

## Spiritual Care Committee

February 2019

### **NHS Grampian Spiritual Care Committee**

#### **“TREES THAT BEND IN THE WIND”**

#### **Report on the work of Healthcare Chaplains in NHS Grampian 2018**

In my 2016 Report to the Spiritual Care Committee, I made reference to the fact that the Chaplaincy department are the custodians of a tree, a Chinese Dogwood tree to be precise, by virtue of the Therapeutic Roof Garden attached to the Sandpiper Sanctuary.

On 8 February 2017, Scottish Care launched its report relating to the role of social care staff in palliative and end of life care : **‘Trees that bend in the wind: Exploring the experiences of front line support workers delivering palliative and end of life care’** . It is a 47 page report which provides a forum where the views, experiences and values of social care staff in palliative and end of life support are explored in detail. Its aim is to ensure that everyone in Scotland is able to achieve a truly person-centred end of life experience by being supported by staff who are properly resourced and supported. In the report there is a reflection on the way in which the ‘tree that bends’ (an image from one of the workers to describe their role) was in danger of breaking unless front line care staff are adequately supported.

From that report I would like to borrow some themes and metaphors as a way of capturing the activity of the Chaplaincy department in 2018.

#### **Root and branch**

2018 saw the culmination of a process of re-shaping the structure of the department. This is a process that has been evolving since 2012, when I became Co-ordinating Chaplain. I inherited a fairly irregular team structure that was top-heavy with band 7’s, with a significant number of band 5’s and relatively few band 6’s, which is probably the banding that should predominate in any Chaplaincy team. Over the course of the past 6 years, we have significantly reduced the number of band 7’s and the number of band 5’s and as a consequence of that have increased the number of band 6 posts .Our remaining band 7 posts are now Sector Leads, one for Acute and one for Mental Health .

I also inherited a very significant number of Chaplains in the Community sector, i.e. all the Chaplains outside Aberdeen City .There were in effect 19 posts covered by 17 Chaplains .This has now been reduced to one substantial, nearly full time post in Moray and 10 other posts covered by 5 Chaplains, i.e. 6 Chaplains doing what previously 17 Chaplains did.

This has been achieved by

- A. Merging a number of part-time posts to create a nearly full time post.
- B. As Vacancies have arisen offering them to existing Chaplains already in post in a near- by Hospital, so that 5 Chaplains now cover 10 small Community Hospitals.
- C. Covering two Community Hospitals, Inverurie and Stonehaven, with a Chaplain based in Aberdeen.

Another parallel development in terms of the structure of the team has been the replacing of three part-time secretaries with one full time secretary/administrator. 2018 is the first full year that this has been operational and has worked smoothly and efficiently for the functioning of the department .

All of this has been achieved incrementally in recent years, but there is a sense that this root and branch change has come to fruition as a template for the department in 2018. I am reproducing an Organogram of the department structure that perhaps captures this better than I can with words.

I should record in this context that we welcomed a new member to the team in the person of Carole Clarke in 2018. Carole joined us in May, with a background in music therapy. She has re-located from Edinburgh and will be working in the Acute sector, based in the Green Zone in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. We wish her well and a long and happy time in the department.

### **Top of the Tree**

In contrast to welcoming Carole at the beginning of her Chaplaincy career, at the end of September we said goodbye to James Falconer as he retired and ended his Chaplaincy career of 30 years . It is James that we have to thank for the tree I mentioned at the beginning of this report, as will become apparent presently. His Chaplaincy career began in Kingseat Psychiatric Hospital, until he moved to work on the Foresterhill site on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1991. As we said good bye to James publicly I mentioned a number of legacies that James has bequeathed to us. The most obvious and striking of those is the Therapeutic Roof Garden. James was the vision that inspired the creation of the Roof Garden. The vision took shape 2011/2012. Then there were the fund-raising years of 2013-2016, during which the incredible amount of £667,000 was raised. This culminated in the installation of the garden which took place in the Autumn of 2015. We all have a wonderful memory of the

Official Opening of the Roof Garden by Her Majesty the Queen in 2017. This is perhaps the most obvious legacy from James, but there are many others, including:

The Annual Candle service that began on the first Sunday in December in 1993 and has grown and has continued every year since .

