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**Aspire Social Worker – Group Work Practitioner**

**Starting a new job during Covid-19**



Starting my new role at Aspire as a Group Work Practitioner during Covid-19, has been a very surreal and at times a challenging experience. I have felt supported throughout my time here, especially by the members of my team who have worked within the building during the pandemic. They have taught me the role, techniques, tips and about the most confusing building I have ever seen. I now know my way around after nearly 5 months!

Most of my meetings, connections and conversations have been over the phone or Microsoft Teams which was a very strange way of working at first, but now it is just the norm and I actually quite like it, however I do miss that human interaction and connection. I am grateful for the space and time I had to adapt to a new role as well as working within a pandemic as I now have confidence in myself and enjoy the challenges and interesting people we meet (or speak to over the phone) on a daily basis.

Trying to complete a new starter induction when there are minimal people in the office was a challenge, and is still not complete due to social distancing, reduced staff in the workplace and the closing of some services. Most of my induction has been within my team, over the phone or via zoom meetings. I am excited to complete it and visit all of the services linked to our own, whenever that may be!

I was given the joy of working from home every other week which I found really useful, being able to complete training, facilitate groups and hold a case load while living in pyjamas was a real enjoyment. Having space and time with no distractions within my own home allowed me to get to grips with my new role as a Group Work Practitioner was useful and I am grateful for that time to learn.

As I only know what Aspire is like during a pandemic, I have no idea what the old “normal” was or how the new model will work as I am now not only a member of the Group Work team, but I am also a keyworker. I have found adapting to the current way of working due to the pandemic just like starting any other job; the real challenge will be returning to the old “normal” – whatever that looks like!