Shanika Ranasinghe

Studies: Music (PhD Student)
Role: SU’s 2019-20 PGR Collective Convenor for the School of Performing & Digital Arts

Pre-Lockdown Life: ‘My main aspiration was to work in the mental health sector. But, I began looking at careers in arts administration instead.’

During Lockdown: ‘I was inspired to get more involved with volunteering again, by running several online workshops for Year 12 prospective Oxbridge applicants through charity OxFizz. I had thought of maybe giving it up; yet the pandemic reminded me how much I get out of volunteering and how good it is for my mental health.’

Reflections: ‘I will remember most from this the resilience everyone has shown. It has been inspiring to see how people have risen to the various challenges posed by the lockdown.’
Jobs & Volunteering Prior to Lockdown

‘Outside of RHUL, I’m on a zero hours contract with the youth mental health charity, Young Minds, alongside volunteering positions with the charities OxFizz and Student Minds.’

Maintaining my wellbeing

‘Good mental health is of course something that can be difficult for many people to keep during lockdown. Many friends were concerned that I – as someone with a pre-existing mental health diagnosis – might relapse into some sort of mental health episode, or even a mental health crisis. Remarkably, I have managed lockdown fairly well. Maintaining my mental health by keeping in frequent contact with my PhD supervisors, video-calling friends regularly, going outside for short mindful walks with my mum and having short afternoon naps (if necessary).’

Advice for others

‘Lockdown came out of the blue and my entire surroundings and freedom changed to something completely unexperienced by me before. Yet the positive of this is that it has only highlighted the importance of doing degrees, jobs and volunteering you love – not just for me, but for everyone. We never know what will happen or where we will be tomorrow, so we all need to make sure the life we are living is as close to the one we want to be living long-term.’