Talking about Marie Curie

February 2026

Ideas and inspiration for telling our story

At Marie Curie, we provide free expert care and support for anyone living with any terminal illness. We bring 75 years of experience and leading research to the care we give you at home, in our hospices and over the phone. And we push for a better end of life for all by campaigning and sharing research to change the system.

But we know there's more to do. With your help, we can be there for even more families when they need us most.

As a Marie Curie Speaker, you play a vital role in communicating the work that we do to people in your local community.

We know that while many people have heard about Marie Curie, they don't know exactly what we do and all the different ways we support people. So that's why your talks are so important.

To help you share our story, we've created a script which can be tailored to your specific audience. You can use it alongside the PowerPoint presentations on the Fundraising Group Resource Hub or try some of the more creative ideas in this document.

Thanks so much for your support - we can't do all that we do without you!

Before you get started…

Here are our tips to make sure your presentation is a success:

- Before giving your presentation, visit our website and the Fundraising Volunteer Resource Hub on the website to see the latest Speaker documents and any events or campaigns happening in your area. Tailoring the speech to your audience means it's far more likely to connect with them.

- Check your timings. When planning your talk, check how long you are expected to talk for. On average most talks are about 20-30 minutes, but sometimes you may only have 5 minutes.

- Local is best. The script template at the end of this document encourages you to add local information throughout, such as community services or hospices, or research or campaigns going on in your area. By adding local details, you can make your talk more relevant and engaging to your audience.

- Decide on your 'ask'. What do you want to achieve from your talk? It helps to have a particular goal in mind – be it donate, fundraise, legacy gift, volunteer, share your story or join one of our campaigns. Think about your audience and what might be most appropriate for them, and consider what campaigns or events are running in the local area. Visit the Fundraising Volunteer Resource Hub to find out more.

- Don't rush! Remember to stop every now and then to check that your audience is following you or if they have any questions or need more information.

- Make sure your audience can hear you clearly, or they'll quickly lose interest in what you have to say.

- Remember to leave some time for questions after you finish your presentation.

- And don't forget the hand-outs. Make sure your audience have information about Marie Curie to take away with them. You can find our most up to date stats and information on the Fundraising Volunteer Resource Hub.

Be creative

If you have more experience of public speaking, or if you've spoken somewhere before and are looking for new innovative ways to engage your audience, you might want to change things up and do something different with your talk.

Our presentations and script are designed to help, support and guide you, with lots of information that you can use to build your talk, but you don't have to cover it all, and you may want to explore some different ways to share Marie Curie's work.

Below are some ideas for ways you can mix things up a bit with your talks:

Using props

If you don't like PowerPoint, or don't have the facilities to use it, you could bring along some props to help illustrate the work of Marie Curie.

You could bring a daffodil pin or bunch of real daffodils, to talk about what Marie Curie does. A history book to mention our history and where we've come from. A mug and teabag when you're talking about the real practical and emotional support our nurses

offer. A cushion to talk about the comfort and homeliness of our hospices. A phone to speak about the support we offer, online or over the phone to people facing terminal illness. And a bag for life to talk about our Companion volunteers, who might help people get out to the shops (you could bring the other props in this bag!).

My Marie Curie Story

We find many of our supporters have their own Marie Curie story, and you might choose to share yours as part of your talk. If you do have a story you'd like to share, including your experiences within your speech is extremely powerful and can build a stronger connection with your audience. You could use it instead of a case study or build the whole speech around your experience.

There's no expectation that for you to share your own personal experiences, and we only want you to do so if you feel comfortable sharing. If you prefer not to use your own story, you can find many powerful and moving Marie Curie stories included in our PowerPoint presentations, on our blog, or by talking with your Community Fundraiser who can suggest their own ideas or stories that they may have used.

What's inside a nurse's bag

This is an idea shared by one of our Speakers. She suggests bringing a few things you might find in nurse's bag. You can use these in the same way as our props idea and they could include things like a box of tissues (to offer emotional support to the whole family), a cup of tea (often it's the little things that make a huge difference to people living with a terminal illness), a packed lunch and tea in a thermos (nurses try not to use patient's kitchens where the families may be taking a quiet moment of rest), and a book, magazine or DVD (we know many of our nurses find out about their patient's interests and bring something in to read, watch or talk about).

Good luck!

Your script template

This script is designed as a template to help you deliver all the important messages about Marie Curie to your audience. Remember, you can tailor the length and content to suit you and your audience. If you decide to follow this script template, it will take roughly 30 minutes to deliver.

Intro

Whatever the illness, we're with you to the end
How many of you had heard of Marie Curie the charity before this talk – put your hands up. Okay, great! How many of you know what we do? *Take some answers from the room – expect to receive answers focussed on cancer and nurses, to which response is:* Yes, great – that is definitely a part of what we do, but there's a lot more to Marie Curie. I'm looking forward to being able to share some more about our work with you today. So, let's start at the beginning.

