



## Chaplaincies' Forum Newsletter : Autumn 2017

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### Welcome to the fifth edition

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The Chaplaincies' Forum is responsible for ensuring that those from the Church of Scotland who work in chaplaincies are included within the support and care of the Ministries Council. Chaplains work beyond the immediate confines of the Church but the Forum strives to ensure that they feel they continue to belong within the community of the Church.

During 2017-18 we will be organising the undernoted conferences and retreat:

Chaplains' Day Conference 8 November 2017, Carronvale House, Larbert

University Chaplains' Conference March 2018 To be confirmed

Conference for Prison Chaplains 17 April 2018, the Bield, Perthshire

Chaplains' Retreat 17 May 2018, the Bield Perthshire

Chaplains attending these events in previous years have appreciated the programmes provided and have offered constructive feedback for the contents of future occasions.

In this issue we include a report of the Forum's recent visit to the team of workplace chaplains at the Braelhead Shopping Centre in Glasgow; a significant milestone concerning the registration of chaplaincy in the NHS and a report from John McMahon, Head of Spiritual and Pastoral Care Chaplain at Broadmoor Hospital in Berkshire. We would be delighted to receive articles and feedback from all chaplains, both full-time and part-time, for publication in future editions of the newsletter.

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## Work Place Chaplaincy at *intu* Braehead

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Five members of the Forum - James White, Anne Stewart, Rosie Addis, David Watson and John Thomson – were warmly welcomed to Braehead at the Management Suite on 6 September 2017 by Hazel Brooks, Chaplain to the Centre.

We met first of all with Jack Quinn and Cate Adams who have responsibility for the organisation of Work Place Chaplaincy in the West of Scotland. They gave us an overview of the various areas covered by Work Place Chaplains and of the work they do. Hazel and Sharon then gave us an insight into the work they covered at Braehead.

Hazel then invited us to accompany her on a tour of the centre which included those areas behind the scenes to which shoppers do not get access. As we went round the centre it was very apparent that Hazel was a *weel kent* face as she engaged with so many people as they went about their work - and always with a smile and a cheery word. Our group was also able to speak with the staff who were happy to give us a few minutes of their time for a conversation. Hazel's approach to chaplaincy is to make herself known in a friendly but unobtrusive style as she seeks to build up meaningful relationships with those she encounters. We got the sense that she was highly trusted and that staff would be open to sharing their concerns and worries with her.

We then returned to the Management Suite for lunch where we met with some of the staff who serve in the Centre's Offices. They too were happy to engage with us and share aspects of their work. For them a typical day was very busy and often stressful working in a demanding and competitive environment. They all spoke very highly of the support they received from the Work Place Chaplains.

The Forum was provided with a room to hold our business meeting in very comfortable surroundings. We

are grateful to the Centre Management for the hospitality and facilities that they provided during our visit. We left with a warm glow of having experienced a glimpse of the enthusiastic and caring service provided by Hazel and Sharon. The Centre is extremely well served by these two chaplains who are to be commended in the highest terms for all that they do.

## Blessed to be at Broadmoor

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How did a Church of Scotland minister end up working as a chaplain in Broadmoor Hospital? The same reason a Church of Scotland minister ends up anywhere! A Call was heard and responded to with no one being any more surprised than John himself.



John McMahon has been working in NHS healthcare chaplaincy for almost 15 years, first as Lead Chaplain with NHS Lothian at both St John's Hospital, Livingston and the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and Associated Services in Edinburgh. He moved south to work with the West London Mental Health Trust just over 5 years ago, where he is now Head of Spiritual and Pastoral Care in one of the country's largest and most specialised mental health organisations. John's main clinical base and practice is in Broadmoor Hospital but he also has a Trust-wide remit and works in low and medium secure forensic services, as well as local psychiatric services in three of West London's boroughs (Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Hounslow). He manages a team of chaplains and, as well as having employed 'generic',

Muslim and Roman Catholic staff on the team, the Trust also regularly facilitates religious visits from Buddhist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jewish, Hindu, Pagan, Quaker and Sikh traditions (and others as required).

Broadmoor Hospital is one of only four high secure hospitals in the UK, which specialises in providing assessment, treatment and care in conditions of high security for men from London and the south of England. It is internationally recognised, both for its work with patients and for its extensive research activities. The hospital treats people with mental illness and personality disorders who represent a high degree of risk to themselves or to others. Currently, Broadmoor Hospital looks after around 210 patients, with the average length of stay being approximately five years, although many patients' stay is considerably shorter. Patients are transferred to conditions of lower security once the risks that they have posed are diminished or, indeed, some may be transferred back to prison.

