

## Our nurses and midwives

**Fay Grech-Marguerat**  
**Macmillan Wellbeing Nurse**  
**Milton Keynes University Hospital Cancer Services**



### Why I wanted to become a nurse or midwife

My Mother used to struggle to get me out of my nurses dressing up outfit when I was 3, so that she could wash it! I could often be found looking after my friends using my Doctors kit or delivering baby dolls from under my friend's jumper! My Mother was a chronic asthmatic as a child and she was sent to live on the Isle of Wight at age 8 for 3 years because it was believed that the air on the island was conducive to asthmatics. This was in 1956. She was cared for by Nuns and only saw her parents 6 times in 3 years. This wouldn't happen these days. She felt lonely and isolated and very afraid. Some of the Nuns were not very kind at all. I grew up knowing this happened to my Mum and it made me think more about care of the sick, than perhaps I would have done otherwise. I decided that I wanted to try and make a difference to people with ill health. So I decided to be a Nurse.

### How my career has developed

My last placement as a student nurse was on a medical and surgical oncology unit at St James University Hospital in Leeds (I trained there). I fell in love with cancer care at that point and my first job as a qualified nurse was on this unit as well. I was fortunate enough to learn to give chemotherapy here, which doesn't happen now until you've been qualified for a couple of years. Next, I moved nearer home (Woburn Sands, Bucks) to Northampton General Hospital, as a Gynae-Oncology Nurse, continuing to administer chemotherapy to ladies with Ovarian Cancer. I moved on the Northamptonshire Centre for Oncology and became a Senior Staff Nurse giving chemotherapy to Oncology and Haematology patients in an outpatient department. Here I studied for my Clinical Supervision certificate, my ENB 237 (Oncology Course) and my ENB 998 (Teaching and Assessing Students). I helped to set up a PICC insertion service and regularly taught staff. Then I went on secondment as a Palliative Care Education Facilitator and produced an accredited course for nurses in association with the University of Northampton regarding Palliative care and life limiting illness. From here, I moved back to chemotherapy outpatients and then on to Milton Keynes University Hospital Cancer Services, as a Macmillan Information and Support Nurse. I have been in this role for 13 years now and we are now called Macmillan Wellbeing Nurses.

### On a typical day

A typical day includes providing information and support to people affected by cancer. Not only patients, but their families, friends, the worried well, staff and students. We operate clinics and drop in sessions, support groups, pamper sessions, a choir, HOPE courses and we can provide information in printed, audio and visual



formats, easy reading, braille and in languages other than English. We have two Macmillan Wellbeing Nurses in the team, a Macmillan Physiotherapist, a Macmillan Psychologist, a Macmillan Dietitian and a Macmillan Co-ordinator. We also have a team of volunteers.

### **How I've made a difference as a nurse or midwife?**

I see my role as a privilege. Especially when people affected by cancer talk to me about things they have never shared before. One of the things I find rewarding is seeing the relief in people's faces when they have shared their problems and concerns. Another thing I am proud of is the choir which I started 3 years ago. The choir is called 'Beyond the C' and it is for people who are affected by cancer in Milton Keynes. We meet once a month and my good friend accompanies us on piano. We learn about breathing and music. But mostly we have a lot of fun singing all kinds of music. I have about 45 members and more join each month. It is extremely rewarding to see the joy on people's faces, despite their circumstances. It makes a difference.

### **What would you say to a young person interested in a career in nursing & midwifery?**

Go for it. We need nurses. But only do it if you are prepared to put patient's needs above your own.