Marie Curie was founded in 1948. We take our name in honour of the distinguished physicist and chemist Marie Curie, who was awarded the Nobel Prize twice.

When we started our charity, Marie Curie's daughter Eve gave us permission to use her mother's name.

As a charity, fundraising has always been a key part of Marie Curie's work, so more care and support can exist in future for the people who need us.

Marie Curie's first donation came from Mrs Alice Macpherson in the late 1940s, who gave us her £75 diamond engagement ring. This tradition of generous gifts continues to this day, with more than a third of all the care and support Marie Curie provided last year thanks to gifts left in supporters' wills.

That's around 18,000 people getting vital care and support at the end of their lives – without gifts in Wills that wouldn't be possible.

We're here for people with any terminal illness, and their families

We're here for people with any type of terminal illness, whether it's Alzheimer's, heart, liver, kidney or lung diseases; motor neurone disease; Parkinson's; and advanced cancer.

What do we mean by a terminal illness?

- Someone has a terminal illness when they reach a point where their illness is likely to lead to their death.
- Depending on their condition and treatment, they may live for days, weeks, months or even years after this point. Our aim is to help people get the most from the time they have left.

How we're helping

We are the UK's leading end of life charity, providing free expert care, guidance and support for anyone living with terminal illness and their families, to get the most from the time they have left.

Our services include:

- **Hospice Care at Home.** Marie Curie Nurses, Healthcare Assistants and other healthcare professionals provide clinical care and emotional support in the comfort of your own home, day or night. They provide the care you need, allowing people to stay at home for as long as possible, managing symptoms, easing pain, protecting dignity and helping people live the best life possible. They also support the people close to them too – from reassurance and practical information to letting them take a break.
- **Marie Curie Hospices.** Our hospices offer specialist round-the-clock care in a friendly, welcoming and comfortable environment. As well as wards for inpatients, we provide a range of therapies and care for people who come into the hospice as day patients, often on a weekly basis. Many of our hospices have gyms to help people remain as well and active as possible, and we offer a range of complementary therapies such as massage and reflexology. The hospices also provide pre and post bereavement support to families.
- We also help people throughout their illness, and those close to them, by giving them support from trained **Marie Curie Companion** volunteers and being there when someone wants to talk through our **Marie Curie Support Line**.

In 2023/24, we delivered over 80,000 episodes of care by our hospice and nursing teams.

Tell a Marie Curie Story

Check the Fundraising Volunteer Resource Hub and our blog for Marie Curie stories that resonate with you - and your audience!

Marie Curie Nurses

Marie Curie Nurses are experienced in caring for people at the end of life in their homes.

- Our nurses provide hands-on care and emotional support in people's own home, helping with managing symptoms, easing pain, protecting dignity and helping people live the best life possible.

- The support our nurses give helps people to be cared for at home for as long as possible, if that's what they want. This means they may be able to avoid going into hospital, so they can be with their family and friends in the familiar comfort of their own home.

Marie Curie Nurses are also there for family members, giving them vital emotional support.

- When our nurses provide care overnight in people's homes, it allows families to take a break from their caring role, so they can get some rest or catch up with sleep, as they know that their loved ones are being looked after by a Marie Curie Nurse.

- Our nurses have the time to listen to people's concerns and talk through their anxieties about what they're going through, what to expect and what lies ahead in the future. They often provide reassurance or a friendly ear to help people through this difficult time.

My Marie Curie Story

If you have a personal experience of our care or of the organisation, it can be a really powerful way to engage with your audience.

Marie Curie Hospices

There are nine Marie Curie Hospices across the UK. *Check our website if your talk will be local to one of our hospices. You can include information specific to that hospice.*

- Each hospice offers the reassurance of specialist care and support, all free of charge, in a friendly, welcoming environment, for people living with a terminal illness and their loved ones – whether they're staying in the hospice or just coming in for the day.

- How our hospices help will vary depending on what people and their family want and need from us.

- Each hospice has doctors, nurses, therapists, social workers, chaplains and counsellors who work together to help people achieve the best possible quality of life. They'll offer all the support they can to meet people's needs, whether it's helping to relieve someone's symptoms, supporting them and their loved ones at a difficult time, or advising people on practical issues.

- We are supported by volunteers who help us to make a difference in so many ways – gardening, flower arranging, complementary therapy, drivers, receptionists to name but a few.

Tell a Marie Curie Story 2

Check the Fundraising Volunteer Resource Hub and our blog for Marie Curie stories that resonate with you - and your audience! You can find some of these stories in our presentation PowerPoint slides.

If you're trying to reduce the time of your talk or want to spend more time on your own story, you can leave this one out.

Information and support for everyone

At Marie Curie, we want everyone affected by a terminal illness to get the information and support they need, whether they have an illness themselves or are a family member or friend.

