

## **Hello from Doncaster Royal Infirmary!**

**By Wendy Spencer, Senior Hospital Liaison Substance Misuse Worker**



Four months ago, I was offered an opportunity to leave my comfort zone, moving from a role that I had been in for nearly 13 years, to take on the position of Senior Hospital Liaison Substance Misuse worker at Doncaster Royal Infirmary. Whilst this was clearly a brilliant opportunity to develop both personally and professionally, it was incredibly daunting... and I will explain why.

For me, stability and routine are key for maintaining both my emotional and physical wellbeing. I suffer from type one diabetes, a condition that I have had since my early teens. Whilst I can maintain good periods of stability, any stress or changes to my routine can have a major impact on my ability to control my blood sugars. To add to this, over the last 10 years or so, I have also struggled with my mood, which has a major impact on my motivation to look after my physical health!!

Furthermore, just before I was offered the opportunity, my partner and I started some major home renovations, so my home life was upside down. I was already feeling quite overwhelmed with the amount of work I had to do at home, so taking on anything else at that time felt almost impossible.

So, as you can imagine, leaving a role that I had been in for 13 years, to take on a new project, learn a whole new skill set and work with a completely new team, was terrifying! What if I couldn't cope?

I needn't have worried. Four months in, I know I have made the right decision to join the hospital liaison team. Yes, the role is challenging, and my routine is in tatters, but the highs far outweigh the lows!

So, what has been the good, the bad and the ugly of joining a new team during a pandemic?? The good is most certainly the team of people that I now have the pleasure to work with. The Hospital Liaison Substance Misuse Team, prior to my start, was made up of three amazing practitioners. The team was formed just before the pandemic hit the UK, and have worked throughout. They have not only developed a new service from scratch, they have also adapted their ways of working throughout the pandemic, maintaining an essential service to Doncaster Royal Infirmary, whilst being understaffed the entire time. Yet their motivation, positivity and support for each other has not waivered. I was welcomed into a team who genuinely made me look forward to coming to work each day.

But don't get me wrong, it has not all been plain sailing, but whatever is?

As a team, we have faced some major changes to working patterns and processes, we have worked through conflict, and now our amazing team is about to expand further, bringing new challenges and changes into force. Through all of this, the support the team have offered each other is like nothing I have ever seen before. Work does not feel like work, when you work with colleagues that feel like friends.