

Meet The Team



Hugh Cole

Clinical Manager

Case Management Services

Hugh, your role at Keystone is Clinical Manager for the case management service but your professional background is occupational therapy. When did you start working in case management?

I started in 2011. I came from being a manager and commissioner in social care, based in London, where my work was focused on shifting how we delivered services to disabled people in a more personalised way. Instead of professionals making all the decisions about how to meet a person's care needs, we were giving greater control to the person themselves through a self-directed care approach, which empowered them to be more involved with identifying their needs and in how services were delivered. It was a massive shift in focus at the time but fitted very well with my occupational therapy perspective of enabling people and not 'doing to' them.

What drew you to case management and what do you like about it?

I was looking to refresh my clinical skills and work more closely with individuals. In addition, as case management was still relatively new there was a lack of experienced managers within the sector. It was a natural step, especially as there were so many similarities with what I had been doing in social care – such as, arranging packages of care to suit the client, a focus on working with people in their homes, liaising with families, and facilitating access to services.

I like that as a case manager I can bridge the gap between the medical and social models of disability in my work with the client and their family. I need to know the medical aspect but the social context for how the person with a disability is going to manage is ultimately more important. I like introducing the client to a broader range of services and not just those from statutory services. I particularly like empowering people to have control over their own rehabilitation and ongoing support.

Which skills do you think are the most valuable for a case manager to have?

Broad assessment skills – to be able to consider everything about the person, such as their physical, mental, cognitive, emotional, social and environmental needs.

Sometimes we see someone who is newly disabled but other times, we start working with them part way through their rehabilitation process and its necessary to accurately assess where they are 'at', and then to be able to plan for their needs going forwards

Communication skills are absolutely essential and using different modes. A case manager may be required to speak to the legal team or discuss practical matters with distressed family members, for example.

Practical – it's so important to just practically and proactively get on with the job to get help/support in place, often within a strict time scale.

Self-confidence and composure are needed as often times there are difficult situations or complex matters to manage.

As Clinical Manager at Keystone, what have been the biggest challenges in the past year? What have been the aspects you've most enjoyed?

The challenge has been to create, with a small team, a fully functioning and organised company from scratch that is operating within an increasingly regulated sector. Having a good knowledge base has been the firm foundation from which to grow.

The most enjoyable part of my role in the last 12 months has been working with new case managers that have come on board with the company.

What will you be focusing on in the next 12 months?

My focus will be on further developing the support and clinical supervision that KCM provides to its team of experienced case managers. This is specifically aimed at encouraging and enabling them to easily register with the Institute of Registered Case Managers (IRCM,) once it has been launched later this year, and will be an essential requirement.

What do you do in your own time to relax?

Its very important to me to get out and about in my motorhome and I enjoy travelling to new places both in the UK and abroad.