**Interview 6 10/7/19**

I: Ok, so you’ve read over the participant information sheet and signed the consent forms, so you’re happy to go ahead?

Nadia: Yes.

I: Yes.

I: Can you tell me a bit about your role as a nurse?

Nadia: I’ve been a nurse for 36 years, I’ve been in the Armed Forces as a serving member of the RAF; I’ve witnessed a number of terminations that have taken place – some legal and some illegal.

I: OK. Can you tell me a wee bit more about this; lets split it in to two here. Can you tell me about the legal terminations first of all?

Nadia: Legal terminations….2 occasions when the baby had no skull forming and there was another 1 where the brain wasn’t forming and another 1 where the baby hadn’t formed completely….putting mother at risk too. These were justified as far as I was concerned. I was also a member of SPUC at the time.

I: So, did you take part….did you help in the procedure?

Nadia: Yes. I assisted with the care of the mother throughout those; the 1s that were illegal, I refused.

I: OK. So, obviously those that were illegal….were those brought to light through conversation?

Nadia: We saw them in the ward….they were Officers who fell pregnant….given time to think, but when they returned were past the date and it was fully formed babies delivered….1 was breathing and left to die; a baby boy. The mother….eh….the theatres were closed to everybody apart from the staff on our ward in at the weekend. I was told that the woman had haemorrhaged badly and I had to go down to the Pharmacy and collect this medication….a phial, which I refused to do and I was the *ordered* to go….I refused again….they got the phial; the Major who did the procedure then threatened me and I said Court Marshall….he physically threatened me. At that time I ran a martial arts club, so it didn’t proceed any further. Then my Commanding Officer found out what was happening, he asked me to come in and explain which I did and he stopped him getting any further promotion. But, the baby….was a baby boy and was breathing; needed assistance and never got it so the baby died and emmm….I had no part in it – I had no part in her recovery as I wouldn’t do anything to help the lady whatsoever.

I: OK. So, in that vein then….what does conscientious objection mean to you?

Nadia: Knowing the facts to object….and when it pulls on your strings of morality; your traditions, the way you’ve been brought up; I was brought up a Catholic, but that doesn’t mean to say I follow that up but I trained as a Priest….for 5 years but I have a very objective mind, I prefer to take labels off and look at the person in the situation. Situations that like include rape; I can understand and I wholeheartedly agree with termination then; when it puts the mother at risk and they don’t have that bond….the mother feels that bond within, but the father has nothing except visual….if it puts the mother at risk then I would rather have the chance to try again with the person I *wanted* to have the child with. That’s the sorta things I personally believe in.

I: OK.

Nadia: When it’s used as an excuse….there’s plenty out there – plenty of things from male contraceptive to female contraceptive to sterilization to whatever; there’s so many things out there that can stop an excuse and it’s an excuse to get rid of something that was a mistake – why make it in the 1st place! Then I agree people should be held to account and no abortion should be taking place.

I: So you said earlier you were a member of SPUC, so you obviously feel really strongly about that?

Nadia: Very much so.

I: Would you also say that you’re good at separating your personal beliefs from your professional beliefs?

Nadia: Very much so. Especially in the armed forces where we’re geared for war and that means taking life. We are trained that way – I served with honour and I loved what I did….lots of things I can talk about, things I’ve seen and done and things I can’t talk about. I signed the dotted line and I knew what I was putting myself up for and you have to follow and within your position you’ve also got to lead. As a medic you’ve got to be able to lead your team.

I: When you were in that position as team lead….have you experienced anybody else’s objection that has impacted on you?

Nadia: Yep.

I: Can you tell me more about that?

Nadia: It caused a….just that main 1 where the baby was actually born alive. I was ostracised by females basically because….emm….I had no right to take that stance and….a female doesn’t own life, nobody owns life, you know? As far as I’m concerned this was an excuse….this lady said she needed time to talk to her boyfriend – now this was out in Cyprus. We thought the boyfriend was back in the UK or some other country….he was actually in Cyprus! When that girl found out she was pregnant it was early stages and she wanted time – but she took months. All that baby had to do was put weight on – we’re talking about 6 and a half months in to her pregnancy. When she started to show….this baby was terminated and I didn’t want any part in it.

I: Do you feel that affected your thoughts, your beliefs, your views? From that point on, has this always come back in to your mind? Is it something that….

