

Interview 30 June 2020

DARREN THORNE: This is recording an interview with Yvonne Griffith, with Kay Boyle and Darren Thorne in the room. So can you start off by just telling us about your role and how long you've been here?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: At the moment I'm the neonatal manager and that is to say, December 2017. Prior to that, I was the deputy manager and I commenced that role July 2011. And I was acting manager between November 16 and January 17 just to cover sickness and absence.

DARREN THORNE: OK. Thank you. How long have you been a nurse ?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Thirty five years. Yes, a long time.

DARREN THORNE: Have you always worked through maternity?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: I qualified as an adult nurse. Did my training 85 to 88. And then I did my major's training, 93 to 95. And then I went out to America to work for ten years to the 97. And, and then I switched over to neonates during that time and then came back 2000 with [redacted] I&S and did some bank work and then actually came back for good. And I'd say that 2007. I think I've been in the neonatal unit since then.

KAY BOYLE: I've got a list, I appreciate that we've got access to a lot of it.

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Yeah. Yeah.

KAY BOYLE: So obviously, we've built up a very detailed timeline. So I'm going to pick out bits in the timeline where you appear.

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: OK. But I may not remember everything.

KAY BOYLE: I totally appreciate that because it's four years ago. Stephen Breary picked out in July 2015 there was that commonality with Lucy, the deaths, now obviously this is before the triplets.

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Yes.

KAY BOYLE: Were you made aware of it at that time? Because I know he was talking toIs it Eirian ? I always get it wrong.

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Eirian. Yes. And as I am being a deputy, I shared my time between the clinical area and the office, really, so often I would be there perhaps when Eirian wasn't there. And so I didn't have a lot of involvement then, really, because it was quite secretive. It was a conversation that they had between the senior clinicians. And I knew that there was lots of thematic reviews happening and looking at all of the deaths and the commonalities. But there were quite a few medical, nurses and staff who would be present.. But, you know, I think we're a small team. And it is that commonality of, and the young

DARREN THORNE: No sorry, my question wasn't directed to you, it was more about how would you feel if, you weren't the only one having interaction with Lucy, at first contact with her, there were other people, plenty of people with her by this time.

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: And I think to be fair though, the independent review, because it was all discussed and lots of people had very strong ideas and other people were 'hold on a minute we can't go around accusing everybody of X, Y, Z until we've got the proof'. And I think the same as the external reviews. Yes, a lot of babies have died, but a lot of babies continue to die, but you have to look at the plan of care, you have to look at clinically how stable the baby was. And we did that and couldn't really find anything, because they were just commonality things. It was lots of babies gestation 24 weeks, you know. And then we asked a lead consultant from Liverpool. He couldn't find anything. So it's not something we we kind of just dismissed. We didn't really look at each case individually to see if there was anything that was suspicious. And I think it ...

DARREN THORNE: Sorry who was the lead consultant from Liverpool ?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Nim.

DARREN THORNE: From the network.

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Yeah, so he came and we all looked through it. Couldn't find anything definitive. Well, that looks a bit Y, X, Y, Z. And so I think it's very difficult to go and tell someone actually you've been accused of, I can't even say what you were accused of, you know. And until you've got the hard evidence, because that is somebodies' life, isn't it, really? And I think in one respect, they just wanted to protect her by propping her, until we had gone, we could say, you know, I think if somebody said to me, actually, all the doctors are accusing you of this would just really floor you, wouldn't it? And it's a single girl living on her own. It's very, very tough. And in hindsight, yes, I know we need to be open and honest, but it's very difficult if it is just from one person, isn't it? Do I make sense ?

KAY BOYLE: Yes, you have been living this for years and years. Did you see the final grievance ? Did they ever shared with you?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: No, I just got my statement.

KAY BOYLE: So you never saw the final report that was actually shared with Lucy ?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: No.

KAY BOYLE: Or the letter that was completed by the chairman of the grievance ? You didn't see any of that ?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: No, no.

KAY BOYLE: Okay. I suppose, really, were you surprised by the arrest of Lucy ? By that time, bearing in mind it was a year on, after the police had gotten involved ?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Yes, I think the external review is the same as the internal reviews that we didn't really highlight, I suppose it didn't give certain people the answers that they wanted.

KAY BOYLE: What was the relationship like with the nursing staff and the consultants ?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: To be fair, we've always maintained by professionalism. And myself included and often you would go home and spat things: [REDACTED] and you know, but, Steve, lead Steve, he's not a nasty person. And he hasn't got a vendetta. And he's not that type on the unit either. I mean, he is a nice guy, you know. And so it is very, very difficult when somebody has got something so ingrained in their head, and I didn't share those views. Purely like I said before, I couldn't envisage anyone doing anything like that. So not to say that nobody was capable. But I think, you start to question yourself, well, did I not notice something ? But then there's a team of about 40 nurses and nobody said, well, actually, every time I take over, and it's okay when you start reading reports now, you think oh gosh yes. So, there's that presence but. So I think the police was as a result of, they were happy with the findings of the review and I think they wanted to go to the police and straight away. But it's very difficult. One thing that it's not when you haven't got proof of that.

KAY BOYLE: So were you surprised ?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: About the police ? No. Not because I thought she was guilty, but I knew that I didn't have the answers.

KAY BOYLE: So you knew that they were going to go, the police were going to get involved at some point ?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: But when the actual arrest and it was a big shock to be fair. I didn't realize, I was actually in Iceland at the time. And so I came straight from the airport here. She was arrested on Wednesday. And I was here the next day. So that floored absolutely everybody.

DARREN THORNE: It must've been difficult supporting everybody.

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Yeah, it was. Yeah.

DARREN THORNE: And going through that yourself at the same time.

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Yeah. Yeah.

KAY BOYLE: And obviously Lucy's name was released, wasn't it?

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Yes.

KAY BOYLE: What was the reactions like? Bearing in mind you had to go through of all of that.

YVONNE GRIFFITHS: Yeah, I mean, it was very, very difficult. I'm a nurturing person, so I think you take everybody's feelings on board and not only with support in the nurses. And also supporting the medical staff because obviously Steve was very upset by things. So he's