

I'm sure by now many of you will have heard the tragic news that Karen Woo was killed in Afghanistan on Friday 6 August.

Karen and I first met at BUPA House. She wanted to implement the Safer Surgery Checklist at the Cromwell Hospital and wider in the BUPA Group and was looking to learn from others the lessons of implementation. After the meeting she asked me to stay behind and talk about the CHFG and my own story. It was very clear from our first meeting that she was passionate about her profession and how it might be made even better to give patients the care and safety that she really believed they deserved. It was also very clear to me that here was someone exceptional, someone with vision, drive, passion but also someone with humility, humanity and a genuine care for those around her.

Karen became part of the Standing Group. She was full of ideas and could often see the way forward before the rest of us got there. I remember her enthusiasm for spreading the word about human factors in healthcare, especially among trainees and juniors, and she was really keen about the CHFG Advocate Programme. Just after the idea had been suggested she and I had a long phone call in which she helped me to pull my rather rambling and aimless thoughts into something much more concrete and useful which ultimately shaped the 'how' of the programme. Just at the end of last year, when we looked for volunteers (although she was already in Afghanistan at this stage), she asked to become one of the Advocates on her return.

When she announced her plans for working in Afghanistan, it seemed that of all the people I knew, here was somebody that could make this work. She was passionate about the plight of the Afghan people, and especially the lack of medical care available to the women of Afghanistan. The last time that myself and my wife Jane saw her was at a fundraising event she had organised for Bridge Afghanistan. We had no doubt that she was doing something she really believed in.

I admired her. She was an inspiration. One of life's few genuine all round 'nice' people. Someone I could talk to at a logical level, but also heart to heart.

At this time I'm deeply aware of the pain that all those close to her must be feeling, and that a number of the CHFG supporters knew her especially well. My thoughts are with you all.

Martin Bromiley