

## 1. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH NIGHTINGALE HAMMERSON?

I first heard about Nightingale House 6 years' ago, when I moved to London from Spain. Whilst in London, I worked with St Christopher's and Royal Trinity Hospice but always had Nightingale Hammerson in the back of my mind, as I was very familiar with their work. When the role of Care Quality Lead was advertised early in 2019, I applied immediately and was offered the role. Last year, I applied for the role of Director of Care. I have now been in this position for nearly a year. Being part of Nightingale Hammerson covers my three career passions: dementia, palliative care and care homes, all of which are very important to me.



## 2. HOW MANY TEAMS DO YOU MANAGE? TELL ME ABOUT THEIR WORK?

In all, I lead 10 teams and approximately 200 team members.

I have the overall responsibility of the provision of care at Nightingale House and am the registered manager with CQC. This means I have responsibility for our care on all households. My role is also to support the household managers, therapies team, pharmacy, dietitian, Relationship Centred Care and palliative care teams.

I am also responsible for overseeing the services provided by external care professionals and communications. In addition, I am part of the development team responsible for our Care Home Education Centre (CHEC); an exciting new phase for Nightingale Hammerson's new platform to offer accredited educational qualifications within our sector. I also lead our researcher network, partnering with universities and research programmes.

## 3. OUR CARE TEAMS ARE DIVERSE, BOTH IN TERMS OF THEIR SPECIFIC SKILL SETS BUT ALSO FOR THE WEALTH OF CULTURE, ENERGY AND HUGE ENJOYMENT THEY BRING TO OUR COMMUNITY. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO ANYONE THAT IS THINKING ABOUT COMING TO WORK WITH US AT NIGHTINGALE HAMMERSON?

Nightingale Hammerson is a very special organisation. What you will find here, you will not find in the majority of care homes in our country. Our resources are plentiful and varied, comprising a large therapies team, in-house GP, dietitian and palliative care lead, to name a few. All of our care teams are supported by a pool of knowledge and this is very much reflected in the care we provide.

Dementia education and career development at Nightingale Hammerson are unique. Many of our care team develop and go on to work in different roles, including leadership and management. If you are passionate about care, come and work with Nightingale Hammerson; you will be able to develop your skill set and take advantage of our education programmes and find new opportunities.

We are a very good place to work, it is safe and you can wake in the morning, happily thinking about going to work, knowing that you will be supported in your daily roles.

## 4. FOR YOU, WHAT IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE ELEMENT OF YOUR ROLE?

I very much enjoy spending time at the frontline of care with our Residents. Here, I am able to speak with our teams and residents and see exactly how I can support them. I can see if our residents are happy – are the care teams happy – and is everything working as it should be.

The decisions I make in leadership must have a positive impact on all, including our relatives. For example, regarding visiting during Covid – we were one of the few homes with an extensive visiting programme during 2020, allowing residents to see their loved ones. By putting myself in the shoes of others, in this instance both our residents and relatives, I was determined to find a way to make this happen. It was a lot of pressure, but by bringing in our scientific expertise and drawing on evidence, this allowed us to put our own systems in place and enable a visiting programme (albeit with limitations) to take place so that our families could be together.

## **5. WHAT DO YOU FIND THE MOST CHALLENGING?**

The management of the pandemic; the uncertainty and difficulties of planning ahead has been very difficult. To know how we are going to be working in three months' time, for example, is not 100% possible. We are faced with many external factors, all of which dictate what we can and cannot do and that makes planning a challenge.

However, we have a great, committed team who love to care and are passionate about what they do. It makes my work so much easier.

## **6. BRIEFLY, CAN YOU SUM UP HOW LIFE HAS BEEN, AND CONTINUES TO BE, DURING THE TIME OF THE PANDEMIC?**

We have learned how to live with the new normal – yet hoping this is medium term and not long term. The flexibility from everyone has been great, our teams have gone outside of their normal roles and have gone that extra mile for both our residents, their families and each other.

We have all learned how to use new technology, which is a real positive as this will last forever!

## **7. OUR NEW HOME IN HAMPSTEAD, HAMMERSON HOUSE, WILL OPEN LATER THIS SPRING. WHAT PART HAVE YOU PLAYED IN COMING TO THIS POINT?**

I have had to plan and organise each of the care services that we provide. As you can imagine, this has required a lot of preparation from our different departments and trustees to ensure we are ready to greet our first residents this spring. The co-ordination of each of the departments have been carefully orchestrated. We have had to ensure the right skill sets are in place and that our external providers of care are ready. For example, the visiting GP service. All our behind the scenes work is not yet visible but they will certainly come to life when our doors open and I am very excited for when this happens.

## **8. WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE OF NIGHTINGALE HAMMERSON?**

That our recognition as a centre of excellence in London reaches national and international status. Our work highlights the importance of holistic care, where our residents feel good and our staff have the opportunity to develop. Our contribution to research and knowledge will allow other caring professionals to learn from us and leave, having developed their own skill set. We want to be open to learn and to share our knowledge. We also want our relatives and volunteers to continue being part of our very special community and for all, far and wide, to share our values.

## **9. FINALLY, IF YOU HAD THREE WISHES FOR YOUR DEPARTMENT, ANYTHING AT ALL, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?**

- A.** Good health for our residents, team members, volunteers and relatives.
- B.** Passion for what we do and for being outstanding in the care we provide.
- C.** To continually improve our standards of care, to learn from mistakes and always strive to do better.