

NHS Grampian Spiritual Care Committee

Report on the work of Healthcare Chaplains in NHS Grampian February 2011

Nursing is an art: and if it is to be made an art, it requires an exclusive devotion as hard a preparation, as any painter's or sculptor's work; for what is the having to do with dead canvas or dead marble, compared with having to do with the living body, the temple of God's spirit? It is one of the Fine Arts: I had almost said, the finest of Fine Arts

Florence Nightingale

This year I used these words from Florence Nightingale in opening the AGM of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and Associated Hospitals Nurses' League. As I re-read the piece I realised that chaplaincy too, is an art. There is a growing movement to see the work of chaplains as a science: recording, measuring outcomes. But much of the work of chaplains is less predictable, living in the moment, reacting to opportunities and challenges as they arise, creating something new and spiritually beautiful out of the raw materials of fear, hope, doubt, faith, hope and love. Every day for a healthcare chaplain is a synthesis of art and science.

In this report I will describe just some of the activity of the NHS Grampian Chaplaincy team in what has been a year of major change. Many things have changed and new ventures tried but what does remain constant is the offering of care and support to the patients, relatives and staff who come into contact with the chaplains on a daily basis.

Times of Change

The chaplaincy team has been going through a period of change this past year. We carried out a review of where chaplains are based in the Aberdeen hospitals and have now settled on what we believe is a more efficient and effective team configuration. The main changes have been: Rev Mark Rodgers moving to work full time on the Foresterhill site; Rev Jim Simpson moving to work full time at Royal Cornhill Hospital; Rev Muriel Knox assuming lead role at Woodend Hospital. Donald Meston, while spending most of his time at Royal Cornhill Hospital, has now assumed additional responsibility for the Links Unit at the City Hospital.

This year also saw the transfer from Church of Scotland to employment by NHS Grampian of the chaplains serving the community hospitals, the Oaks Unit in Elgin and Dr Gray's hospital. This involved a great deal of administrative work as conversations were held with the existing chaplains, a review of time allocation and their formal appointment to NHS posts. A study day was held in June which was part of the induction process. Our new chaplains are now settling down to their new way of working and coping well with the different NHS administration.

Another major challenge to all members of chaplaincy staff has been learning how to use the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) which is a national process of review and development. As we move towards the completion of our first year of KSF in March some of us are struggling as we get used to this very new way of working. It is a particular challenge to the part-time chaplains who serve in Aberdeenshire and Moray, many of whom work only a few hours a week. Fred

Coutts (head of Spiritual Care) has been devoting a great deal of time recently to supporting them in this unfamiliar but essential process.

The other major change which the department is facing, along with all of NHS Grampian is the process called *Safe Affordable Workforce*. All senior managers have had to present plans for their areas of work in "Challenge Meetings". The proposals accepted for the chaplaincy department are the removal of the post of Head of Spiritual Care when Fred Coutts retires at Christmas 2011, to be replaced by a half time post at a lower grade; a reduction in secretarial hours to take effect when there is a vacancy; and a small reduction in the hours allocated to part time hospital chaplains outwith Aberdeen city as vacancies occur. Work is now going on to plan how best the service can be managed from January 2012.

Measuring the Work

There is increasing pressure for chaplains to measure the effectiveness of their work in an NHS which stresses evidence based care. As a move in this direction, a national snapshot audit of chaplaincy activity was taken in November 2009 and eventually reported on in 2010. The range and depth of the work carried out throughout Scotland has been seen as very impressive and influential. Our Board area also submitted exemplar of activity mapped to the quality indicators of the national Quality Strategy, placing chaplaincy and spiritual care firmly in the mainstream of NHS thinking and activity.

Rev Alison Hutchison (Chaplain at ARI, Glen o' Dee and Aboyne Hospitals) carried out with others an audit of the use of bereavement literature for relatives. The report has led to a revision of the existing NHS Grampian booklet and she has taken her experience into the national arena through a small working group of the NHSScotland Bereavement Framework process.

Ewan Kelly, the Chaplaincy Programme Director at NHS Education Scotland has been urging chaplains to participate more in research and Jim Simpson has agreed to be the NHS Grampian spiritual care research champion.

