

**Kirsty Thompson is a Team Leader for the Central Mental Health Liaison Team at Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust. She has been a nurse in the Mental Health Liaison Team for seven years and has undertaken the role of Team Leader for around two years.**



**Here Kirsty tells us more about her role.**

### **Tell us how you got your role?**

I completed a diploma in mental health nursing at University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and qualified as a mental health nurse in 2008. Since qualifying I have completed various other training courses and most recently I am completing a leadership module and a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) module which is relevant to the role I am doing. Previous roles I have done at the trust include, working on inpatients (male, female and Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit wards), Home treatment team (HTT) practitioner, Deputy Team manager for the HTT, Mental Health Liaison Practitioner and currently Team Leader for the Central Mental Health Liaison Team.

### **What does your role involve?**

My role involves providing operational and clinical leadership to the Mental Health Liaison Team and the Mental Health Urgent Assessment Centre (MHUAC). The role is varied and can include anything from assessing service users, liaising with their families/carers, representing mental health services in the acute hospital and developing action plans, responding to compliments and complaints and service improvement. During COVID in the Central Mental Health Liaison Team, we developed an urgent mental health assessment centre which has enabled us to have a space to provide assessments and support for service users who would normally attend A&E. With the MHUAC, we are now able to transfer service users with no medical need straight to the MHUAC or transfer at a later time when their medical need has been addressed. This has been beneficial to ensure our service users are able to be transferred away from A&E in a calmer environment with support from mental health staff at all times.

### **What have been the best bits and challenges of your role?**

I hear this comment all the time but is it so true, “no day is ever the same”. I am passionate about my role and when asked about my job I am always proud to say I am a mental health nurse, (I couldn't imagine doing anything else). The role is ever-changing and there is always the opportunity for further training, gaining new skills, reflection and personal development. There is no greater feeling than helping others and hopefully making a difference no matter how big or small this is. Some of the challenges that have been difficult especially during COVID is staffing shortages, increased anxieties and adapting how we work. However, nearly a year on we have successfully developed the Mental Health Urgent Assessment Centre which has provided an alternative area for service users to be assessed in a less stimulating environment.

### **Life outside of work:**

When I am off work I love to socialise and my partner would say I would go to the opening of an envelope. I love going on holiday and visiting new places, shopping, going out for lunch and being a personal shopper and taxi service to my 15-year-old daughter Ruby.

### **Top tips for people wanting to get into the profession:**

Prior to starting my nurse training, I worked on inpatients wards as a healthcare support worker, I feel this has given me invaluable experience and insight into the role. I think it has helped me throughout my career and kept me grounded to ensure all roles are valued and respected. Often support staff are the first point of contact and have the benefit of spending therapeutic time with service users. I would encourage anyone to work as a support worker either prior to or alongside their training to enhance their experience and development.