My Lockdown Life

I don’t know about you but when I first realised that we really were going to be ‘locked down’, my initial thought was a bit of excitement at the fact I would be able to hang my washing out in a morning, that I would watch TV whilst whiling away the hours on my laptop and that within a week I would be all up to date and not have much to do, other than keeping an eye on things! I had also had the grand idea that I would be talking to each of my team every day for at least half an hour. Safe to say, it hasn’t happened like that at all. Well, not after day one anyway.

Not only that but the main benefit of having all of these video calls was that we would get to see each other’s houses – that’s fine for everyone else, but I have just moved house and going through a refurbishment of the whole thing – if I manage to find a wall behind me without polyfilla in full sight I feel like a champ!

I had always thought that I could not work at home, that I couldn’t be motivated and that I would be lazy. I probably could be all of these things but I learnt quickly that as long as I do an early workout (this bit doesn’t always happen), have a shower, get dressed (not back into my PJs) and get sat down with a cuppa and laptop open for 9am, I am actually quite good at working. I have learnt that I can sit in my own company and be ok and that I don’t need to constantly be talking to people. I’ve learnt that I can get my emails up to date but that doesn’t mean I stop for the day, I actually have space to do some thinking and planning for our organisation. That all said, I still miss seeing everyone at the office and having face to face chats with people.

I am not tech savvy at all. Before this, I hadn’t even face timed, I wouldn’t really know how to and I never ever ever wanted to see myself on screen, but now, I am ‘zooming’ several times a day to stay connected to colleagues – I still manage to be late for most meetings, not because I’m watching the TV but because I’m trying to figure out how I connect to someone!

There is a lot I don’t like about this new life. I don’t like that I don’t have human contact with my friends and colleagues, I don’t like that I can’t hop in my car and go for a little drive with a can of diet coke and a kitkat, I don’t like that I can’t wander around the shops and I’m missing going for a glass of wine after work on a Friday.

There is also a lot that I do like and some of this I have to try to maintain when it changes again. I like that I am not using my car so much (I will get back on my bike soon), I like that we have all found new ways of working and communicating and have adapted so quick (I’m very lucky to work with some amazing people who helped make this happen), I like that our skies are less polluted and that we can see that on NASA pictures. I really love that I do at least one hour long walk with my dog each day, sometimes two – it’s so good to get out walking and not feel pressure that I should be doing other things or driving somewhere to pick up a bottle of milk, right now it is mostly on foot. I also like that this has brought communities together, we all go out on a Thursday evening to clap for carers, it’s also a chance to check that neighbours are ok.

We all talk about what is the first thing we will do when this is over. I don’t think it will be over for a good while, nor do I think we will go back to what we saw as normal but I do think that we will be given more freedom to introduce some of what we love back into our lives. For me, the one thing I want to do is to go to the Peak District and walk up Kinder Scout, I can’t wait.

In terms of work, we are already thinking about how we can continue some of our current ways of working – we don’t need to go back fully to how we were before, things can be run differently, more efficiently and more effectively and still be a very high quality service, we know this because it is what we are doing.