Bereavement Support

Rev James Falconer who is Chaplain in combined Child Health reports that the Grampian Child Bereavement Network of which he is a part has recently been able to appoint a co-ordinator thanks to the award which they have received from the National Lottery. This network is a joint venture of professionals from health visiting, social work, educational psychology and Aberdeen Mental Health Association.

The annual service for thanksgiving and remembrance for those who have died in hospital and at Roxburghe House is now well established. The format of the service is constantly evolving and this year's service organised by Rev Sylvia Spencer (Chaplain at Roxburghe House and the Anchor Unit) at Queen's Cross Church was well attended and appreciated.

James Falconer led a Celebration of Remembrance at Drum Castle in March. As well as remembering those who have died from Cystic Fibrosis since the establishment of the CF team in 1993 a small area of woodland has now become a place of reflection for the bereaved family. The project was a partnership between the CF Team and the Nation Trust for Scotland.

A variety of memorial services for different groups have been led by chaplains through the year. To mention but two: Early Pregnancy Loss Services are now well established in Elgin (in the Hospital Chapel and at Elgin Cemetery). The 23rd and last memorial service for stillborn babies was held at Trinity Cemetery in Aberdeen in

June. Stillborn babies and those who die close to birth have been buried at Trinity through the years. The space there is now full and the babies are now buried in a special area at Hazlehead Cemetery. Discussions are on-going with the local SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society) Group about future plans for such memorial services.

James Falconer continues to work with a small group to try to enhance the facilities for relatives who visit the Foresterhill Mortuary to spend time with loved ones who have recently died in hospital.

In an attempt to try to quantify the number of funerals which chaplains are asked to conduct a survey was carried out for six months at the end of 2010. The number of adult funerals which the Aberdeen chaplains conducted over the six month period was 43.

Spiritual Care Matters

An Introductory Resource for all NHS Staff entitled Spiritual Care Matters was published by NHS Education for Scotland (NES) in 2009. The NHS Grampian Chaplaincy team was successful in obtaining a grant to promote this excellent material from NES to hospital staff. Alison Hutchison took lead role in this project, producing promotional material, using the colourful cartoons published in the book. She gave a very well received presentation on how Grampian had carried out their project, at a national conference in Perth in the spring of 2010, along with the other groups who had been awarded grants. As well as being distributed round all hospitals in Grampian, the posters and other material which she produced have now been made available to other Board areas in Scotland.

Visitors

There have been a number of visitors to the chaplaincy department this year. A group from churches in Blantyre in Malawi, twinned with the Presbytery of Aberdeen spent some time with the chaplains, including a time of worship where they shared their lively singing. In September the Princess Royal spent some time in the Chapel as part of a visit to the VSA Carers Point in the ARI Concourse. She spoke informally to a small number of representatives of VSA and carers. The chaplains were delighted to enable this meeting to take place in the chapel.

While no visitors were actually seen, we anticipate that some family members whose relatives died on the Brent Spar Accident in July 1990 may have visited the small memorial which can be seen on the wall of the Quiet room in the ARI Chapel. Many relatives attended the Memorial Service organised by the Oil and Gas Industry Chaplain in the Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting to mark the 20th anniversary of the accident.

Over the year a number of professional colleagues from the Grampian Chaplaincy team and further afield have also visited the department, one to spend some extended time with the Aberdeen team during a sabbatical from his church duties.

Volunteers

The Aberdeen chaplains make great use of volunteers, both as Sunday Service escorts and as ward visitors. Mark Rodgers takes lead role in selecting, training and supporting the volunteers. We were delighted to hear that NHS Grampian has been granted the Investing in Volunteers award and we are grateful to the chaplaincy volunteers and staff who were interviewed in the process that led to the award. We

anticipate that a training course for new volunteer ward visitors will take place in 2011.

Worship

The bad weather in the period leading up to Christmas put some of the planned Christmas services into jeopardy. However many of the services planned did take place, albeit with reduced numbers. Christmas sees many special services and carol singing in many hospitals, but worship is provided in a variety of settings throughout the year. For the first time ever the Dr Gray's Hospital Carol Service in 2010 was held in the Hospital Chapel itself. Since the opening of the Dr Gray's Hospital Chapel in September 2009, Andy Willis, one of the Elgin Chaplains reports that a total of 570 patients have attended formal services. The chapel is now extremely well used, formally and informally and has quickly become a focal point of contact for chaplains, staff and patients and a sanctuary of tranquillity amidst the hustle and bustle of the hospital.

