

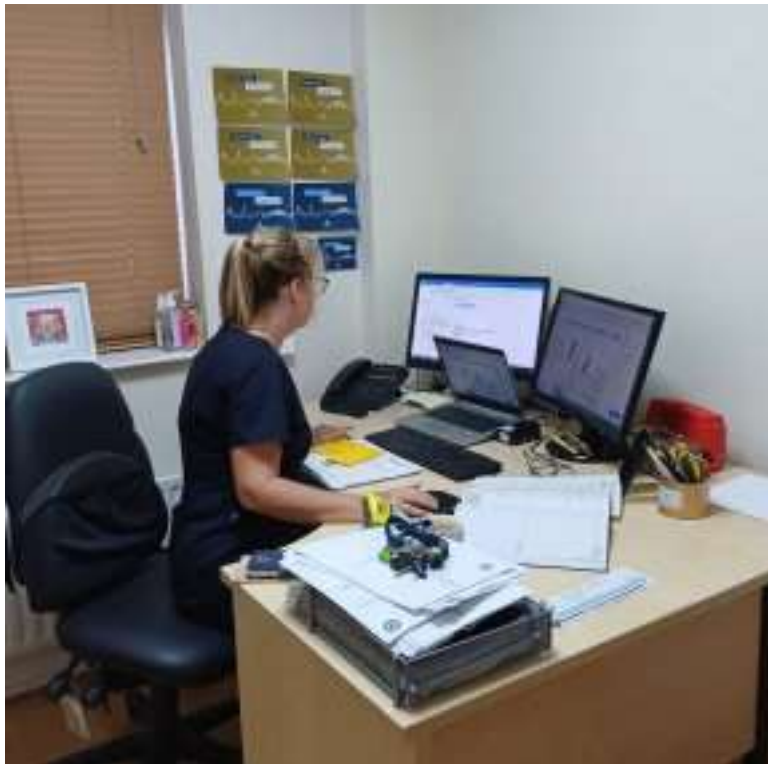


work life balance

Employer: Cobalt Hospital (Part of Ramsay Health Care UK)

Area: Cobalt Hospital

Theme: Stress and Mental Health



This case study is a reflection over a 6 month period from 1/3/2023 - 31/8/2023 from the Head of Clinical Services journey to create a better work life balance. Julie is one of the organisations health advocates which makes this account even more prevalent as she has had to start and take her own advice, something she is not used to doing. Julie is contracted to 37.5 hours per week over a 5 day period. Julie does not receive any overtime payment or time off in lieu for any hours worked over this 37.5. Julie routinely works a 10hr day 5 days a week and occasionally more, she also works on a weekend from home for at least 4 hours. Julie has been doing this since she joined the organisation 5 years ago. Julie identified the need to review her working hours, workload responsibilities and her lack of ability to say NO. Julies aim over the following 6 months was to be kind to herself, achieve her goals of working her contracted hours, delegate and reduce some of her work load and to not always agree to take on more, and to have more "ME" time.

"I decide to volunteer for the case study for BHAW to share my experience of how my working week looked and how I eventually realised that it was



not sustainable, and how this was affecting my mood and lifestyle. Basically my work was my life and that had to stop being the case. Since my father had passed away my weekends became more busy with visiting my mum, and then I became a grandmother and this also impacted on my weekend, something had to give."

From March to May Julie had made some headway into working within her contracted hours, she did not take her laptop home on weekends so this now became her own time, allowing her to see her family without thinking about work. Julie did admit this was hard to do and just thought of all the work she had to do during the following week to catch up. Re scheduling, prioritising and being more organised made this easier to achieve. Julie kept an upto date diary of what she called tasks and highlighted them once they were achieved, this gave Julie a sense of achievement and success. Over the months of June July and August Julie worked her contracted hours most days and only worked over when absolutely necessary such as for a late meeting. She decided to stop being the national paediatric safeguarding lead for the organisation as this impacted on her hospital role with workload and time commitments. She even negotiated a working from home day once a week. Because Julie now finished work at a reasonable time, she joined Cobalt gym where she can be seen at least 3 times per week. Julie now feels more in control and is happy to delegate responsibility.

"I am really proud that I achieved what I set out to do, despite thinking I should have done this years ago. My work still gets done, I will always have deadlines but being more organised, saying "no" to some tasks has made this easier. I have retained my work ethic but select what I can do when, one thing I still cannot do is start something, stop, and then go back to it, I feel I must complete every task before moving on to the next. so maybe not quite there! I am more content and happy at work with less stress, which I find strange given that I have to complete the same work in less hours. I am enjoying my free time and feel like I actually have "ME" time. long may it continue."