John has always been interested in 'the other', even from his early years in school when he studied what then felt like "exotic" world religions as part of his Scottish Highers. His first degree at university was in Religious Studies (looking at, for example, the sociology and phenomenology of religion as well as

comparative studies of different world and philosophical traditions with an emphasis on valuing difference and diversity), and so he relishes the multi-faith environment in which he now works. It's not unknown for him to attend the Muslim Jum'ah prayer on a Friday afternoon, having escorted the Rabbi to visit a patient on a Friday morning or, indeed, to co-ordinate a multi-faith celebration when Broadmoor celebrated its 150th anniversary (the hospital opened in 1863, the same year as the London Underground). Intellectually, John has always enjoyed the interface between church and society, valuing people for who they really are and enabling others, including himself, to be the best that we can be (in spite of religion!). He would describe his theology as more apologetic than dogmatic, keen to keep an openness of mind and spirit as well as holding on to one's own authenticity. When studying for his honours papers in Systematic Theology in his second degree (when training for the ministry), John had no idea back then that he would draw so easily on the psychologist and philosopher William James' seminal work *Varieties of Religious Experience* or, indeed, Bishop Berkeley's epistemology as backdrops to genuine psychiatric questions around perception and reality. Nor did he ever think that his university reading of Albert Camus' *The Outsider* would be so relevant to later professional work. The world(s) of beliefs and values is a fascinating arena but in a forensic context John places just as much emphasis on the behaviours associated with those beliefs and values. It can be a risky business, especially if beliefs are delusional and destructive. And who decides?

As well as one-to-one person-centred work, seeing individuals on a needs-led basis, John always works collaboratively with the clinical teams. In particular, he helps to co-facilitate a psychological therapy group every Monday afternoon, with the Head of Psychology and a Clinical Nurse Specialist, which looks at 'Challenging Stigma and Promoting Recovery'. Every Thursday afternoon, with the Responsible Clinician (Consultant Psychiatrist) and a Psychological Well-Being Facilitator, John co-facilitates a ward-based group which looks at existential and philosophical issues called 'The Why? Group'. Much work is co-produced and co-delivered as mental health services embrace the Recovery model which seeks to build resilience through hope, control, opportunity and personal responsibility. However, as you would expect in a high secure hospital, relational security and professional boundaries are key components in helping to maintain safe and effective care and chaplains are no different to other healthcare staff in terms of mandatory training (such as PMVA, prevention management of violence and aggression, or security intelligence). Needless to say, all work in the hospital is closely monitored and supported through intensive and regular sessions of clinical supervision and reflective practice (both profession-specific as well as multi-disciplinary). John enjoys these opportunities to reflect on the work and interventions offered as, just like the patients or service users themselves, he says that "we are all a work in progress".

Curiously, even the building is a work in progress! A brand new £242 million hospital will open in Spring 2018, and John and his team have been heavily involved in helping to design the new purpose-built multi-faith sanctuary which will help to enhance the spiritual and pastoral care offered and experienced. He says that he feels blessed to be at Broadmoor and he hopes that the work in which he is involved and shares with others will be a blessing to those who need it.



*The new Broadmoor Hospital multi-faith sanctuary*

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The Revd John McMahon is Head of Spiritual and Pastoral Care at West London Mental Health Trust, where his main base and clinical practice is at Broadmoor Hospital, Crowthorne, Berkshire. Although an experienced forensic psychiatric chaplain, John is also a Church of Scotland minister who previously served as a parish minister in Edinburgh. He is also currently Chaplain to the Moderator of the General Assembly.

## **Accreditation of Healthcare Chaplains**

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### **Registration**

As of the 22nd August 2017 the UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy's (UKBHC) register has been accredited by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) under its Accredited Registers program.

The UKBHC maintains a voluntary professional register that has been accredited by the Professional Standards Authority. The Register demonstrates the accountability of healthcare chaplains to the public, to promote high standards of practice and behaviour, and to support professional regulation. Chaplains registered with the Board will be entitled to refer to themselves as a "Board Registered Chaplain".

### **What will it mean to be registered with UKBHC?**

Board Registered Chaplains have demonstrated:

- evidence that they meet the eligibility criteria for registration;
- compliance with the professional Code of Conduct and requirements for Continuing Professional Development;
- fitness to practice;
- paid the relevant registration fee.

To maintain registration chaplains shall:

- ensure that their UKBHC record is complete, accurate and contemporary;
- maintain their CPD activity;
- comply with the professional Code of Conduct;
- pay the relevant registration fee.



Copies of this e-news edition and previous editions can be found at:

[http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/ministries\\_council/partnership\\_development/chaplaincy](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/ministries_council/partnership_development/chaplaincy)