

# Starting a new role in Lockdown



**Working from home has become the 'new normal' during the Covid-19 pandemic - but how do you cope with the challenge of starting a new role during Lockdown.**

**2013 BA (Hons) Public Relations graduate Jade English started a new role as Communications Officer at the North East Active Partnership earlier this month, and faced the challenge of not only starting a new job, but also of finding new ways of engaging people in sport and fitness during the pandemic. Jade writes about the challenges - and advantages - of starting a new chapter in her career during Lockdown.**

## [Return to AboutUS](#)

In March I was made redundant from my Marketing Officer role (not due to Covid 19). I applied for a few jobs, but one stood out. Communications Officer with the North East Active Partnership (formerly Tyne & Wear Sport and Northumberland Sport). Their role as an organisation is to provide support to those who plan and deliver sport and physical activity in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, with the aim of increasing the number of participants. I was intrigued by the job description. A role like this within an organisation that is all about encouraging people to become active (which is something I've been doing alongside my comms role for the last 18 months since I qualified as a personal trainer), would mean I could combine my passion for physical and mental wellbeing, with my love of working in marketing and communications. This was too good an opportunity to miss.

I applied for the job and was invited to interview. Then Lockdown struck. My interview was put on hold and I was unsure as to where I'd stand in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, with many companies freezing recruitment for the foreseeable future. Then I was asked if I'd be happy to do my interview via video call. It wasn't something I'd done before but was certainly willing to if it meant I had a chance of getting the job.

Fortunately for me, the Zoom interview went well and the following day I received a phone call – I was offered the position and they wanted me to start in a just couple of weeks! This meant I'd be starting a new job, with a new company, as part a new team, all from home. A concept that seemed strange, but exciting. "Would I be able to do my job in the same way? How would I get to know the team? Will the way I do my job be affected? Would I still get the same level of support?" I had all these questions whizzing around my head. But I was soon put at ease when I met my new manager from a distance, as he left my laptop on my doorstep. We had a chat about everything. He explained that it was a new experience for them as well as me and reassured me that we can only do our best during times like these.

My first week was similar to how things would have been pre-lockdown. Induction, health and safety, housekeeping, procedures and policies, but all via Microsoft Teams rather than in the office. I even had one-to-one video calls with most of the team so I could get to know them and learn more about their roles in the organisation. In hindsight, this has probably served me better. It's rare that you get the chance to sit down with each and every single member of the team when you start a new job, so it's been great to learn so much about the organisation and how my role fits in.

**Graduate Jade English**

As Communications Officer it's my role to lead on internal and external marketing and communications. I am tasked with the identification, creation, distribution and promotion of all communications – this includes press releases, branding, social media, photography and videography, websites, events, printed and digital materials. It's my job to raise awareness about the work we do, and to ensure the charity has an increased level of engagement with partners, as well as making stakeholders, partners and the general public aware of any opportunities in the sports and physical activity sector. My role was created following the amalgamation of two separate active partnerships which we're now in the process of rebranding, therefore has a lot of scope to progress and really make an impact which is super exciting.

During Lockdown, the role of the organisation very much remains. Recently we delivered over 2,500 activity packs to families across the region to encourage them to remain active during Lockdown. However, the way in which we work has adapted. For instance, as part of my role I'd usually be out and about, gathering content from various projects and events. Due to the current situation I'm unable to do that, so I've worked closely with the team and introduced some processes which mean we're still able to obtain good, compelling content but in a way that is safe for everyone involved.

I'm now starting my third week of working from home in my new position and I feel like I'm part of the team already. I've switched induction meetings in the office for video calls via Teams and have used screensharing to be guided through systems rather than sitting beside a colleague and watching them do it. We have a video call every morning and catch up on everything from work projects to what we're watching on Netflix.

The management team are supportive, flexible and there is a great spirit of trust - we don't need to 'clock in' at a certain time, as long as our work is done to the best of our ability, that's all they ask. All the questions I was asking myself prior to starting the role from home, have been completely alleviated. We're able to start earlier and finish earlier, those with children are able to split their day and work in the evening, and we're able to take longer lunches if we want to get out for our daily exercise during the day.

Which brings me on nicely to my top tip for keeping fit and healthy in lockdown, which is - just keep moving. It's as simple as that. Be it walking, running, cycling, skipping, virtual yoga classes, live Instagram HIIT workouts, or PE with Joe Wicks. Keeping fit and healthy doesn't always mean hardcore workouts every single day – do what feels right for you. Move intuitively. Don't guilt trip yourself that you should be doing more because you 'can't get to the gym as usual' or because you see your friends doing home workouts on social media. If you're moving, staying hydrated, eating a balanced diet and getting a good amount of sleep then you can't go far wrong.

**See more from Jade and her top tips on maintaining good physical and mental wellbeing by following @Peakmindfulbodytraining on Instagram and Facebook.**

**For more information on the work being done by North East Active Partnership, visit: [www.tynewearsport.org](http://www.tynewearsport.org) or [www.northumberlandport.co.uk](http://www.northumberlandport.co.uk)**