

A support worker for a nine-year-old boy with cerebral palsy

Placed in 10 weeks · Senior Case Manager, JSP

Finding support workers that clients and their families can trust is the whole of what we do. We carry the search so the case manager can stay focused on the case, and we screen hard on fit before anyone reaches the client. Here is a recent example.

The client

A nine-year-old boy with cerebral palsy, living locally. He is non-verbal and wheelchair-dependent, and needs daily support with personal care, feeding, and moving and handling. His mum is deeply involved in every part of his life: protective, hands-on, and cautious after past experiences left her wary of letting anyone new through the door.

By the time the Senior Case Manager at JSP came to us, the role had been open for more than a year. That was not for want of effort on her part. Without the time to work through hundreds of unsuitable applications, you are often left with a handful of so-called suitable candidates who then do not show up for interview.

Why it was a hard brief

- Re-establishing trust with a mum who had been let down before and was, rightly, cautious.
- Recruiting locally for a role that needed a driver, with term-time and holiday adjustments.
- Finding the right blend of physical capability and calm, warm emotional intelligence to fit a family that had built its own rhythm.

It is not a brief a job advert solves on its own. It needs someone working the pool by hand and screening hard on fit, because the cost of getting it wrong here was not just a vacancy, it was a mum's trust.

What we did

We approached this with one guiding principle: mum's caution was not a problem to overcome, it was information. Before we put a single candidate forward, we took time to understand the family dynamic, what had gone wrong before, what she was looking for, and who would genuinely fit in that home.

Mum was not just consulted, she helped shape the support plan and had a real say in who was put forward. When a family has a hand in that, trust comes a lot more naturally.

We used our tried and tested advertising approach and worked applications out of hours to get ahead of the competition. More than that, we kept values alignment at the centre. The right skills matter, but the right fit matters more.

After a strong interview process, we put one Support Worker forward. On paper she ticked every box: experienced, calm under pressure, local, and a driver. What set her apart was something you cannot advertise for. She has a younger brother with cerebral palsy, so she understood this world personally, not just professionally.

“It looked fantastic. I was impressed with the questions asked.”

The child’s mum, on receiving the Support Worker’s profile

The outcome

The Support Worker has now been with the family for over a year. She has settled in well and become a consistent, trusted presence in his life. He clearly loves her.

“Because we’ve got the right person in first time, it’s really helped with breaking down those worries. What’s happened in the past is that the wrong person got in, and it made families go ‘told you it wouldn’t work’, going back to that place. But with this case, it was perfect.”

Case Manager, JSP

What made her impact especially meaningful was what she brought beyond the job description. Growing up alongside a sibling with cerebral palsy gave her a credibility with mum that no amount of professional training could replicate: the ability to sit with her and say this is normal, my brother went through this too.

That kind of reassurance, from someone living the same reality, changed the dynamic entirely.

“The family are very happy. The Support Worker has settled in well and is providing consistent, reliable care throughout term time and holidays.”

Case Manager, JSP

Why fit comes first

That is how the screening is meant to work, before anyone reaches the child rather than after. Across our placements, around 80% of the people we take to a meet-and-greet are offered the role.

Having a stranger come into a child’s life is a big deal, and we get that. Whether that person fits is the foundation everything else is built on, because trust is built on human connection, not qualifications. Here the right fit went further than anyone could have scripted: a support worker who had lived the same reality as the family.

It matters because the support worker spends more hours with him than almost anyone outside the family. Get that person right and it can change a child’s life and give a family room to breathe. Get it wrong and the placement breaks, and their trust with it. That is the part we take on, so the case manager does not have to.

Fair and proportionate costs

Here is how our fee compares with a standard percentage-based perm placement fee.

	Williamson	Perm agency
Recruitment cost	£3,887.33 one-off	~£4,680 one-off
How it's charged	For the hours of expert work we actually put in	A flat 15% of salary, whatever the search took
Time to fill	10 weeks	Similar
The outcome	A carefully selected candidate well aligned with the child and family	Any candidate who will pass an interview and stay past the fee refund period

The perm agency figure is an illustrative 15% placement fee on a full-time support worker salary (£16/hour, about £31,200 a year). We bill instead for the specialist hours the search actually takes, so the fee stays proportionate to the work involved.

If you have a complex case and want to talk through direct recruitment, get in touch at info@williamson-care.co.uk