

Unsung Heroes Project

Paul

February 2020

Takes job as Workforce Development Manager - Arrowe Park Hospital

March 2020

Pulled onto gold command

Wuhan boat arrives, people sent from Southampton to Arrow Park

Situation snowball (March) after two weeks redeployed (not officially/formally).

Just had to react to additional capacity.

- Create pre covid external hub. Build hub in imagination.
- Thought of McDonalds drive through style but with tents and bays for parking at The Warrens, Oval car park and Victoria Central Hospital. (supermarket size)
- Needed to be able to handle care from GP and ambulance, be able to see people in cars and keep clinicians safe.
- Organise donning (putting on) of PPE in 'cold areas' and doffing (taking off) in hot areas... hot areas where you've come into contact with covid infected people. (tents and porta cabins).

Organise campaign to ask for help.

- 'Breath Wirral' : builders, painter decorators - people with masks or scrubs in their houses. (Receiving nothing for system!)
- Felt like a war situation: think different.
- Success with schools using pillows and sheets and cushions to make masks and visors.
- Encouraged by neighbourhood response.
- Kids making 3d visors that got used.
- Also had to pick up and drop off this equipment in the area so people could be more protected (petrol costs!)
- Everyday liaison with council who provided traffic cones and bays for parking

March-May Chaotic! 2020

Needed security in car parks: Safety of equipment but also of community.

Spends days building fences.

Receiving patients who should have been in hospital, some died.

June:

Just about caught up/set up system

Home: Live in flat, had to doff clothes on doorstep before entering. Boil clothes and shower.

Single parent, not allowed to touch own children until cleaned. Can't remember who picked up kids from school!!

FEAR: Am I going to get it, no body knew how deadly it was, am I going to give it to the children? 'The death pandemic' 'Waiting for a bullet'

PRIDE and DREAD

Front line war, someone's got to do it, 'over the top'... I'm the man on my street facing the danger. Neighbours knew. Knock on effect on safety line for colleagues and public

EMBARRASSMENT

Strip outside house with kids watching, having to tell them not to touch me!

Had to use your own ideas to create safe spaces

GUILT: Are your kids going to lose their dad? Who do I put first?

No release from pressure and stress. No pub, coffee, no small motivation in day to pick me up. No treat. No kick back, no downtime.

Didn't know what day it was

Clapping

Encouraging to see other emergency services

applauding: Fire, police applauding for NHS.

Surreal moment stood on balcony in flat with neighbours clapping felt like I should wave like the queen. Touching moment.

July August 2020

Care home antibody testing (sybiotic) Bit more normal 9-5

Invite medical students to help with primary care, also look into Vet students!

At least it had a positive effect on their career

Still waiting for Government to decide what should happen next

September 2020

In charge of swabbing site for anyone in NHS with suspected Covid. Site built by Army using my ideas from previous site.

November/December 2020

- Porta cabin office blocks. Winter, wet, cold.
- Asked for fleeces, bought boots and socks.
- Working dark to dark
- Clank of metal doors, metal toe cap boots on metal stairs. Prison feel, having to walk around site for exercise. Felt like a prison guard, just missing a gun (Shawshank Redemption).
- Institutionalised military prison feel. Metal doors, generator pumping and breaking, freezing cold.
- Scheduling people, locating people.
- Dickheads taking photos outside trying to prove virus not real and place a waste of money. BBC running 'Site was pointless' story, photos when quiet - people came in waves -
- No respect. Altercations with reporters.
- Anger, nasty atmosphere, depressing, demoralising.

3 hours in rain sleet, sub zero directing traffic and instructing people how to administer tests in their cars, me stood outside. Screaming babies, learning difficulties adults, 'you've done it wrong, start again'

CHALLENGING

Desensitised and DULLED from fear.

With covid people daily.

January 2021

Reflect for first time thinking 'not signed up for this'
First time boss says 'well done'

Now being to think about job I'd been taken on for...
workforce development.

Summary

Paul's story is about finding yourself on the frontline of response to what would become a global pandemic. It's about stepping up from behind a desk to building hospitals in car parks, to not being able to hug your own children, to the dread of the invisible poison you're bringing back to your own home, from having to strip on your own doorstep before entering, to fending off the local vipers trying to prove it's all a joke and an illusion. To seeing death, pain and suffering first hand, to being frozen and fearful and overwhelmed. No respite, little support, constant.

It's also about how humans can step up in the most challenging circumstances, how a community can rally round and make what's needed, it's about the sacrifices people make in caring for others and the positive difference we can make when the rules are thrown out and we have to trust our gut and instinct to do the right thing, working dark to dark, in the valiant pursuit of saving others.

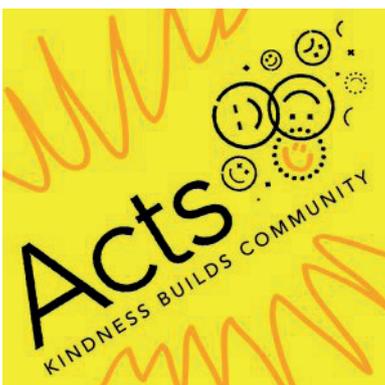
What is Unsung Heroes all about?

We're looking to launch a new project called 'Unsung Heroes'. Highlighting the people who worked behind the scenes for the NHS and in the voluntary community and faith sector during the Covid crisis and who continue to do so.

The project will involve listening to their stories and then offer opportunities for people to create a song in response. We'd then love to put on a concert to share the songs for everyone involved to participate! We believe it's important to recognise and value the unsung heroes in our world!

Funding

We're seeking funding to continue with the project.



www.actsonline.uk/unsung-heroes/

