



STONEBRIDGE



How to Develop a Career as A Carer of the Elderly

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How to Develop a Career as A Carer of the Elderly



Being a carer of the elderly is about making a difference, no matter how small, to the lives of older people who cannot care for themselves completely. This is a rewarding and satisfying career that people from all walks of life choose to follow...

There are no age barriers if you want to work as a carer for the elderly, what's important is that you have a caring nature and a genuine desire to help these people live a happy and fulfilling life.

You may already be working in another 'caring' role, or you may look after someone at home. Or perhaps you just feel the need to do something of value, have always wanted to become a carer of the elderly but have never had the confidence to follow your dream. Stonebridge will show you how and guide you through the steps you need to take to make the change.

You can become a care assistant with no formal qualifications, often by starting as a volunteer in a care home and building your experience of working with old people. You will help people with their daily needs and give them the care and support they need to live as normal a life as possible. The role of a care assistant who works with the elderly is to ensure they retain their dignity and self-respect as life begins to get a little more difficult.

And if you're already working in the field of caring for the elderly and would like to gain a formal qualification and take your career to the next level the Health and Social Care Level 3 Diploma would be perfect for you.

This qualification will open the gateway to more senior roles in this popular profession.

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Why do we need carers of the elderly?

Caring for senior people is a necessary and recognised career in the UK, as many people enter care homes or are cared for in their own homes when their needs change as they become older. There are an estimated 5,153 nursing homes and 12,525 residential homes in the UK (Age UK estimate calculated from Care of Elderly People Market Survey 2013/14, Laing and Buisson, 2014), and all of those homes need competent staff.

Some care of the elderly comes from family members, but this is not as common in the UK as in other countries of the world as we tend to be a less 'family orientated' nation in terms of caring for our elderly relatives.

This is why the role of a care assistant or senior care assistant is so important in playing a part in the lives of elderly people in the UK. A career as a care assistant is a rewarding one that helps older people keep their dignity and quality of life as they go through the ageing process.

But being a care assistant is more than just looking after elderly people's needs and having a quick chat with them now and then. An elderly person often looks to their carer as their rock; someone who will listen to them and treat them the adult they are, not as a child just because they can't do everything they used to. Would you like to be one of those special people who go home at the end of the day knowing they've made life better for someone? If the answer is yes then a job as a carer of the elderly could be perfect for you.



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Do you want a career as a care assistant or senior care worker?

There will always be work for carers of the elderly. According to National Statistician, the UK's population is ageing more slowly than other comparable countries, and the number of people aged 60 or over is expected to pass 20 million by 2030 (National Population Projection for the UK, Office for National Statistics).

