

# Method for Marie Curie estimation of deaths and future need for palliative care in 10 and 25 years

July 2025

## 1. Background

Estimates of future need for palliative care are important for planning and commissioning of services and highlighting the increasing need for palliative and end of life care. In addition to increasing future need, there is likely to be a need for more complex palliative care due to increasing multimorbidity and deaths over the age of 85, as well as differing levels of need by disease<sup>1</sup>. Marie Curie estimates of future need for palliative care use a simple calculation assuming the need for palliative care is stable over time, and increases in need reflect increasing numbers of deaths in the population<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Method

Our estimates of future need use an intermediate estimate of palliative care. This method better captures need for palliative care due to multimorbidity, which might otherwise be underestimated. The intermediate estimate counts deaths where the death certificate noted underlying or contributory cause of death for specified causes likely to need

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<sup>1</sup> Etkind, S. N., Bone, A. E., Gomes, B., Lovell, N., Evans, C. J., Higginson, I. J., & Murtagh, F. E. M. (2017). How many people will need palliative care in 2040? Past trends, future projections and implications for services. *BMC Med*, 15(1), 102. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-017-0860-2>; Finucane, A. M., Bone, A. E., Etkind, S., Carr, D., Meade, R., Munoz-Arroyo, R., Moine, S., Iyayi-Igbinovia, A., Evans, C. J., Higginson, I. J., & Murray, S. A. (2021). How many people will need palliative care in Scotland by 2040? A mixed-method study of projected palliative care need and recommendations for service delivery. *BMJ Open*, 11(2), e041317. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2020-041317>

<sup>2</sup> Marie Curie. (2023). How many people need palliative care? Updated estimates of palliative care need across the UK, 2017-2021. Data and evidence briefing. <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/globalassets/media/documents/policy/policy-publications/2023/how-many-people-need-palliative-care.pdf>

palliative care<sup>3</sup>. Using this method, deaths which could benefit from palliative care in the period 2017-2021 were estimated at 90% of all deaths<sup>4</sup>.

ONS Principal population projections of deaths in the UK population, published in January 2025<sup>5</sup>, were the base data for estimates of future deaths and of deaths which would benefit from palliative care. Need for palliative care was calculated based on 90% of the projected deaths for 2025 (today), for 2035 (in 10 years statistics) and for 2050 (in 25 years statistics). The increase and percentage increase in palliative care was calculated based on projected palliative care deaths in 10 years or in 25 years, minus projected palliative care deaths in 2025. Statistics were produced for the UK and the four nations, using each nation's principal population projections of deaths<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Murtagh, F. E., Bausewein, C., Verne, J., Groeneveld, E. I., Kaloki, Y. E., & Higginson, I. J. (2014). How many people need palliative care? A study developing and comparing methods for population-based estimates. *Palliat Med*, 28(1), 49-58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269216313489367>

<sup>4</sup> Fantoni, E. R., Wynne, N., & Finucane, A. M. (2024). Estimates of population-level palliative care need in the UK: a descriptive analysis of mortality data before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Bmc Palliative Care*, 23(1), 271. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12904-024-01574-5>;

<sup>5</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2025). Principal projections. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/tablea11principalprojectionuksummary>

<sup>6</sup> England principal projections: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/tablea14principalprojectionenglandsummary>

NI principal projections: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/tablea17principalprojectionnorthernirelandsummary>

Scotland principal projections: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/tablea16principalprojectionscotlandsummary>

Wales principal projections: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/tablea15principalprojectionwalessummary>

### 3. Statistics for the UK

#### UK deaths in 10 years and in 25 years

- In 10 years, 7 people will die every 5 minutes (almost 735,000 people). That's almost 71,000 more people dying every year compared to today
- In 25 years, 8 people will die every 5 minutes (over 825,000 people). That's over 160,000 more people dying every year compared to today

#### UK palliative care projections in 10 years

- In 10 years, the need for end of life care will rise by 10% compared to today. Over 60,000 more people will need care every year
- In 10 years, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care in the UK will rise by more than 60,000 to over 660,000 people per year

#### UK palliative care projections in 25 years

- In 25 years, the need for end of life care will rise by almost 25% compared to today. Over 147,000 more people will need care every year
- In 25 years, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care in the UK will rise by more than 147,000 to over 745,000 people per year

## 4. Statistics for England

### England deaths in 10 years and in 25 years

- In 10 years, in England, over 600,000 people will die each year. That is almost 60,000 more people dying compared to today
- In 25 years, in England, over 685,000 people will die every year, that is 138,000 more people compared to today

### England palliative care projections in 10 years

- In 10 years, in England, the need for end of life care will rise by over 10% compared to today. Almost 54,000 more people will need care every year
- In 10 years, in England, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care will rise by almost 54,000 to over 545,000 people per year

### England palliative care projections in 25 years

- In 25 years, in England, the need for end of life care will rise by 25% compared to today. Over 120,000 more people will need care every year
- In 25 years, in England, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care will rise by more than 120,000 to over 610,000 people per year

## 5. Statistics for Northern Ireland

### Northern Ireland deaths in 10 years and in 25 years

- In 10 years, in Northern Ireland, almost 20,000 people will die each year. That is over 2,400 more people dying compared to today
- In 25 years, in Northern Ireland, over 23,000 people will die every year. That is over 5,500 more people compared to today

### Northern Ireland palliative care projections in 10 years

- In 10 years, in Northern Ireland, the need for end of life care will rise by almost 14% compared to today. Over 2,000 more people will need care every year
- In 10 years, in Northern Ireland, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care will rise by more than 2,000 to over 17,800 people per year

### Northern Ireland palliative care projections in 25 years

- In 25 years, in Northern Ireland, the need for end of life care will rise by over 30% compared to today. Over 5,000 more people will need care every year
- In 25 years, in Northern Ireland, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care will rise by more than 5,000 to 20,800 people per year

## 6. Statistics for Scotland

### Scotland deaths in 10 years and in 25 years

- In 10 years, in Scotland, over 68,000 people will die each year. That is over 4,500 more people dying compared to today
- In 25 years, in Scotland, over 75,000 people will die every year. That is over 12,000 more people compared to today

### Scotland palliative care projections in 10 years

- In 10 years, in Scotland, the need for end of life care will rise by 7% compared to today. Over 4,000 more people will need care every year
- In 10 years, in Scotland, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care will rise by more than 4,000 to over 61,000 people per year

### Scotland palliative care projections in 25 years

- In 25 years, in Scotland, the need for end of life care will rise by almost 20% compared to today. Almost 11,000 more people will need care every year
- In 25 years, in Scotland, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care will rise by almost 11,000 to 68,000 people per year

## 7. Statistics for Wales

### Wales deaths in 10 years and in 25 years

- In 10 years, in Wales, over 39,000 people will die each year. That is over 3,700 more people dying compared to today
- In 25 years, in Wales, over 43,000 people will die every year. That is 7,800 more people compared to today

### Wales palliative care projections in 10 years

- In 10 years, in Wales, the need for end of life care will rise by 10% compared to today. Over 3,000 more people will need care every year
- In 10 years, in Wales, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care will rise by more than 3,000 to almost 35,000 people per year

### Wales palliative care projections in 25 years

- In 25 years, in Wales, the need for end of life care will rise by 21% compared to today. Over 7,000 more people will need care every year
- In 25 years, in Wales, the number of people needing palliative and end of life care will rise by more than 7,000 to 39,000 people per year