

A Day in the Life of an Early Support Consultant with the Mental Health in Families team

A typical working week features some time working from home, blended with time in various office spaces co-located with community case holding teams. Co-location time is very important for networking and relationship building across adult mental health services, children's social care teams and Family Support. We endeavour to focus co-location in a particular locality of Kirklees, so a consultant may be primarily based in Batley, Dewsbury, Valleys/rural or central Huddersfield. For example, a consultant aligned to Batley may spend a day co-located with children's social workers at their Batley base, a day with Family Support teams in Batley and a day with adult mental health workers at their base in Batley. Whilst co-located, the focus is on providing consultation to support case holding workers to fully consider the impact of parental mental health on children and think about ways that they can address this in their work.

Whilst face to face is the preferred method for holding consultations, these can also be provided over the phone or virtual medium such as MS Teams and can be done whilst working from home. Consultation work involves in depth analysis of a family situation and making sense of all available information to identify the lived experience of the child. Evidence based tools are used to support consultation and develop understanding and confidence for case holding workers.

As there is a focus on improving and enhancing practice, consultants spend time identifying any needs of the service or gaps in knowledge that they feel would benefit from additional training. Training is then designed and delivered to fill this gap, so that professionals from early support, children's social care and adult mental health services are able to work towards addressing the impact of parental mental health and supporting the family to build resilience. Similarly, resources are developed within the team by consultants to support direct work with families and help to start conversations about mental health.

Tasks on a typical day can include:

- Working from home using virtual means to respond to requests for consultation from case holding colleagues
- Attendance at a familiar office base to collocate with community-based teams and provided face to face case consultation
- Co-delivery of one of the training courses offered by the team with another team member
- Involvement in developing further training/presentation opportunities and resources to support case analysis
- Sharing and discussion of good practice and research within the team specific to the impact of parental mental health and how this could be used
- Recording of case consultations on Liquidlogic
- Using systemone to seek out information for sharing on a need to know basis in accordance with Caldicott principles
- Arranging and facilitating collaborative meetings between professionals from different services to focus discussion on the impact of parental mental health with a focus on developing a shared perspective and joined up approach to working the case.
- Attendance at and contribution to decision making multi agency forums and panels