

# We know about end of life care



## Marie Curie Cancer Care end of life service specifications now online

**Marie Curie is committed to sharing best practice in end of life care. Service specifications developed through the Marie Curie Delivering Choice Programme are now available on the National End of Life Care Programme website.**

Lack of access to 24/7 support and responsive community services can be major problems for people at the end of life and those caring for them. Carers often feel vulnerable during out of hours periods when most services are not available. When a person's condition changes, carers can become anxious and call for an ambulance. Once patients are admitted to hospital, staff often face barriers to getting them discharged to their preferred place of care, which can mean that people end up dying in the place they least wish to be.

Organising care for people at the end of life can take hours of valuable clinical time. Coordinating health and social care packages is a lengthy process and a dedicated coordination facility allows clinical time to be reinvested in the delivery of patient care.

The NICE Quality Standard for end of life care highlights the importance of consistent care coordinated across all settings and services and support at any time of the day or night. Fully integrated end of life care services can also help commissioners to deliver the transformational change required to satisfy the QIPP agenda.

Marie Curie has been working to address challenges around end of life care with partners in the statutory, voluntary and independent sector through its Marie Curie Delivering Choice Programme. The programme aims to improve local care and support services so that more terminally ill people, regardless of their diagnosis, have the choice of being cared for in the place of their choice at the end of their lives.

[www.mariecurie.org.uk](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk)



In England's north east, the project involved collaboration between 183 stakeholders (providers and commissioners) across acute and community settings. Once the local challenges and barriers to providing optimum end of life care were identified, small multi-stakeholder working groups (with Marie Curie service design support) designed new or modified services to address access, coordination and transportation issues. Marie Curie then produced service specifications backed by a business and economic case.

Three service specifications originally designed for services in South of Tyne and Wear have subsequently been adopted by the NHS North East Clinical Innovation Team to enable integrated services to be extended across the whole of NHS North East.

“Working in partnership with the Service Design team from Marie Curie Cancer Care has clearly demonstrated how collaborative working can benefit our patients. Developing service specifications and business cases is a key process in getting ideas taken forward in a changing healthcare environment, and their knowledge and expertise is second to none. 24/7 palliative care support is key to allowing people to die at home and one of the important work streams to improve palliative care. The development of the service specifications has allowed a sound clinical concept on quality to be presented as a business case to help professionals throughout the country achieve their goals.”

Dr Elizabeth Kendrick, Chair End of Life Clinical Innovation Team NHS North East

Communicating the benefits of integrated working is key to the success of service redesign projects according to Service Design Manager Rachel Ainscough. "Local stakeholders want to know how any service developments will meet local needs and provide better patient outcomes and genuine patient choice," she says.

The following specifications offer a template that can be adopted - and adapted - by any organisation considering setting up services along similar lines. They contain information on service configuration and formulae books for the collection of local data from which to build a business case.

#### **Palliative care coordination centre**

The centre is a single point of access for organising integrated health and social care services and packages of care enabling patients to be cared for in their preferred place. Services organised by the centre can potentially reduce avoidable hospital admissions and length of hospital stay. Effective resource management provides equity of access to services and value for money. It can also support management information on service utilisation and maintain the locality palliative care register.

#### **Overnight palliative care service**

This service provides overnight holistic hands-on care, a crisis response service and telephone advice and reassurance to palliative and end of life patients and their carers. It enables patients to be cared for and die in the place of their choice by helping to avert crises and avoid inappropriate hospital admissions.

#### **Dedicated palliative care transport service**

This provides dedicated transport supported by staff with additional clinical and support skills. It operates as a flexible and responsive service for patients needing transport at the end of life to help them to be cared for and die in their place of choice.

**Download the service specifications from the National End of Life Care Programme website:**

**[www.endoflifecareforadults.nhs.uk/commissioning/sample-service-specifications](http://www.endoflifecareforadults.nhs.uk/commissioning/sample-service-specifications)**

To find out more about the service specifications or Marie Curie's service design consultancy service please contact Simon Gordon, Senior Project Manager, Marie Curie Delivering Choice Programme: [simon.gordon@mariecurie.org.uk](mailto:simon.gordon@mariecurie.org.uk)  
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