

PRESS RELEASE

Nurse takes pandemic in her stride by launching Facebook fitness group

An inspirational nurse at the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust has been boosting colleagues' physical and mental health during the pandemic, by setting up an online fitness support group.

Kellie Green, a paediatric sister working in the Emergency Department at Russells Hall Hospital, thought maybe 10 staff in the department would show an interest, so she was thrilled when more than 100 got involved.

She named the closed Facebook group 'A&Easier said than Run' and aimed to encourage colleagues to get outdoors and improve their wellbeing during an especially stressful time at work.

Participants have been posting pictures from their run, walk or cycle ride and have embraced the monthly challenges set by Kellie – the latest one was to notch up the equivalent distance of a marathon throughout the month of June.

The 29-year-old nurse said: "I never thought that it would be as amazing as it is.

"The group is helping to improve the physical health of staff but more importantly it's improving our mental health too by creating a team as we have all got to know each other better.

"When people share their experiences, it motivates others – it's a domino effect.

"So many who said they would have stayed inside are getting out and about while observing social distancing and enjoying the fresh air and feeling better for it."

Chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, Diane Wake, has praised Kellie for her initiative.

She said: "What a brilliant idea. We know how people are really battling with their mental health during this crisis and especially those working on the frontline.

"Kellie is helping her colleagues to stay fit and well and significantly is fostering camaraderie among the team."

Kellie is very open about the fact she struggled with depression and anxiety for years. But when she started running, the sense of freedom she felt eased her stress.

"It has been a big part of my life," said Kellie, who ran the London Marathon in 2016.

“Whenever I had a bad week, I would get my running shoes on. If I felt angry, I could run that anger out or if I felt like having a cry I could do it away from others.

“Working in a hospital can be a really stressful environment but the pandemic has intensified that. So, I’ve been getting out more and I thought if exercise can help me, who else can it help?”

“There used to be a massive stigma about mental health but everyone has mental health whether it’s positive or negative and it’s nothing to be ashamed about.”

Kellie now hopes more staff will pull on a pair of trainers and reap the benefits of being outside.

“Don’t expect to run straight away, though!” she adds.

***** ENDS *****

Issued by the communications team at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.