

# Thank you ADS for being much more than just an employer...

By Steve Driver

## Team Leader – Hull Primary Care Addictions Service



The year was 2010 and during the months of November and December, a weather front had brought heavy snowfalls, record low temperatures, travel chaos and school disruption to the islands of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Large numbers of the United Kingdom's population were bunkered down for the beginning of a lengthy cold snap which saw the UK's coldest December since Met Office records began a century ago, with a mean temperature of -1 °C. These raging ice and snowstorms also coincided with the beginning of my ADS career, but never in the wildest winters possible would I have believed I would be leading a team through a pandemic some ten years later!

From the beginning, after what seemed like endless years with the Lincoln University reading a Social Work degree and nearing my forties, I had started a year-long contract with The Alcohol & Drug Service which was sponsored by the Trustees Savings Bank (TSB) as an Alcohol Practitioner. The old building on Spring Bank in Hull had a familiar sense of *Déjà vu* - the feeling that one has lived through the present situation before, and indeed I had. During a period of crisis in my own life, some four years earlier, I had been referred to The Alcohol & Drug Service for support with alcohol dependence. Along with personal ambition, and support from professionals including the ADS, I had uncoupled from my old self and navigated a chartered way towards sustainable recovery.

Prior to the end of my yearlong contract at Spring Bank, The East Riding Partnership had an opening at the Lairgate office in Beverley with the Open Access Team. I interviewed successfully and transferred over to this position of Alcohol & Drugs Practitioner. I spent six remarkable years with the Open Access Team and developed through a variety of dual diagnosis and substance misuse specialist training courses but I also had the opportunity to develop the Social Work role to become a Practice Educator with The ADS to support students to fulfil their journeys in the Social Work field. In 2017 I transferred to the Bridlington CDAT Team (which is now the ERP East Hub) to become the Senior Social Worker. I feel this role allowed to me to develop

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the ability for managing a more complex caseload of clients but also consolidated and strengthening my first steps towards managing staff in the organisation.

A little over a year later, an opportunity arose to team lead a contract awarded to the ADS for a Shared Care project in Hull and following an interview grilling from the ADS Chief Executive and the Service Manager I now lead the Hull Primary Care Addictions Service. During the two years of being the Team Leader I have been able to learn an enormity of management competencies, complete the AET and draw ever closer to the end of a diploma in Leadership & Management.

So in short, thank you to The Alcohol & Drug Service for being much more than just an employer... you have kept me both sane and safe, you have allowed me to share and invest, and more importantly to value and take pride in the person I have become.

Steve