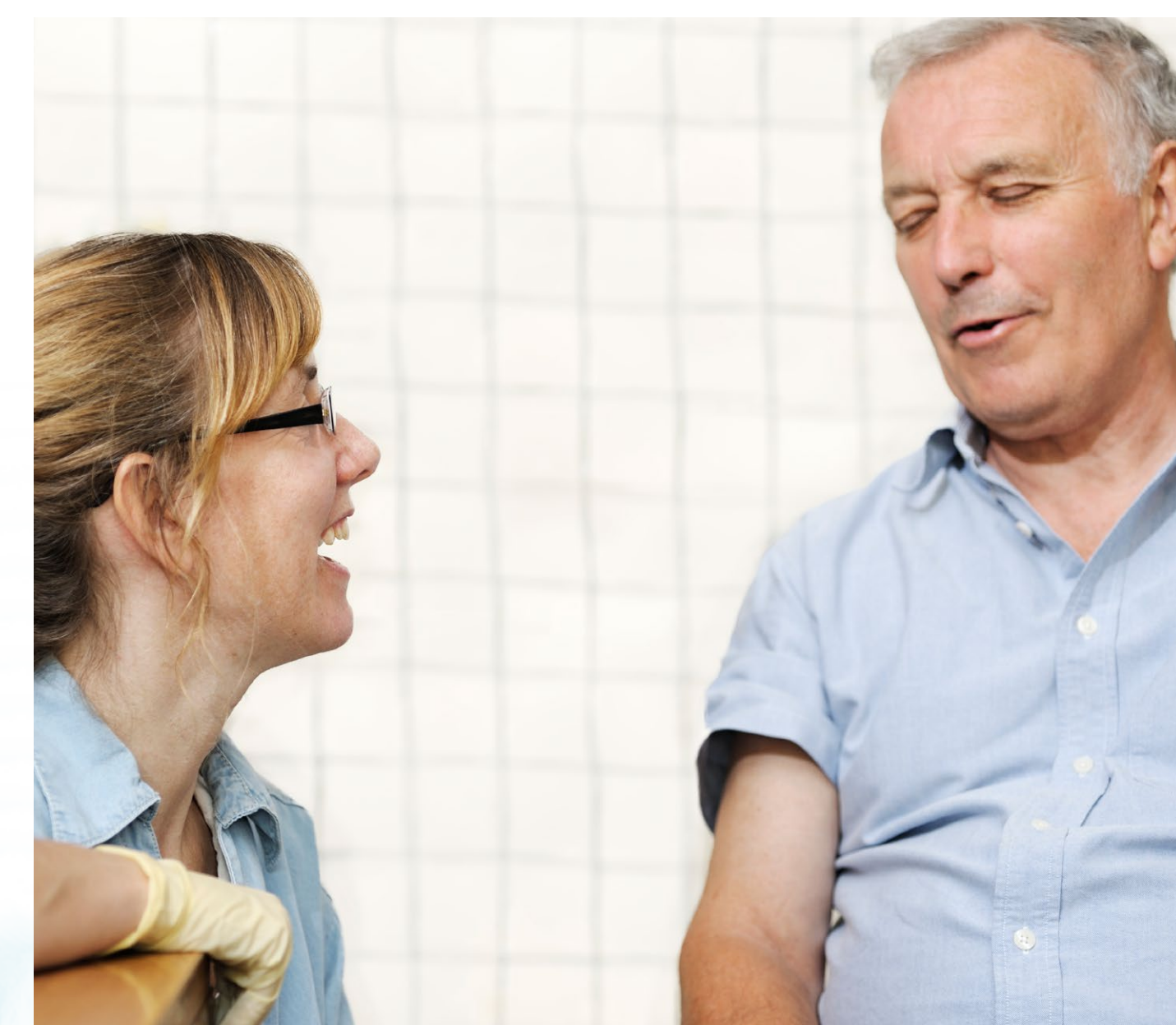
This means that over the next fourteen years a large number of those 20 million people are going to need some form of professional care, either to assist them with an illness or to help them deal with the day to day aspects of becoming old.

So this is a profession that can give a great deal of job security and the opportunities to progress up the career ladder. You could be working as a care assistant now and in 6 months' time be supervising your own team and earning a higher salary!

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If you are thinking of becoming a care assistant working with older people you'll need the following skills:

- **The ability to listen** – elderly people enjoying talking about their lives, past and present, and your role is to ensure they feel listened to.
- **Patience** – sometimes elderly people can't do things as fast as they want to, or express themselves as they could before, especially when they have a form of dementia.
- **Social skills** – the ability to chat about anything from what's happening in the news to the price of a pint of milk in a friendly and approachable manner.
- **Communication skills** – as a care assistant for the elderly you are likely to have to sometimes deal with people who are feeling depressed, don't want to eat or get dressed or talk to anyone. A good care assistant is able to communicate with these people calmly, without becoming aggressive.
- **Flexibility** – no two days (or two people) are ever the same in the life of a care assistant for the elderly. You could be bathing, helping feed, dressing, running errands or providing company.



