**Team HR**

**Elaine Bell, Head of Operational HR**

In March 2020, all departments within the Human Resources Directorate were mobilised to support NHS Forth Valley’s response to the emerging coronavirus pandemic by establishing a Forth Valley COVID-19 Deployment HUB. For many members of the team this meant standing down or pausing the “day job” moving base and undertaking new work much of which was emergent and saw us working alongside colleagues that perhaps we had never worked with before. The virus and its far-reaching impact touched all members of the team their families and friends and as the scale of the crisis became clear staff were understandably anxious and worried for themselves and their loved ones. The support shown for each other during this time was heart-warming and uplifting to experience. Team HR pulled out all stops and without hesitation from day one offered to work whenever and wherever it was required – they stepped up.

In March, the COVID-19 Deployment Hub was established as an area wide resource, located in Forth Valley Royal Hospital operating over 7 days and managed by the Human Resources Directorate. Its purpose was to co-ordinate the deployment of our workforce across the whole organisation ensuring essential services were maintained. It adopted a ‘hub and spoke’ model that aligned with NHS Senior Decision Makers and Line Managers. Working closely and making linkages with all NHS Directorates, Partnerships, external partners including Local Authority colleagues, Police, Army and local businesses.

Up to date workforce information was key to establishing the skills and experiences of our workforce to ensure any decisions made by senior decision makers to mobilise the workforce whether that be large or small was based on the most up to date information available. The workforce information and administration staff produced daily reports for Silver Command which included updates on Recruitment/Staff Bank activity, sickness absence, numbers of staff self-isolating etc. The team also developed and implemented the use of a home working risk assessment, collating live information numbers of who were shielding. This allowed the organisation to be proactive in supporting those isolated at home and providing where appropriate opportunities for them to continue to contribute and feel valued.

Arguably, one of the most significant demands in relation to workforce was the accelerated recruitment campaigns. Team HR responded magnificently to the challenge and worked tirelessly across all functions when it was required. This was only possible with the joint working of the whole HR team and the pulling together of the HR senior management team in a coordinated way.

The Staff bank team along with others including OHS, Medical Workforce, Recruitment, Nursing and OD supported the recruitment campaign which saw us work together in the evenings and weekends. This was all done with a huge sense of responsibility recognising the need to support our colleagues on the front line whether in wards, departments, COVID HUBs, community assessment centres, care homes, NHS Louisa Jordan Nightingale Hospital and more recently test and trace services.

The team within the Learning Centre worked collectively to support each other and colleagues across the organisation welcoming staff, coordinating room bookings to support COVID meetings and redirecting bookings at very short notice. The team worked hard to ensure all rooms were risk assessed and capacity reviewed to ensure staff safety and social distancing.

Last but not least is a shout out to our Occupational Health Service, which has provided an outstanding service for our workforce working again over 7 days responding quickly and professionally to those staff and their families who required to be tested for COVID 19. The support and guidance they have provided to our workforce is invaluable and we are indebted to them for their ever present and continuing patience and professionalism.

Although, the past few months have at times been difficult, we have learned a lot about each other and have bonded as a team in a way that we may never have done if this coronavirus had not come along. We have been creative, kind and co-operative and made connections we may never have made otherwise. We have made difficult decisions calmly and professionally embracing all that has come our way.

One of our nursing colleagues who became a vital part of the deployment hub reflects on her time with the team:

**Suzanne McGregor: Community Nursing Team Leader (Falkirk East)**

“*During the COVID pandemic back in March, I was asked to support the development of the HR deployment hub and represent nursing. I was a little apprehensive as I was being taken out of my comfort zone and being asked to join a new team at a time where staff within the hospital were anxious about what lay ahead with COVID.*

*From day 1, I was welcomed into the HR team. Everyone worked well together with a shared vision of how the hub would operate. There was a clear sense of team working, and everyone’s opinion mattered. Every member of the team had unique skills and knowledge, and we all complemented each other to achieve the goal of developing a fully operating deployment hub. I really appreciated the opportunity to work with each member of the HR team and have taken new knowledge and skills back to my nursing role”.*