Nadia: I’ve never felt hatred towards a patient; everyone has their story and you look at what your job is and you follow that through. I mean today in this climate we have got people with terrible diseases and they want the right to die. They can be fully functional, have their own thought processes and know what the end result is and they don’t want to face that. We’ve now got Parliament, judges, lawyers who say no, you don’t have the right to take your own life….when you talk about abortion, you have maybe 2 or 3 people who say right let’s do it….there’s not a panel there; there’s babies getting turned away from treatment. Very recently, Great Ormond Street, like to withdraw all treatment and this family had – it was costing this country nothing as the Vatican were going to fly this baby to America; they waited too long and the baby died. When it comes to abortion, only a few are involved….it’s very clandestine, it’s very – it’s not open and that’s where I see it’s wrong. When a baby is a mistake, or it’s through genetics, or violence that this baby is conceived, then we have got a debate, but as an excuse, I’m sorry, it can be done a lot earlier if they think they’ve made a mistake….there’s the morning after pill; you’ve got rid of cells.

I: So you feel at that point then, [morning after pill] there’s no viability there?

Nadia: Yeah….I think life is….there’s too many things happening in the world, you know gender fluid stuff, all political stuff….it’s all gone really strange. See if we take it right back to basics, I mean the bible is a book of stories as far as I’m concerned. It’s parts of history, of things that did happen and people wrote about it; but when you actually break it down in to a decision, which involves a life….emm….have great night out, enjoy yourselves and if it ends up that 2 people go to bed then take the precautions and if you haven’t got that then take the morning after pill. Don’t let things happen where you’re then talking about the death of a child. The death of something that has formed. Do it when it hasn’t formed….when it’s still a thing; a set of cells where there is no formed creature there.

I: So what do you think has helped, overall, to form your beliefs and your views?

Nadia: Talking to people. Being amongst people….having children of my own and being a grandfather. People are individuals and are fantastic creatures, they really are and when you have been a father, you’ve seen how innocent they are, how much they need you. I very much believe in adoption. I think that all couples should have the right for a child; whether you are in a traditional marriage or same sex marriage. A home can be with 1 person….I was brought up in the most fabulous family; I was surrounded by love and that is what a baby needs. It doesn’t need a judgement….a baby doesn’t understand and I never force my opinions on people….*never*. What I do is I follow the rules, like with my military background; I’m very much a disciplinarian, but with love. A baby….my only problem is when it’s a mistake then I would say no I don’t want any part of this….

I: Do you mean you would conscientiously object?

Nadia: Yes.

I: When working as part of a team, have you ever experienced a time where someone has objected and you feel as if the responsibility has been put on to you?

Nadia: No, not in that case. I’ve been the sort of 1 in the lower rungs as that’s done with the consultants and things and not even in like family. In our family, there’s been miscarriages but never that – it hurts and that’s a good thing because it shows it means something to you. In work, we’ve had to deal with prostitutes in Germany – it was basically what we did to help the general public and what we did was….like for the German economy; they were very much classed as emm….businesses and they treated their down below parts as their offices. We had to check for pregnancy and if they had to get rid of it, I refused to play any part in it because it wasn’t wanted as it was keeping them of the street or out of the parlour. They had to get a health certificate to say they weren’t pregnant and they didn’t have any STD’s. Those sort of things. I phoned to say I was losing respect for people because as far as I was concerned it was an unnecessary pressure that medics were put under….to be part of that, to be put in that arena.

I: So is it fair to say that your experiences along the way in your career have helped shape what your views are now?

Nadia: Yep. I love life and also having nearly lost that through a heart attack….every day is a bonus and people don’t see that. They don’t appreciate how tragic life can be; how short it can be. Every day is a blessing and it should be looked at like that. Babies don’t have a conscious choice and people can take that away. We’ve had it with Alder Hay where kids were getting cremated – the loss to the family and that’s a deep loss. They didn’t their place to grieve or to get closure. Then people come in to say they want to get rid of kids. My friend was all for abortion, he was a theatre tech….then his wife became pregnant and he fainted at the scan – when he saw the baby, the shape. The very next day he had to assist in an abortion and he went to pieces. He said get me of here – what I have I been part of all these years….that was an epiphany for him. He’s a fantastic father….

I: So, through personal experience, he conscientiously objects?

