



Update 2007/8

Community Palliative Care Team

Most of the Hospice's patients stay at home during their illness supported by the Community Palliative Care Team. At any one time the team is supporting approximately 250 patients in their own homes. This team of specialist nurses, also called Clinical Nurse Specialists, works closely with General Practitioners (GPs) and District Nurses (DNs) and other health and social care workers.

As a team, we are constantly reviewing our way of working to make sure we are providing what people need in the best way possible. We found that our previous way of basing our specialist nurses in certain geographical areas, didn't then meet the needs of the other professionals in the area as the one GP or DN may have to liaise with several nurse specialists regarding patient care.

Over the past year we have made a fundamental change to how we work with GPs and DNs in the community. It is vitally important that we continue to enhance our professional working relationships with our GP and DN colleagues to help us meet the many complex and individual needs of patients and families under our care.

Now, each Clinical Nurse Specialist works with a specific group of GPs and DN Teams. A team of 3 Community Nurses each cover a wider area in which 'their' GP practices and District Nursing Teams and others are situated. For patients, this means that in the absence of their 'named' community nurse, they are able to gain advice and support from other members of the team who are familiar with the local GPs, district nurses, and support facilities in the area.

By undergoing this change we have created closer working relationships with GPs and DNs in order to facilitate opportunities for liaison and sharing of knowledge and experience. This in turn has improved patient and family care and experience.

To evaluate this change to our working practice we recently sent a brief questionnaire to all 'our' GPs and DN Teams. Initial feedback has been very positive, with people saying they feel more supported in their work and appreciate having a specified person with which to confer.

Thank you for helping us to develop our service in this way



David Edwards
Community Palliative Care Team Leader