



*"I'm Alex and I am a Substance Misuse Advocacy worker based in Salford at Early Break. I have recently stepped into a temporary part-time Team Leader position in Rochdale alongside my usual position. And this has happened during the outbreak of the Coronavirus - in at the deep end!"*

*Like most of us, Coronavirus took me by surprise and has had a profound effect on my life as a whole! Prior to Coronavirus, I worked four days a week at Early Break, my eldest daughter was enjoying her first year at primary school and my youngest exploring the world of nursery. My husband also works full-time as an Adult Substance Misuse Practitioner. Our lives were busy and full with lots of other social activities also, so the time we spent together as a family has always been precious! Then COVID-19 struck and our lives transformed. I now work from home four days a week with a new position within service, whilst also having my two small children at home with me, one of which has required home-schooling! The first couple of weeks have been epic! Despite feeling really overwhelmed and stressed at times - I was still able to offer a service and support to my clients from home, as well as support other members of our team. As well as offering care to my children. That being said, the house has been an absolute mess, my eldest daughter has lived as 'Elsa' for around 10 days now, there has been chocolate yogurts smeared on windows and my youngest has been used as a drawing pad for my eldest's entertainment most days. I have lived in a 'hoody' the entire time and have even attended zoom meetings as my daughters play 'hairdresser' with me!*

*All that being said, I have had a change in perspective during Coronavirus and am really trying to enjoy the little things in our lives. We have an opportunity to slow down, rest and re-stock now that we are at home and I am trying to enjoy spending more time with my loved ones as much as I can. Which is easier said than done sometimes!*

*All of the above has obviously had an impact on me professionally. I am not able to be 100% focussed on work 100% of the time, which has taken some adjustment. I have had to evolve the way in which I work and communicate with young people now. I have 1:1 sessions either over the telephone or via WhatsApp video call, which is very different! But the outcomes have been positive and the young people appear to have adapted far better than myself! I now also attend all meetings, whether that be managerial, team or with external professionals, virtually! I now have a zoom and Microsoft teams account which enables me to stay connected to others regularly. Which I think is so important for everyone during this uncertain time.*