

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Wednesday 10th June 2020

The Revd Sarah Crane, Baptist Minister and Lead Chaplain at Milton Keynes University Hospital reflects on the past few months



If I'm honest the last two and a half months have been a bit of a blur. In early March we had the second Covid-19 death in the country and from there things have changed at a rapid pace day by day. Our hospital has now cared for over 100 people who have died from Covid-19 and we know the journey isn't over.

Firstly, the hospital suspended volunteers visiting on the wards. Then national guidance was given to suggest that Chaplains could respond to requests for visits but not visit from bed to bed speaking to patients and their visitors. I am currently our only fulltime Chaplain and have still been able to work in the hospital every day, but we have been creative in enabling the wider team of Chaplains, who are shielding, to offer support via phone and video calls. I have also had the kind support from a local colleague, the Revd Ruth Gookey, who has been able to join the staff bank and support both patients and staff.

Our staff have been incredible, however, the hero rhetoric is largely unhelpful. These professionals have had to adapt and respond to a situation which has changed rapidly. They have been frightened, exhausted, generous and giving. They are highly skilled people who have done their best amidst the same anxiety everyone else is facing. We have kitted out a new Staff Hub and have seen a bit of an increase in staff seeking support from Chaplaincy as well as P2P, our Staff Listening Service. The same worry and anxiety exists here too and we have worked hard as a hospital to provide support and information about wider support for those who are struggling.

Although Covid-19 cases are reducing, we know that is it far from over. Hospitals will have to develop new ways of working to deliver planned and emergency care alongside care for those with Covid-19.

Please do pray for our teams; for wisdom for those responsible for developing plans to reopen services; for rest for those who are tired and spent; for vision to see what changes we need to keep from our rapid shapeshifting; for peace for those who are grieving; and for the love and kindness of God to fill our hospital each day.