

Spotlight on The East Riding Partnership Central Hub

By Alison Haynes Practice Development Manager



Supporting the Central Hub staff team during a 'lockdown' response to a global viral pandemic, were honestly not words I ever thought I would write! They certainly were never a set of circumstances that I felt were likely to become my reality and the people I work alongside as we welcomed in 2020!

It's also I'm discovering hard to write this without at least some exclamation marks as there remains something still fairly unreal and bizarre about what has become the 'new normal'.

All the staff team responded incredibly well to what was in the first part of lockdown, a rapid pace of change. Every service user was contacted by phone given intensive support, reassurance and guidance. Gratitude was expressed by so many and comments such as, 'I feel really cared about' is just one example of the responses given to staff when they made those calls. The increased psychological support has been evident in many service users increased stability and this during a time of stress and pressure both locally and nationally due to the pandemic.

We also needed quickly to reduce numbers in the office and so a rotational way of working was also quickly adopted and this meant getting used to a heavy reliance on IT and MS Teams as our main means of communication. Internet 'freezing' leading to people halting what they were saying mid-sentence has caused some chuckle inducing frozen facial expressions!! Our 'team' has grown to include small babies and dogs and cats who made (and continue to make) some valuable contributions to Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings and in the case of the cats, some useful keyboard entries as well (aaargh!) (also not so great when the delete button is trodden on repeatedly when report writing 😊)

Meetings have become incredibly focused and I think a record has to be one where the purpose of the meeting was fulfilled in 13 minutes..I kid you not 😊 It's great in many ways as there is no unnecessary travelling around and meetings can be so much more immediate and accessible. The downside is that there can be a lot of

them in a day and on a digital platform with a link from an email..the challenge then is to click on the right link from the right email for the right meeting! Not a problem you may think but if its meeting number 199 that day and you've forgotten your own name due to information overload, clicking on the right link can seem mammoth!!!!

Going back to office spaces and how to manage not bumping into each other (also known as remaining COVID secure), some very strange 'choreography' has also developed which again has become a new normal over time. In maintaining physical distance people have been known to walk backwards away from each other whilst apologising from four different directions. They are then left with the logistical problem of having to work out who should move first and then in what order everyone else should move subsequently. I'm sure that scenario will be familiar to many in a building inhabited by far fewer people who need to maintain a distance from each other at all times

Throughout all the changes I have been and continue to be impressed by everyone's adaptability, positivity and humour. Alongside this is also the ability to acknowledge when things are challenging or difficult and being aware of overcoming these difficulties as a team.

I, like all of us I'm sure, yearn for the day when the 'new normal' returns to something more like the old familiar normal, but there are many pieces of learning that I will take from this time. Our resilience as people, our immense adaptability but mostly the kindness at the heart of people's interactions with those they have continued to support so well and that being so very evident through such a challenging time...thanks to you all...you know who you are 😊😊😊😊