

# END OF LIFE CARE COALITION

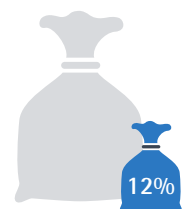
## The emergency bed crisis: high quality end of life care as a critical part of the solution

Everyone deserves high quality care as they approach the end of their life. But every year, **over 118,000 people and their families do not receive it.**<sup>1</sup>

Many dying people spend their last months and weeks in hospital – even though most of them do not want or need to be there. **On average, people in their last year of life are admitted to hospital 2.28 times and have over 30 bed days in hospital – some have many more.**<sup>2</sup> **Four out of ten end up dying in hospital despite only three out of 100 wanting to do so.**<sup>3</sup> Not only is this distressing for patients, but it also significantly drives up costs for the NHS. For instance, £1.8 billion is spent caring for people with cancer alone in their last year of life.<sup>4</sup>

Community care – such as community nursing, palliative care, pharmacy and occupational therapy to support people to stay at home – should play a much bigger role in end of life care. The limited availability of community and home care services means that hospitals are too often the only places where people can access care.

### End of life care at a glance



Up to 12% of total health costs are estimated to be spent on care for people in their last year of life<sup>2</sup>

8 out of 10 people with dementia attend A&E at least once in their last year of life and A&E attendance has increased by 61% over 5 years<sup>5</sup>



Access to community-based end of life care could save £104 million per year for cancer patients alone as a result of fewer emergency admissions and reduced length of stay<sup>2</sup>

Need for palliative care is projected to increase by 42% by 2040 – an extra 161,842 people each year<sup>6</sup>



### The critical role of community-based end of life care

Community end of life care is one of the few interventions shown to be effective in reducing reliance on emergency and acute care. High quality palliative care could result in 60,000 fewer deaths in hospital, saving over £180 million each year.<sup>2</sup> Need will only increase: by the mid-2030s, 30% more people will die each year<sup>2</sup> and annual deaths will outnumber births.<sup>7</sup> Despite this, community end of life care is still:

- Under-resourced
- Poorly coordinated
- A low local priority for those planning future health and care services

Driving down demands on hospital care has been identified in the Five Year Forward View as the crucial step if the NHS is to deliver efficiency savings. There is also a significant focus on reducing emergency admissions and cutting the number of delayed transfers of care, meaning people can leave hospital as soon as they are able.<sup>8</sup> High quality end of life care must play an important role in delivering these ambitions.

There are many ways this could be achieved:

- Provision of palliative care to patients with cancer can lead to a reduction in repeat emergency admissions in their last 30 days of life compared to those without<sup>9</sup>
- Services such as the Macmillan Specialist Care at Home can lead to fewer A&E attendances and fewer days in hospital<sup>10</sup>
- Services such as the Marie Curie's Nursing Service can result in reduced hospital care costs of £1,140 per person due to a 58% reduction in emergency admissions<sup>11</sup>

## New opportunities, missed opportunities

### *Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships*

NHS bodies and other local partners are working together through Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs), creating new opportunities and demands to radically reshape acute and out of hospital care in their local areas. However, an analysis of STP plans undertaken by the End of Life Care Coalition showed that over 40% of local STPs have little or no focus of end of life care.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Government's National Commitment on end of life care*

In July 2016, the Government published 'Our commitment to you for end of life care'. It outlined over 50 commitments around end of life care, including to support people to have honest discussions with care professionals about their needs and preferences, make informed choices about their care and develop personalised care plans. While the National Commitment is well intentioned, it came with no additional funding or incentives to turn the positive words into action. One year on, little progress has been made, particularly in improving out of hospital capacity.

### What do we want to see?

There is a critical need for better out of hospital care to ensure every person approaching the end of their life, and their family and carers, has access to appropriate care, treatment and support. Without the right investment, strategic planning and prioritisation, the NHS will continue to see unnecessary rising emergency admissions and delayed transfers – with negative impacts across the health and care systems. We want every person approaching the end of their life to have access to:

1. An assigned point of contact to liaise with about their care and preferences
2. Coordinated care between services, enabling patient and family priorities to be consistently addressed, whoever is providing care
3. Community nursing, pharmacy and occupational therapy services to support them to stay at home
4. Specialist palliative care advice and support in the community
5. Trained staff to deliver end of life and palliative care at home

### What can you do?

The Government's National Commitment on end of life care outlines the challenges, but cannot deliver the solution. We are therefore asking for your support to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of community-based end of life care in Parliament
- Write to Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Health, to demand a clearer focus on out of hospital end of life care
- Engage with your local STP lead to stress the importance of a holistic approach to end of life care in and out of hospital

We can support parliamentarians in any parliamentary activity to raise awareness of these issues. Please contact [eol@incisivehealth.com](mailto:eol@incisivehealth.com) for more information.

We are calling for high quality, personalised care for people approaching the end of their life, wherever and whenever they need it.

The End of Life Care Coalition comprises six leading charities that have been campaigning to improve the quality and experience of care and support people receive as they approach the end of their lives.

For more information, visit our website: [www.endoflifecampaign.org](http://www.endoflifecampaign.org)



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