So, in April 2015, we launched our information and support services. Anyone can access these free services which include:

Marie Curie Support Line

- People can ask questions and find support from our trained staff through this dedicated line. This can be on the phone or an online.
- In 2023/24, we had 19,444 contacts to our Support Line, over the phone and via webchat.
- Many of the calls we're getting are coming from family members of someone who has just found out they have a terminal illness and are looking for support that's available and where to find it, or just someone to talk to.

Marie Curie's website and information leaflets

- We have more than 200 information pages on our website for people with a terminal illness, and their families and friends. In 2023/24, 1.7 million users accessed our online information and support.
- There's practical information about living with a terminal illness, financial and legal information, looking after someone's wellbeing and care needs, planning ahead for the future and useful links to other support that's available.
- Free printed information booklets are also available on request.

Marie Curie Companion volunteers

Check mariecurie.org.uk/services/companion to see if this service is currently available in your area. If not, take this slide out for the moment.

Living with a terminal illness can be isolating. Little things most of us take for granted, like a chat over a cup of tea, can make a big difference. That's where our trained Companion volunteers come in.

- They provide emotional and practical support – over the phone, at home, or in hospital.
- Companion volunteers visit people regularly for a few hours each week. This may be helping them to get to an appointment, to go out shopping or for a stroll, or just listening without judgement.

Our work on policy and research

Policy

- We believe everyone living with a terminal illness should have access to high quality care and support, which meets all of their needs.

- We work with politicians, policymakers, the NHS and other charities to actively campaign for better care and support on behalf of people affected by a terminal illness.
- Marie Curie has also created the '*The Daffodil Standards*' – this is a free, evidence-based, structured approach designed to help GP practices feel empowered to improve the end-of-life care in manageable, practical ways. GP practices can voluntarily sign up to this and the aim is that the Daffodil Standards will help them to feel empowered to improve the end of life care they provide across the UK.

Research

- We're the UK's largest charitable funder of palliative research. Our research helps us give the best care and improve the care system so that more people have the best possible experience at the end of life. We incorporate what we learn into the care and support we provide and share it with others so we can make care better for everyone.
- In 2023/24, 282,621 people were positively impacted by our policy and research work.
- The research we do explores crucial issues. Recent examples include research projects on improving care and support for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of people affected by terminal illness, as well as financial insecurity at the end of life, amongst many other topics.

The challenges we are facing now

Nobody should have to face the most difficult time of their lives alone.

Yet shockingly, every three minutes someone in the UK dies without getting the support and care they need at the end of their life. That's almost 1 in 3 people that don't get the end of life care and support they need, which is around 200,000 people every year.

We don't think that's good enough.

Marie Curie plays a vital role in ensuring everyone living with a terminal illness receives the care and support they need and deserve at the end of their life. But the challenge is growing. Our ageing population means more and more people are living with a terminal illness and often have more than one long term health condition. This means that the need for end of life care will continue to rise. We need your help in order to be there for the increasing number of people who need us.

How your support can help us

The care and support we provide are always free of charge to the people we help. This includes people living with a terminal illness, and their family and friends.

That's why we're asking people to give their support, so we can make it possible for more people with terminal illnesses all over the UK to have the care and support they deserve, now and in the future.

Here's how your support can help us:

- **£5** can help fund heating in a hospice for an hour
- **£23** can help fund an hour of nursing care
- **£207** can help fund nine hours of overnight nursing care, allowing people to get the expert care, and practical and emotional support that they and their families need, at home.
- Or if you're thinking really big… It costs **£9,100** to fund a hospice for a day, meaning people living with a terminal illness can get the expert care and support they need in a friendly and welcoming place.

(For different costs, speak with your Community Fundraiser or email speaker@mariecurie.org.uk).

Tell a Marie Curie Story 3

Check the Fundraising Volunteer Resource Hub and our blog for Marie Curie stories that resonate with you - and your audience! You can find some of these stories in our presentation PowerPoint slides.

If you're trying to reduce the time of your talk or want to spend more time on your own story, you can leave this one out.

Here's how you can support us today

Speak to your Community Fundraiser about the action that's most relevant/important for your talk. For example:

- Please do try to sign our petition if it's something you care about.
- Could you make a donation to support Marie Curie's vital work?
- Consider giving two hours of your time to collect for Marie Curie, it really makes a big difference to our work.
- Could you hold a quiz night in aid of Marie Curie?
- Would you consider signing up for a [trek/cycle/challenge event] to raise vital funds for Marie Curie?

If you have a story of Marie Curie care, we'd love to hear from you. You could speak to me after the talk, or email stories@mariecurie.org.uk.

I would like to thank you, for giving me the opportunity to talk to you today and would like to open the floor to you. If anyone has any questions or would like to share their own Marie Curie experiences.