

# Care in the home

Born and raised in Zimbabwe, Rosie Kenyon swapped careers in the 1990s, but has settled into a role she loves as a live-in carer in Winchester

## Tell us a bit about your early life.

I undertook my Registered General Nurse training at Harare Central Hospital, then worked in midwifery at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, at the time a dedicated maternity hospital. I returned to Zimbabwe in 1975, working in acute medicine, married and had two children, then emigrated to South Africa in the 1980s, where I worked as a practice nurse. In 1987 I joined a friend in establishing a hospice offering domiciliary care – undoubtedly the most fulfilling and rewarding time because ‘care makes a difference’. I’m proud to say it continues its wonderful services today. In the mid-1990s I established a manufacturing/retail hand embroidery business employing and skilling 20 rural women, full time, producing exquisitely hand-stitched linen, soft furnishings, a baby range and ladies’ nightwear. It grew to export sales globally, a wonderfully creative time. I returned to the UK in 2008, worked in the NHS, retired in 2019 and returned to South Africa. After my partner died in 2021 I came back to the UK and entered the world of ‘A Carer’ via Access Care.

## What are you doing on a typical working day?

I am currently ‘living in’, caring for and supporting a gentleman with dementia and his family in a delightful town just outside Winchester. My role covers practical matters and companionship. It includes household duties such as



ABOVE: Caroline Nash.

laundry and assisting with gardening, some personal care, supervising and dispensing medications, making healthcare appointments and taking my client to these, record keeping where necessary, observing confidentiality, shopping, maintaining social engagements such as coffee mornings and accompanying my client on walks. Communication is crucial and making sure his family are informed. A carer observes behaviour and mood level, I may listen and suggest, encourage and distract whilst diffusing anger and maintaining understanding. Familiarity and safety are crucial to routine, but I need to be flexible and objective to cope with challenging situations. I need to be responsible and professional at all times, expect the unexpected – and take care of me too; it can be challenging and lonely, but help

is available from my agency and sympathetic, satellite organisations. Every day is a new day!

## How did you become involved with this work?

A desire to keep on giving and make a positive difference to the lives of clients and their families, because what I do enables someone to remain in their home for much longer. I would say it is working at a less hectic pace, but no less challenging!

## What inspires you?

My clients and their families, my nursing background and experience – it led me to do this and I regard it as a privilege.

## What’s the best thing about living and working in Winchester?

It’s such a beautiful city, with interesting history everywhere – also, I love the stunning countryside and delightful villages. I’m very happy, I’ve made good friends and know I am valued by my client, his family and Access Care.

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