His contribution to Wider Chaplaincy Community, James was the first president of the Scottish Association of Healthcare Chaplains and he pioneered in 2011 the delivery of Community Chaplaincy Listening in NHS Grampian in Danestone, Brimmond and Cove practices .

The vast amount of comfort, solace and support James has given in RACH, ITU, Neonatal, Rubislaw and many wards and situations. This has been to patients, relatives and staff. There is a huge legacy of comfort and consolation in a times of great distress or sadness, journeying with the dying , support of the bereaved, funerals of babies, children and adults conducted, services taken in the Chapel in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary on a Sunday.

I would like to place on record our gratitude to James as he finishes at the top of the tree, so to speak, for sustaining his of commitment and energy to the Chaplaincy department right to the end.

### **A tree is known by its fruit**

2018 was a significant year for NHS, marking as it did the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the NHS . On the actual day of the anniversary, 5<sup>th</sup> July, we hosted a celebration event in the Chapel in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary . The centre piece of the celebration was a lighting of Seven Candles, one for each decade of the NHS.

As each candle was lit, we focused on the different “branches” of care that the NHS has provide during its 70 years, from the cradle to the grave, namely Maternity, Paediatrics, Acute , Emergency, Mental Health, Community and Palliative care. These different branches mirror William Shakespeare’s Seven Ages of Man speech from As you Like It.

All the world ’s a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His Acts being seven ages.

As each candle was lit, there was a moment of silence, for prayer in an individual’s particular faith tradition, for reflection or for whatever way it was appropriate for the silence to be used . Each time of silence ended with the Clic Sargant Hospital Choir singing Ubi et amor caritas, which translates as Where Charity and Love are. The candles were lit by someone who has worked or works at present in these different

branches of care, the short narrative for each candle was read by a different member of the Chaplaincy team .

A further aspect to the 70 Anniversary was “the big 70” that was unveiled at the celebration, on which we invited those present to sign their name by way of showing their appreciation of the NHS. The big 70 then went on tour over many different sites in NHS Grampian for the rest of 2018.

We were very happy to celebrate all the “fruits” delivered by the NHS over the past 70 years. A related aspect to this tree being known by its fruit is the on-going educational / training work that we do as a department, which increases the visibility of the department.

One particular innovation in this regard during 2018 was the creation of an on line learning resource for use with 2<sup>nd</sup> year Nursing Students in Robert Gordon University as part of their Person Centred Care module. Myself, Katrina Blackwood and Gillian Douglas were the presenters for this on line resource and we hope it will have a significant and enduring impact on nurses during their degree course.

Another innovation in 2018 was in connection with the training session on Spiritual Care with 2<sup>nd</sup> year Medical Students at Aberdeen University that we have been part of for a number of years. For the first time in 2018 this session now includes interactive tutorials, facilitated jointly by the Chaplaincy department, the Medical school and the Divinity Faculty in Aberdeen University. We hope that the results of these seeds planted will be nursing and medical staff in the future who are more attune to the spiritual needs of those they care for. 2018 was also a year of innovation for the training in Spiritual Care for Healthcare Support Workers delivered by Sue Rayner and Carole Clarke. This is very positively received and involves a significant degree of interaction with those who participate.

