed and approved by our client team. This is how we work to keep you and our clients safe.

How do I report a concern about abuse or neglect?

In our training we talk through all types of abuse or neglect including self-neglect and we make sure that you are clear about the reporting lines. As a CQC registered provider of care, we have duties which are within a legal framework and our carers do a great job of reporting their concerns to the client team who then take responsibility for reporting to the authorities where needed. All our clients are deemed vulnerable adults by the nature of their age, health or simply that they need us in the house to help – keeping them safe is an important part of our role.