Pam Adam (Assistant Chaplain at Royal Cornhill Hospital) has planned and led a variety of services for people with dementia, including a harvest themed service and communion. In the period before Christmas there was a service for people living with depression for whom the festive season can be particularly hard.

There continues to be problems at Royal Cornhill Hospital when on occasions more people want to come to Sunday Worship than can easily be fitting into the small Chapel. The situation is being monitored and alternative plans may have to be put into place.

Ward changes at Woodend Hospital have brought about major changes in the services there. What had once been a very busy service in the Day Hospital now has reduced to quite small number and the service has relocated to a day room in the main hospital building, while the services in what was once called Westview have grown in numbers with the new influx of rehabilitation patients there.

Singing for the Brain

The Singing for the Brain group is going from strength to strength. Muriel Knox (Chaplain at Woodend) takes a leading role in the group. She can be found gathering ideas from her colleagues for suitable songs on her next theme, so that the patients and families can have a great time singing songs in a friendly and stimulating environment. David Cameron, the Chairman of the NHS Grampian Board and the Chair of the Spiritual Care Committee, accompanied Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Nicola Sturgeon on a visit to the group during the annual Review meeting for the health Board. They both found themselves joining in the singing and David was heard to remark "This is wellbeing in action!"

Information

As has been reported for some time now, there continues to be a problem in gathering information for onward transmission to churches and faith groups about patients who are in hospital. Attempts to increase the flow of information through using a card system which patients were asked to complete has not really generated the sort of consented information which was hoped for, and visiting ministers, priests and pastors continue to remark how little information is now provided for them by the Chaplains' Department. As a further experiment to see if the situation can be improved a beautifully designed leaflet describing what the chaplains can provide and giving information about services of worship has been produced. We are

currently at the start of a pilot project led by Mark Rodgers, using this new leaflet in specially selected wards in ARI to see if we can notice any effect. If the pilot is a success the leaflets may be rolled out to other areas.

The Health Board is currently preparing to launch a new Patient Information System in February 2011, to replace the aging computer system which has been in place for many years. It is not yet clear what affect this new system will have on the information provided to Chaplains and onwards to churches and faith groups.

Staffing

This year has seen the transfer of all the former sessional chaplains to NHS Grampian employment. At this time an increase allocation of hours was given to the Dr Gray's Hospital team, thus ensuring that there is a chaplain available in the hospital on each day of the week except Saturday. Rev Thomas Bryson has now joined the Dr Gray's team as a replacement for Rev George Rollo who recently retired after 25 years of ministry in Elgin and in chaplaincy at Dr Gray's Hospital. Rev Vincent Perricone has recently been appointed as Scottish Episcopal Church Chaplain in Aberdeen, taking over the work previous done by Sylvia Spencer. Sylvia continues to work now full time as Chaplain at the Anchor Unit and Roxburghe House.

Congratulations to mark Rodgers who has now successfully completed the Post-Graduate Certificate in healthcare Chaplaincy at Glasgow Univeristy. Mark was one of the first cohort of students to study for the certificate which is anticipated to be the main route for training of chaplains in Scotland.

The Art of the Chaplain

The art of the chaplain is to blend together so many different elements into a caring whole. Chaplains are available to all, from any faith background or from none. They are available at any time, day or night, trying to be responsive to the needs of patients, relatives and staff whenever there is a perceived need. They try to be open to people who may have values and views very different to their own and help them to use spiritual resources to gain strength and to come to terms with the challenges which illness can bring. Yes, there is a science here too, as chaplains try to reflect in a structured way about how best to use their skills, showing the benefit of their interventions for patients in ways which the scientific healthcare community might understand. But at the heart, is an art. To borrow the words of Florence Nightingale: "It is one of the Fine Arts: I had almost said, the finest of Fine Arts."

The chaplaincy team in Grampian is in good heart, rising to the many challenges they encounter as they practice their art of promoting spiritual welfare, Grampian wide.

Fred Coutts

Head of Spiritual Care

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