



The Service

End of Life Care Together is a partnership of organisations across voluntary, health and social care, including Highland Hospice, NHS Highland, Macmillan Cancer Support and Social Finance. We are committed to improving end-of-life care for all across Highland. Our focus is on delivering on the outcomes that matter most to people and their families - being able to die with dignity and respect, in the place of their choosing.

The first services born out of the partnership are the 24/7 Palliative Care Helpline (PCH) and the Palliative Care Response Service (PCRS). PCH provides a single point of access for advice, support and information for people nearing the end of life, their families, carers and professionals across Highland and Argyll and Bute, while PCRS provides timely access to social care at home for people in the Inverness area.

The success of the services, delivered by NHS Highland and Highland Hospice and funded by Macmillan Cancer Support through their partnership with Social Finance, demonstrate the strength of working in partnership. After securing care staff in the Inverness area the next steps are to identify another location for PCRS to expand use of this service.

Aims

Taking a population approach based on the fundamentals of value-based health care and developing services that provide:

- **Personal Value** - meeting the outcomes that matter most to people nearing the end of life, their family and carers
- **Allocative Value** - measuring and ensuring fair access to care based on need
- **Technical Value** - refocusing resources as efficiently as possible to increase community support, reduce unscheduled care and meet the outcomes that matter most to the people of Highland

Service development is currently focused on increasing identification of people who need support by better Future Care Planning and fast-tracking palliative and supportive social care support at home through the 24/7 Palliative Care Helpline and Palliative Care Response Service.

Description of Services

Our 24/7 Palliative Care Helpline provides round-the clock advice, information and support for people in the last 12 months of life, their families, carers and health professionals across Highland and Argyll and Bute. Led by highly experienced nurses and delivered in partnership by Highland Hospice and NHS Highland, the team also works closely with other health and social care services when additional support or hospital/hospice admissions might be required. With this extra support at home, we can help to reduce unwanted hospital stays wherever possible.

Our Palliative Care Response Service provides flexible and timely access to social care at home and other support services for people nearing the end of life across Inverness. In an emergency we aim to assess patient care needs and have social care in place within 4hrs. In all other cases this will be done within 24hrs. By coordinating access to urgent social care services, we can help to prevent unwanted hospital admissions or accelerate discharge from



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hospital helping people to remain at home longer. Our response team also works closely with the 24/7 Palliative Care Helpline, so our carers have access to round-the-clock specialist advice and support.

Impact¹

Analysis indicates that users of the 24/7 Palliative Care Helpline and the Palliative Care Response Service users spend less time in hospital.

24/7 Palliative Care Helpline

- Between the launch of the 24/7 helpline in May 2023 and December the same year, people who died having used the helpline spent on average six fewer days in hospital in their last year of life following an emergency admission than would have been expected for this patient cohort.
- The 415 people who died having accessed the Helpline spent a total of 2,289 fewer days in hospital. This is the financial equivalent of £2,128,770 (based on published NHS Highland bed day rates).

Palliative Care Response Service

- Between January 2023 and December 2023, people who died having been supported by the service spent on average 20 fewer days in hospital in their last year of life following an emergency admission than would have been expected for this patient cohort.
- The 88 people who died having been supported by the PCRS spent a total of 1,698 fewer days in hospital. This is the financial equivalent of £1,579,140 (based on published NHS Highland bed day rates).

Feedback

Craig Hunter, grandson of PCRS service user Liz Hunter...

'We're hugely grateful to the Palliative Care Response Service and Palliative Care Helpline for helping Nana to remain at home, where she wanted to be. She was in control the whole time, and that was so important to her.'

'Having the care team on hand meant we could be there for her as a family rather than her carers. Not that she'd have let us do anything for her though. She was independent until the end, and she'd have wanted it no other way.'

Ken Keith, brother of the first PCRS service user Caroline Keith...

'It allowed Caroline to remain in her home, which was precious to her, to the very end, and because of that, it was so much easier for us to deal with the situation. At no point did we feel that her medical care and monitoring were being compromised by not having her in hospital.'

'She felt comfortable with family around her and we just wouldn't have been able to do that without the response service coming in on a regular basis... it was always there for us...almost like a safety net if you like.'

Updated July 17, 2024

¹ All impact figures are totals and based on a set of assumptions agreed with NHS Highland's Public Health Intelligence Unit. The outcomes figures include all referrals to the service and are based on actual hospital bed day costs at NHS Highland.