Nadia: Yeah through that. He says when the system works right and the conditions are right, he’s still for it – like I am. But, when it’s just a waste….as he says if you feel that way, get them cut off or get your tubes tied. That’s just his opinion now, like mine.

I: So, are your views very much black and white would you say?

Nadia: Yeah….yeah. If you go to a Dr now at the age of 17/18 and you know in your heart you don’t want a child….you cannot get sterilized as they say you’re far too young. But, they’re saying kiddies can pick their own sex now….I mean get real….*get real*! A life is….well if you’re born with a penis, you’re a bloke. Then, once your mind has become fully developed, then you can decide. And the same for females….live a life.

I: So you think it’s very much down to experience then?

Nadia: Ofcourse. Live a life but don’t put a child at risk or terminate….that’s a terrible word. It’s destruction and I’ve seen destruction….I’ve seen it in adults; mass destruction and it’s a terrible thing. When you’re vacuuming out a baby that is horrendous….there’s other ways and other means. Especially when it’s illegal – when that baby is formed and they’ve got to deliver that baby like normal baby, let it breathe and then die….that’s murder. That’s a crime. It’s getting practised and they put a legal bracket on it….well I’m sorry I won’t have any part of that. A lot of Drs have stopped being Drs because of such situations. Trainee Drs saying this is not for me because of this 1 thing. We’ve had HIV – 1 of the biggest things in the world that was going to wipe people out and we found a cure – a way to halt it in its tracks. There’s a vaccination out there now to stop it as long as you fit in a sorta sex life – if you’re promiscuous then you can have this injection to stop AIDS. What about these poor wee people who are getting it through transfusions….so why doesn’t everybody get it? There always seems to be a certain set of people can get this or that or another thing….they need to get round the table and really talk seriously about the death of a child.

I: Do you feel then, coming back to this really significant case to you, that because the mother was an Officer….because of her ranking – was she treated differently to somebody else?

Nadia: Very much so. Had it been a Squaddie, or someone of lower ranks, they would’ve been put out the Air Force. End of story. The Officer had a career….Squaddies follow Officers lead. Now women are saying they’ll sue the Forces. If you get pregnant….well it’s there when you sign up….you cannot say I can’t fight a war because the baby needs fed….you go to war. End of story. That is what we’re geared up for. The same as Pilots – we now have female jet pilots; they were never allowed because of periods. If you are in a jet – well the speed, you know? Now they can stop the period….is *that* right? There’s so many debates….a huge cauldron. You can’t just say – termination what do you think of it? There’s so many things. People who don’t want to carry on with life. People with MD, end stage of cancer….to say euthanasia doesn’t exist….it does. We have got the Liverpool care pathway….medicine is withdrawn, nil by mouth, DNR. When I started nursing, everybody got a chance. It was a training hospital and even if they were 96, it was a case of he’s going to go off today – you can see the way his heart’s going so everybody get ready and we’ll see CPR for real. 9 times out of 10, that person lived another 3 years! So who has the right to say do not let this person survive. Dementia patients especially – we want a DNR as soon as possible because what are you bringing them back to? But you could have the happiest wee lady you can meet, recognises faces, sings songs, so who says she’s not to enjoy life.

I: Do you think that [thinking of conscientious objection to abortion] HCPs have a right to refuse to participate?

Nadia: Very much so.

I: Do you think it’s based on reasons, on certain grounds….but it’s ok to withdraw participation?

Nadia: When they’ve got their reasons – they have to think. Like a rape – this should be dealt with right away. The person could have internal injuries; a terrible thing for them. Then give them a tablet – they have DNA and then the victim should have the choice….if she takes a tablet then who else gets involved? They don’t need a team standing by; they don’t have people saying this is wrong.

I: Right, OK. You’ve answered my questions with your vast experience….

Nadia: People should be individualised. How can we encompass everything to just 1 thing and say do you agree or not. There’s always certain aspects where I as an individual….

I: As a HCP who is an individual, do you believe your rights should be respected?

Nadia: The bottom line is….do no harm. I’ve lived my nursing career by that; I can walk away and put my head down on my pillow and say I did a good job. I honoured the profession. I had the pleasure of being a combat medic and that was a fabulous experience….it’s a case of do no harm….always do good.

I: Do you think that’s what sums it up for you as a HCP?

Nadia: Bottom line for my own self. Do no harm.

I: That brings us to a close then. All that’s left t say is thank you so much for participating.

Nadia: You are more than welcome.