

STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR END OF LIFE CARE

'How people die remains in the memory of those who live on'

Dame Cicely Saunders Founder of the Modern Hospice Movement

The End of Life Care Strategy: Promoting high quality care for all adults at the end of life, sets out the overarching aims to achieve a step change in improving quality of care at end of life.

Around half a million people in England die each year and every person at the end of their life deserves a 'good' death, a death which is influenced by their individual choices and preferences. Everyone has their own idea about what constitutes a 'good' death, however common themes include:

- Being treated as an individual, with dignity and respect
- Being without pain and other symptoms
- Being in familiar surroundings
- Being in the company of family and/or close friends

Some people experience a death according to their wishes, however a great many do not. There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating care at the end of life of the highest quality and excellence, however there is also substantial evidence of where care is not of acceptable quality. Indeed there are some distressing reports of care at end of life that do not meet basic standards of dignity and respect.

As stated in the End of Life Care Strategy '...how we care for the dying is an indicator of how we care for all sick and vulnerable people...', a powerful measure to consider across the breadth of health and social care services.

The care pathway involves:

- Identification of people approaching the end of life and initiating discussions about preferences for end of life care
- Care planning: assessing needs and preferences, agreeing a care plan to reflect these and reviewing these regularly
- Coordination of care
- Delivery of high quality services in all locations
- Care after death

- Management of the last days of life
- Support for carers, both during a person's illness and after their death

Critical to delivering the strategy is ensuring staff across all health and social care sectors are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude related to care for the dying. The strategy underlines the need for end of life care to be embedded in education and training curricula at all levels and for all staff groups.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_086345.pdf

<http://www.endoflifecareforadults.nhs.uk/>



NORTH WEST EOLC CLINICAL PATHWAY GROUP

Since 2008 the North West Clinical Pathway Group (CPG) has been working to improve End of Life Care for the people of the North West. The CPG report highlights some areas of good practice that have been developed. It also consolidates the original eleven recommendations into 5 key aims with evidence to show how they work and what more we need to know to ensure a good death for all.

Key texts and weblink:

http://www.northwest.nhs.uk/whatwedo/improvingservices/end_of_life_care.html

NORTH WEST EOLC OPERATIONAL GROUP

With key responsibility for taking forward the aims and recommendations from the work of the Clinical Pathway Group, the North West EOLC Operational Group drives forward the challenging agenda to improve end of life care for the North West population. The group is led by the three cancer networks within the North West, each of which has an internal function to lead the local agenda for end of life care.

<http://www.cancerlancashire.org.uk/index.php>

<http://www.gmccn.nhs.uk/Home>

<http://www.mccn.nhs.uk/>

Department of Health has made additional resources available to support strategy implementation. Some of the funding is channelled through the Multi-Professional Education and Training Levy and it is this funding that supports workforce development initiatives to enable health and social care staff to be equipped with enhanced knowledge and skills to drive quality improvements in end of life care for the benefit of patients, families and carers.



Funding has been targeted at a range of initiatives including national priorities:

- Raising awareness
- Blended learning and facilities to support learning
- Communication Skills
- Delivering support to learning at basic and intermediate levels
- Mentoring and support of EOLC facilitators – to include education and training facilitators and general EOLC facilitators

And local priorities:

- Awareness raising and continuation of Dying Matters
- Supporting e-learning for EOLC
- Communication skills development at basic, intermediate and advanced levels
- GP development in implementation of EOLC tools
- Spirituality and bereavement
- Implementation of LCP in care homes

In addition, University of Central Lancashire was awarded funding to lead a project to scope education and training for end of life care, a project which will

have a critical contribution to the workforce development agenda. The final project will be made available upon project completion anticipated for late Spring 2011.

This report represents a cross-section of activity supporting enhanced end of life care in the North West, however is not fully reflective of the breadth of this challenging agenda. Further information can be obtained from the contacts as detailed on the cancer network websites.



CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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