

## **Collaborative working within the Hospice ward.**

*Hospice ward staff, social worker, chaplaincy team, Carlisle Carers, 'Wish for a Wedding', GP surgery staff, translator, hairdresser, friend and all who donated gifts for the wedding.*

Working with different nationalities and cultures can be both interesting and rewarding. They can be also be very challenging and in this one case this was mainly due to language barriers.

A young Polish man presented at the Hospice for an end of life admission. He and his partner spoke very limited English. There are no Polish speaking staff at our Hospice.

The medics asked me to source a translator asap so they could admit the man and try to determine his holistic needs. I did this via the GP surgery and the receptionists were amazing. On every occasion thereafter, we had to book the translator via the surgery and the staff were accommodating, friendly and very understanding. They ensured they booked the same translator on every occasion.

The translator that visited was approachable and listened to the context of the conversation we needed her to translate. Although it meant the assessments and treatments were slow and a little laborious at times, we as staff were assured that we were following the client's instructions and meeting his needs.

It would have been great to have the translator 24/7, however we managed by downloading a translator talking app on the I pad and having picture cue cards that the client could point to eg: tablets, tea, food, too hot etc. There was also one friend (Polish)that spoke fairly good English and she translated in between when she visited.

The client's needs relating to my social work role were to look at marrying his partner and ensuring his body/ashes returned to Poland. I referred to Carlisle Carers for support for the partner in applying for a funeral grant and benefits.

Family (2 sisters and a nephew) visited for 3 days from Poland and they were joined by a second nephew who lives in Yorkshire who was able to translate over the weekend.

Following discussions with the family and the client's partner using the independent translator; the client decided to be cremated in the UK and his ashes taken back to Poland. I priced all these options and passed on details to the family and also to his partner.

As the client deteriorated rapidly we returned to an earlier conversation about getting married. He and his partner were still wanting to go ahead with this.

I liaised with our chaplain, the Polish priest in Lancaster and also with the charity 'Wish for a Wedding'.

The wedding was planned for 2 days' time and 'Wish For a Wedding' were amazing at finding the following: rings, flowers, dress, photography and catering. The Hospice hairdresser agreed to do hair and a colleague from Clarins agreed to do the make-up. Amazing response in 48 hours. The translator was booked.

The night before the big day the client deteriorated further and I returned to work with the student chaplain to bless the rings – in case the wedding didn't happen.

The next morning I rushed around trying to get the translator again at short notice. She came and spoke to the client who still voiced a desire to marry. The staff nurse involved, the chaplain and I arranged for them to be married immediately and within 2 hours they were husband and wife. The client's reaction at 'You can kiss the bride' was 'WOW'.

The rings were used but nothing else. However, the fact that all the donations were offered within such a short time shows how kind and generous people can be.

The client died the same evening. A married man with his bride by his side.

