THE PLACEMENT

Southern Area Hospice Services, previously the Newry Hospice, opened in June 1989 and provides a specialist care service, without charge, for terminally ill patients from the local area.

It was a privilege for Mrs Sharon Haughey to be granted a term of placement in an organisation with the responsibility to patients and their families of ensuring confidentiality and trust. Sharon, having a particular interest in issues related to the management of bereavement valued her direct contact with the Hospice Senior Social Worker.

During her term of placement, Sharon was invited to attend and assist in the preparation for a 4-day bereavement facilitator course, ‘Beyond Horizons’. The opportunity to discuss experiences related to children faced with bereavement was candid and informative.

Sharon also observed operations in the Hospice Fund Raising and Public Relations Department. The methods used to generate funds from projects and the measured spread of fund raising events throughout each calendar year was shown to be a demanding and fascinating process.

In general, Sharon’s placement was arranged with sufficient flexibility to facilitate the opportunity to meet with people involved in community organisations and in Health Trusts who support and develop bereavement and care programmes in Northern Ireland.

KEY LEARNING POINTS ON BUSINESS

An appreciation of how voluntary organisations link with external organisations by shadowing the work of the Southern Area Bereavement Coordinator at the Craigavon Area Hospital (SHSSB). This role ensures all organisations operating across the Board Area observe policies and procedures in bereavement care for patients and their families which comply with set national and regional standards.

POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE BA (Hons) LIBERAL ARTS DEGREE PROGRAMME OF THE UNIVERSITY

Sharon stated: “Participation in the 4-day, ‘Beyond Horizons’ course will enhance my ability to relate student personal experiences of bereavement to improve how they might, in the future, help children deal with the different feelings and emotions connected with grief.”

FUTURE LINKS WITH BUSINESS

Direct encouragement will be given to students to become involved as volunteers in the hospice operating in their locality.

Sharon stated: “The BA (Hons) Liberal Arts degree programme has a strong business element. Involvement in the Proteus project will obviously have an impact on teaching, allowing placement lecturers to represent new and exciting career opportunities offered by the range of new contact businesses and organisations.”

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

The Southern Area Hospice supports diversity through the many services offered to patients and their families. The work of the Chaplaincy Service is sensitive to the belief, cultures and faith of all who attend the Hospice.

PERSONAL LEARNING

Sharon stated: “I thoroughly enjoyed my placement with the Hospice. It challenged me to open up to a more positive outlook on life. I now realise that the Hospice offers life, the highest level of palliative care and is not primarily focused on death and dying. The loyal dedicated staff and volunteers create a warm and peace filled environment for patients and their families.”