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Tamra – it's important to get the balance right

Tamra Griffiths, a process planner at Fife Ethylene Plant, has had to work harder than most at looking after her mental health in recent months.

Even though she's busy helping to plan future projects at the Mossmorran plant, Tamra (38) always ensures that she makes time to spend with her husband Paul and their two teenage sons among her busy work schedule.

And balancing the needs of a busy family and work is something Tamra, who lives with her family in Kirkcaldy, has always striven to achieve, even though it has often been a bit of a juggling act.

"Luckily we've had great support from both our families which has helped me to achieve my dream job," she explained.

Tamra came to work as a process technician with ExxonMobil at FEP five years ago after previously having worked in administration roles for around 15 years.

"I had my family when I was quite young, and admin was something that I just sort of fell into as it suited my life then.

"Then when I moved into my 30s and my children got a bit older I really felt like I wanted a challenge.

"I was working as an operator at Diageo while doing a college course in fabrication, welding and inspection. I had always been interested in the inspection and safety side of the industry and I wanted to do something more hands-on.

"I applied for a position in inspection, but I was lucky enough to be offered a post as a process technician at FEP because of the experience I had at Diageo.

"It has been the best thing I have ever done and I wish I had done it sooner.

"I trained and gained experience and became a process planner over two years ago. My job involves planning how to safely shut down, clean and isolate equipment allowing the maintenance and mechanical team to safely work on anything from pumps and turbines to drums and towers.

"It can be stressful at times, so I think it's important to get the balance right for your own mental health and wellbeing. When I finish a busy shift I like to go for a jog to clear my head and go home feeling calmer.

"Through my work I've had the chance to go to America and France, which was great and made me feel a really valued member of the ExxonMobil team worldwide.

"Paul was quite ill recently and my bosses were great, giving me time to look after him and making sure I was coping okay.

"At the beginning of this pandemic it was a bit of a novelty working from home and trying to find out what worked best for me and the family with a view to our physical and mental needs.

"Taking into account I need to cover my workload, make sure my sons are doing the study required to keep them up to date and helping my husband get to stronger after his illness, it was quite tricky.

"We've managed it with good days and bad, which I'm sure everyone has. My work has been very accommodating allowing me to bring equipment home to make my job easier. We are also encouraged to take breaks to help ease the mind when things get a little tough.

"Another great addition has been the mindfulness sessions organised by the company which I have been taking part in via Skype."