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A senior care worker has a more responsible role and needs all the above skills plus the ability to manage and delegate tasks. To become a senior care assistant for the elderly you must be qualified at level 3 with the Health and Social Care (Adults) Diploma (QFC) Level 3. This nationally recognised qualification will allow you to further your career as a care assistant or helper to a senior role caring for the elderly. The skills you will need additional to the above are:

- **Management** – you will be responsible for teams of people and must ensure they perform their duties caring for the elderly to the required standards.
- **Motivation** – as a senior care worker it will be your job to motivate your team members and ensure they carry out their work effectively.
- **Confidence** – a senior care worker will often have to make decisions on care plans for the elderly, deal with emergencies, liaise with family members and ensure health and safety standards are met. These all require the confidence to make accurate and logical decisions.

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How can I become a senior care worker?

If you have been a care assistant for the elderly for a while and are looking to expand your role and take on more responsibility it's time to think about studying to further your career in social care.

The great thing about the Stonebridge Health and Social Care Level 3 Diploma is that it's a distance learning course, so you can study it in your own time, in addition to when you're working. Indeed the course requires you to carry out at least 100 hours of practical work in a social care setting (often an elderly people's home), so your current work could count towards you becoming a qualified senior care worker for the elderly.

The course is split into 16 units in which you will study:

1. Principles for implementing duty of care in health, social care or children's and young people's settings.
2. Principles of safeguarding and protection in health and social care.
3. Understand sensory loss.
4. Understand the process and experience of dementia.
5. Promote communication in health, social care or children's and young people's settings.
6. Engage in personal development in health, social care or children's and young people's settings.



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7. Promote equality and inclusion in health, social care or children's and young people's settings.
 8. The role of the health and social care worker.
 9. Promote person centred approaches in health and social care.
 10. Promote and implement health and safety in health and social care.
 11. Promote good practice in handling information in health and social care settings.
 12. Provide support to maintain and develop skills for everyday life.
 13. Facilitate learning and development activities to meet individual needs and preferences.
 14. Support individuals to access and use services and facilities.
 15. Facilitate person centred assessment, planning, implementation and review.
 16. Support individuals with specific communication needs.
- Note that some of the modules cover working with children and young people as well as elderly people as their needs can be similar.

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Being a senior care worker

Let's look in a little more detail about the kind of work you could be doing as a senior care worker in charge of a team of care assistants. You could be working in a care home, supervising care assistants or be responsible for a team who work in the community, visiting elderly people who are still able to live in their own homes.

In this role you will draw on all the skills you've learned as a care assistant to successfully manage your team and the care of the elderly people you are responsible for.

As a senior care worker for the elderly you need to be a leader and ensure all aspects of the care for the elderly people you are responsible for are carried out to the highest standards.

Your job will involve:

- Ensuring staff are competent in their roles.
- Assessing, developing and monitoring and individual care plans.
- Motivating and empowering your team.
- Administering medication.
- Maintaining high standards of care.
- Communicating with medical staff, family members, and external people such as social workers and county councils.