### **Up a Tree**

The expression up a tree suggests being in a difficult situation, without an obvious way of escape. For many staff in NHS Grampian 2018 has been a stressful year, when they may well have felt exactly like this. This has been especially the case in the Mental Health sector in Royal Cornhill Hospital. Staffing shortages continue and two wards and one day hospital have temporarily closed. Chaplaincy staff have provided regular support to staff across the hospital with fortnightly or monthly Values Based Reflective Practice (VBRP) sessions now taking place in 5 wards with a further two at the planning stage. In one ward in particular, Strathbeg Ward, which has male patients with challenging dementia, we have been involved in offering tailored VBRP. A resilience questionnaire was issued to staff, weak areas or issues in need of support were identified and VBRP sessions arranged to address these. Strathbeg Ward has been part of a pilot group of specialist dementia units across Scotland which have been working to improve specialist dementia care. One of the

focus areas has been staff resilience and it is this which has been addressed using the tools of VBRP.

The expression “up a tree” also brings to mind Exercise Taurus, which took place on 17th May 2018. This was to test NHS Grampians’ response to a Major Incident event happening. In Chaplaincy we had a table top exercise in the morning of the exercise, responding to “feeds” concerning various scenarios unfolding. In the afternoon we adjourned to a local church, which has been identified as a base should a Mass Casualty situation arise and the Foresterhill site is in lock-down. This was a very useful day in terms of engendering confidence in the team in this area, although we sincerely hope never to have to use our skills and learning in these particular circumstances

Another dimension under this heading was our study morning on Spiritual Care and Organ Donation on 7th November 2018. The speakers included Rev Dr Duncan McLaren (Healthcare Chaplain) and Rev Ken Russell (Prison Chaplain, HMP Perth) - with input from a Special Nurse for Organ Donation and someone with lived experience of organ donation. There was a mixture of Chaplains, Chaplaincy Volunteers and other local faith/ belief groups represented. It was a very helpful day in preparing us for how we can support those in very difficult situation

### **Acorns and Blossoms.**

I hope our Volunteers forgive me for describing them under this heading ! The Organogram at the end of this report will indicate the number and variety of Volunteers we have, Ward Visitors, Sunday Escorts, Roof Garden Volunteers and Community Chaplaincy Listening (CCL) Volunteers. We are grateful for all that they do to enhance, complement and support our department. During 2018, we trained a significant number of CCL Volunteers, 8 in total. This has allowed us to fill some vacancies in GP practices we already have a presence in and deploy some Volunteers in new practices . For the first time we have a CCL Volunteer in an Aberdeenshire Practice, this means that although we are still predominantly in Aberdeen City, we have a CCL presence in Moray and Aberdeenshire as well.

### **Out on a limb**

I thought I would put a final section in this report under this heading. During 2018 we began the process of revising the NHS Grampian’s Spiritual Care Policy, for the period 2018-2022. At the time of writing, this new Policy is not yet been formally adopted . The Policy has gone through a number of iterations down through the years, although one of the constants has been this Mission statement:

**NHS Grampian is committed to providing holistic healthcare which is responsive to the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs of its patients. Appropriate spiritual, pastoral and religious care will be offered to**

patients, their relatives and carers and to staff. This care is available to people with or without specified religious beliefs.

One of the desires of the current revision of the policy is to ensure that as a department we are not out on a limb and isolated from everything else that occurs in NHS Grampian. We are sure that is not the case. One of the particular ways of ensuring that we are not out on a limb is to write in a new section to the policy called: Strategic Context . We want the Spiritual Care Policy to resonate both with strategic initiatives locally in NHS Grampian and also strategic initiatives nationally in Chaplaincy/Spiritual Care in Scotland.

**Money doesn't grow on trees**

I realise that we live in a day when resources and finance in healthcare are constantly under scrutiny. We are very grateful as a department for the resources made available to us by NHS Grampian. We hope that the above flavour of our activity shows that the use of NHS Grampian money to fund the Chaplaincy department is a prudent wise use of resources, as we support patients, relatives, staff and indeed the organisation to ensure that although they bend in the wind, they do not break.

Mark Rodgers

Lead Chaplain and Head of Spiritual Care NHS Grampian

5<sup>th</sup> February 2019

**NHS GRAMPIAN CHAPLAINCY DEPARTMENT 2018**

