



## PRESS STATEMENT

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### **1.4 MILLION PEOPLE COULD DIE IN HOSPITAL AGAINST THEIR WISHES**

Over the course of the next Parliament, approximately 1.4 million people could die in hospital when their preference was to die at home<sup>1</sup>.

This is the finding of a coalition of charities who warn that unless action is taken by the next Government, people at the end of life will continue to occupy hospital beds unnecessarily and put pressure on overstretched A&E departments.

Half of the 550,000<sup>2</sup> UK deaths occur in hospital<sup>3</sup> each year, but over four in five (85%) of those who die in hospital wanted to die at home. The charities suggest that this is due to a number of factors including the lack of 24/7 community support, poor coordination between services and the failure to provide fast and free social care support for people at the end of life.

There is scope for efficiency savings to be made by supporting those who want to spend their final days at home to do so. With access to high quality nursing care in the community, total care costs can be as much as £500 lower per person<sup>4</sup>. All political parties have made some kind of commitment to improve choice at the end of life and to support more people to die at home.

On behalf of the coalition of charities, Dr Jane Collins, Chief Executive of Marie Curie said,



“It’s time to change the way we care for people with a terminal illness. Fewer than 5% of people say they want to be in hospital at the end of their lives, yet around 50% of people who die do so in hospital<sup>5</sup>, often with no clinical need to be there.

“Pressure is increasing on NHS budgets and A&E departments are already over-stretched. The evidence shows that it makes financial sense for the NHS to support people to be cared for at home in their last weeks and days. This is also what the majority of people with a terminal illness would prefer.

“Together, we are calling on all parties and the next Government to set out how they will introduce fast and free social care for everyone nearing the end of their lives to reduce pressure on hospitals and deliver genuine choice.”

**-Ends-**

## **Contact information**

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### **Notes to Editors:**

<sup>1</sup> 1.6m people are predicted to die in hospital over the course of the next Parliament between 2015 and 2020. This is calculated by adding up the total mortality projections figures for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 (from the ONS – see note 2) and subsequently estimating the number of those who die in hospital. Based on ONS place of death data, 48.8% of deaths happened in hospital in England and Wales in 2013 (see note 3) we assume this proportion is similar for the rest of the UK



(3,303,874\*0.49= 1,618,898). In England, in 2013 85% of people who died in hospital said they wanted to die at home (see note 4), we assume this proportion is similar for the rest of the UK. We then apply this figure to the estimate of the number of people who die in hospital 1.6m (1,376,064; c. 1.4m).

<sup>2</sup> The total mortality figures for the UK were taken from ONS projections which predict an increase from 547,643 in 2015 to 555,776 in 2020. ONS, 2013, National Population Projections, 2012-based projections

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-318453> (accessed April 2015)

<sup>3</sup> ONS, 2014, Mortality Statistics: Deaths Registered in England and Wales (Series DR), 2013, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-327590> (accessed April 2015)

<sup>4</sup> Nuffield Trust, 2014, Exploring the cost of care at the end of life [http://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/sites/files/nuffield/publication/end\\_of\\_life\\_care.pdf](http://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/sites/files/nuffield/publication/end_of_life_care.pdf) (accessed April 2015)

<sup>5</sup> ONS, 2014, National Survey of Bereaved People (VOICES), 2013 Release (accessed April 2015) <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/subnational-health1/national-survey-of-bereaved-people--voices-/2013/stb---national-survey-of-bereaved-people--voices-.html#tab-Preferences-and-choice-at-the-end-of-life>

- Additional evidence all points to a cost savings associated with supporting more people to die in the community rather than in hospital. This evidence comes from the London School of Economics, Deloitte and Macmillan Cancer Support.
- Evidence from the Cicely Saunders Institute shows that provision of specialist palliative care support increases the likelihood of home death, and reduces A&E attendance among people with cancer.



- Political party manifesto commitments on end of life care are as follows:
  - **Conservatives:** Support commissioners to combine better health and social care services for the terminally ill so that more people are able to die in a place of their choice.
  - **Lib Dems:** Provide more choice at the end of life, and free end of life social care for those placed on their local end of life register if evidence shows it is affordable and cost effective.
  - **Labour:** Support those who are terminally ill with the greatest care needs to remain at home at the end of their life if they wish, with homecare provided on the NHS. Join up services, with a single point of contact for all who need it.
  - **UKIP:** Abolish the annual assessment process for continuing healthcare funding in respect of those suffering from degenerative, terminal illnesses.
  - **Greens:** Provide free social care at the end of life enabling people to die where they choose to die.

### **About the coalition**

We are a coalition of seven national charities who are campaigning together to call for better quality care and support for those approaching the end of their lives.

You can find out more at our campaign website: <http://endoflifecampaign.org/>