

# Students provide 'invaluable' care support during lockdown

Three university students have been commended for their support after working at one of Scotland's leading housing providers during the pandemic.

The teenagers from Linlithgow joined Bield Housing and Care taking on care assistant roles over the Summer providing personal care, social support and domestic assistance to help older people.

Katrina Paley, 18, of the University of Aberdeen, Katie Stewart, 19, from the University of Glasgow, and Ellen Kilgour, 19, of the University of Edinburgh worked as part of the 'Bield at Home' team – a care service for over 60's in Linlithgow and surrounding area.

After universities were closed, Katrina, Katie and Ellen took it upon themselves to help some of the most vulnerable in West Lothian, whilst gaining valuable work experience.

The students were an invaluable asset to the 'Bield at Home' team after members of the work force had to self-isolate and shield over the course of lockdown.

Biomedical Sciences student, Katrina, said: "I am a person who doesn't like doing nothing, so lockdown was not ideal I wanted to get out and do something to help out and I'm glad my work has help to make a difference to older people in my town.

"One of the other students told me about the position and I

immediately was keen to get involved. It was a full-on placement and at first I was nervous. We were by ourselves with the customer and had the responsibility of providing the best possible care to each individual.

“All worries I had swiftly faded away. The ‘Bield at Home’ were extremely welcoming and very supportive.

“One of the tasks I helped with was setting up Zoom calls for customers with their family. It filled me with so much joy knowing I have made a real positive difference to their lives and helped put a smile on their face.”

Each of the students had to undergo a rigorous training process to meet the care standards of the Bield service as well as encapsulating the up-to-date Government guidelines on Covid-19.

Medical Sciences student, Ellen, said: “My Gran had received care from Bield at Home so I was fully aware of the services they provide and I wanted to be a part of that, to give something back. She received tremendous support from the carers and I could see how massive an impact it had on her life, and so I wanted to offer this quality of care to all the Bield customers.

“Although we are all lone workers when in the customers’ homes, our support network was fantastic. Whenever we were unsure of something, or had a question we got instant support from more experienced members of the Bield at Home team.

“Everyone looks out for each other which made it really easy to enjoy the work. All the carers have been so supportive.

“I love this job. Getting to know each and every one of the Bield customers was very enlightening. They all have different stories to tell, and can draw upon so many of their experiences through their lives, it was

fascinating. It was a privilege to have built up a relationship with them all.”

Medicine student, Katie, said: “The customers are all wonderful and I loved spending time with them. For most during lockdown, the Bield at Home team were their only point of contact so were extremely happy to see us and ask about our day. The customers all have different stories to tell – sometimes there was even a new story for every visit.

“We have heard that the customers enjoy our visits, just as much as we do and they enjoy spending time with us, which is amazing to hear. Each of them has different characteristics and personality traits which makes every day exciting and interesting. I really enjoyed working at Bield over the summer.”

The girls were part of a care service team which operates between 7.30am – 9.30pm every day, and provided an additional emergency response service when necessary.

Bield Area Manager, Lorna Smith, thanked the students for their hard work and welcomed them back at any time.

Lorna said: “Katrina, Katie and Ellen provided an invaluable service to our hard working team. They each approached this difficult, and in many ways vital role with enthusiasm and dedication.

“Everyone at the team were delighted how they fitted in and got on with the tasks. This has been a difficult and demanding period and their support has been greatly appreciated by our customers and the rest of the Bield at Home team.

“We look forward to welcoming back Katrina, Katie and Ellen in the near future.”

Bield at Home aim to improve the quality of life of older people by offering a diverse range of services. The service

caters for those living within Bield's West Port and Brae Court establishments, as well as offering support to those who live within a half mile radius of the housing developments.

Staff are not only SSSC certified, but they have also been equipped with sufficient PPE and relevant training.

In advance of using the service, a member of the Bield at Home management team will set up a meeting to discuss an individual's needs, in order to outline a personal support plan.

Bield is committed to investing, changing and innovating its services and operations to address the needs of the next generation of older people.

For more information on Bield at Home call 01506 840846 or email [homeedinburgh@bield.co.uk](mailto:homeedinburgh@bield.co.uk)

To find out more about Bield and its developments, visit [www.bield.co.uk](http://www.bield.co.uk) or follow on [Facebook](#) @bieldhousingandcare and [Twitter](#) @BieldScotland