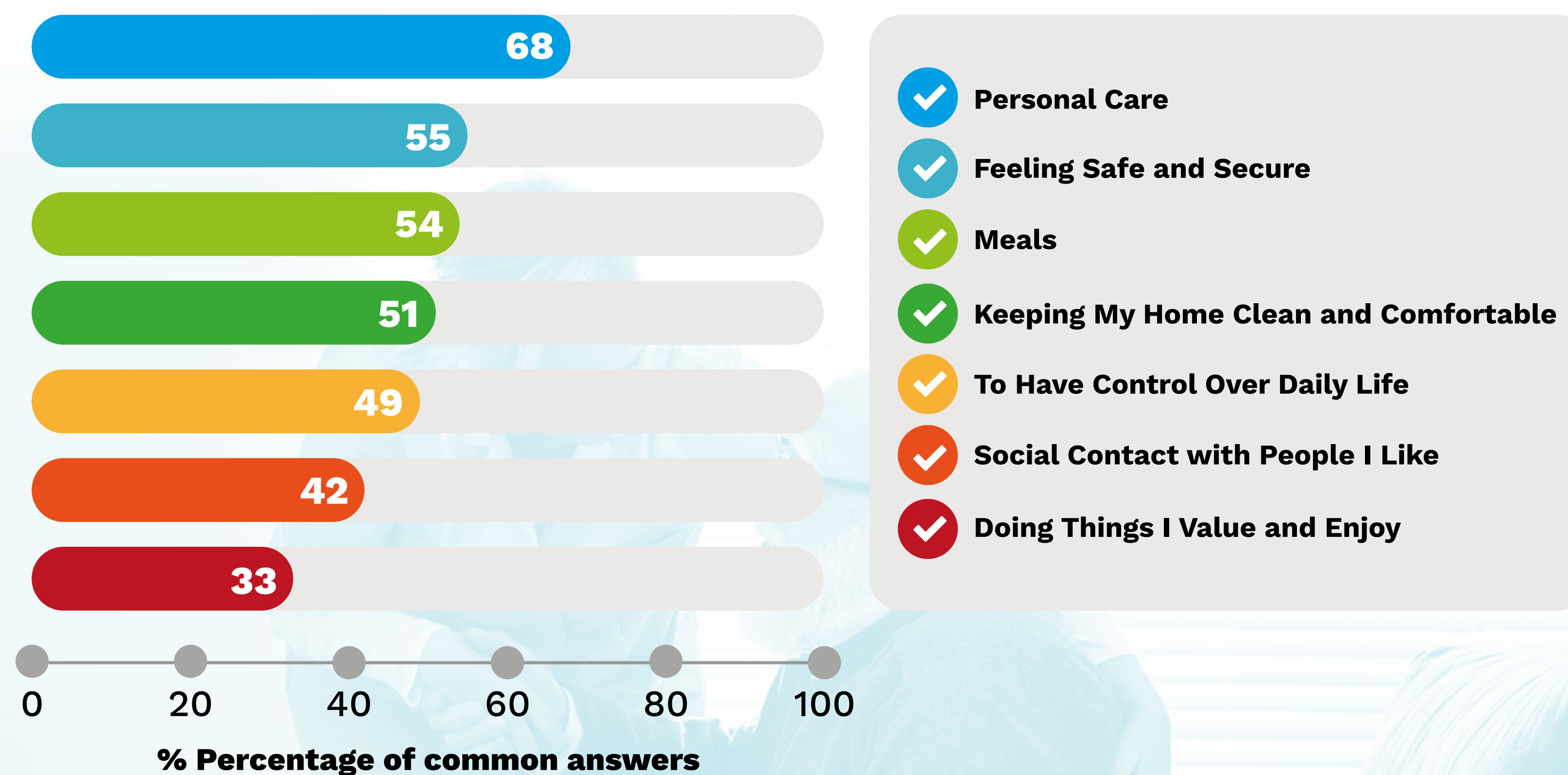
In addition to these tasks you will still have contact with the elderly people you are responsible for, and spend time chatting to them and helping out with their care needs. This is a busy, but rewarding job in which you can combine your people and management skills to help deliver a dignified way of life for vulnerable elderly people.



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When asked in which ways care and support services helped them, the most common answers from elderly people are listed below.



This information comes from the Personal Social Services Adult Social Care Survey, England - Provisional 2010-11. (NHS Information Centre, 2011).

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Without dedicated carers of the elderly these people would not be able to maintain their self-respect and quality of life during their last years.

How much does a carer of the elderly earn?

The starting salary for a full time care assistant for the elderly ranges from between £12,500 and £16,000 per year.

A senior care worker can earn between £18,000 and £21,000, depending on experience.

Source: National Careers Service

Whether you're male or female, a role in caring for the elderly could be a satisfying career for you.

What next?

“Make the most of your life. Live each day as it comes. Before you know it you will be old like me.”

These are the wise words of Ethel to her carer.

Why not take Ethel's advice and do something you love? You could start to make the change in your life today by finding out more about developing a career as a carer of the elderly.

Call us now on **0121 392 8288**



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Stonebridge Associated Colleges
0121 392 8288 | info@stonebridge.uk.com | www.stonebridge.uk.com
Stonebridge House | Ocean View Road | Bude | Cornwall | EX23 8ST