

WIDENING TALENT POOL



Flexible Working success at Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust



BACKGROUND

The EMERGE personality disorder service at LYPFT is a community service working typically 9 – 5, Monday – Friday shift patterns. The team supports between 100-150 service users with complex emotional needs and high presenting levels of risk. One of the roles the service recruits is a Mental Health Practitioner / Care Coordinator, which provide case management support for a caseload of typically 15 – 20 young adult service users.



SITUATION

Hannah, a Mental Health Practitioner / Care Coordinator applied and was successful for the position at LYPFT but needed flexible working arrangements to help her manage relocating and other personal commitments, which included completing her MSc in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy.



MYTHS/CHALLENGES

Recruitment to the position of Mental Health Practitioner / Care Coordinator posts has been increasingly challenging over the previous 2-3 years due to a number of reasons, including:

- Expansion of the service
- General recruitment challenges in LYPFT/NHS in band 5 or band 6 'care coordinator' type roles
- 'Personality disorder' and young adults focussed work is often viewed as a 'special interest' area which does not usually attract a high number of potential applicants



SOLUTION

Hannah completed a flexible working application prior to joining the service which was discussed and approved by the senior team. Kate Lynn, Clinical Team Manager liaised with the Human Resources team to complete a relocation package application. To support the flexible working request, it was agreed that Hannah could work set days from home and set days in Leeds for duty cover with the appropriate management support. Financial support was also provided as part of a recruitment and retention agreement which included an element of mileage reimbursement from Nottingham to Leeds and moving costs.



IMPACT

The flexible working arrangement was carefully planned and explained to all involved and there has been a significant positive impact on service delivery and patient care, as well as a motivated team member who can bring their course learning into the service to the benefit of her co-workers and service users.

The team balance supporting flexibility for colleagues with mandatory weekly meetings to ensure there is ongoing peer support within the team. Managers are also always available to contact via phone or in person to provide support.

“We would not have recruited Hannah without this flexible approach. She has been a fantastic asset to the service and with the management plan in place, the impact on patient care, in our view has been negligible.”

Jamie Scott, Personality Disorder Service Operational Manager

‘Overall, being able to have the opportunity to work flexibly has been essential to my career development, educational progression and achievements, and my overall personal health and wellbeing. If I were to work a 9-5 job with minimal flexibility, I would not have had the same opportunities to work in a job I love, whilst furthering my career through further education, and it would have a significant negative impact on my life’.

Hannah Beech, Mental Health Practitioner / Care Coordinator

