

## Developing end of life services in Northamptonshire

In May 2010, Primecare set up an innovative partnership with a leading group of clinicians from Nene Commissioning Group and third sector organisation, Age Concern. The public/ private partnership was formed to secure the Northamptonshire Rapid Response End of Life Services, on behalf of NHS Northamptonshire.

The model for the End of Life Services was developed by Nene Commissioning to safely support people who choose their home as the place they want to die. Approximately 54% of people in Northamptonshire wish to die at home, whilst prior to the new services being established, only about 19% were able to do so. 58% of all deaths in Northamptonshire were occurring in Kettering or Northampton General Hospitals.

The End of Life Services comprise a single point of access telephony-based solution, the Care Co-ordination Centre, and a nurse-led health care service, the Rapid Response Service. The End of Life Services manage complex care packages for patients in the community and prevent avoidable admissions. The services also support patient discharge from the acute sector, freeing up much needed capacity for planned care.

Primecare run the Care Co-ordination Centre and the Rapid Response part of the service, both of which have been specifically designed to support choice for patients nearing the end of their lives, by helping those who want to remain at home rather than die in hospital.

### About the Care Co-ordination Centre and Rapid Response Service

The Care Co-ordination Centre is a 24/7 telephone service supporting health care professionals in signposting, providing information on local services, and setting up care plans. It is accessed through a single number and is staffed by experienced nurses and call handlers who are supported by a range of clinicians. Up to date care plans are held by the Centre to ensure they have the latest information about individual patients and their families.



### Service features

- 24/7 telephone service
- For referrals from health care professionals
- Senior call handlers co-ordinate the care plan
- Patient / carer can telephone for help and support
- Full directory of services
- Retain care plans
- Signposting to local services
- Calls answered in 90 seconds
- Inform patient's GP practice

The Rapid Response Service, that includes carers from Age Concern Northamptonshire, operates between 8am and 1am every day of the year, providing specialist nursing interventions, led by advanced nurse practitioners, in a patient's home, within one hour of request. The service aims to avoid a crisis situation that would otherwise require the patient to be admitted to hospital.

Age Concern provides a team of care workers to support patients and their families at flexible times during the day or through the night.

The Rapid Response Service also employs Link Nurses who are based full-time at Northampton General Hospital and Kettering General Hospital. They work closely with the hospital and community teams to facilitate timely discharge and help to ensure that the care packages are in place to allow the patient to return home following a hospital stay as quickly as possible.

## Developing a service to meet people's wishes

Now, almost 12 months on and the Northants End of Life Service is providing choice and real alternatives for people who choose to die at home and is a consistent theme across major policy initiatives, in particular the Department of Health End of Life Strategy 2008 and 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say'.

The service complements and integrates end of life care within existing local provider services and aims to enhance the quality of end of life care and to support patients to die with dignity in their place of choice. The service, builds on good practice locally and nationally, particularly in relation to the Gold Standards Framework and the Integrated Care Pathway. The service design enhances existing capacity and capability and directly supports the last eight weeks of the End of Life Pathway. Each element of the service is specifically designed to support choice for patients nearing the end of their lives enabling them to be cared for at home rather than in hospital.

In the first nine months the Care Coordination Centre has registered more than 500 patients and seamlessly co-ordinated home care packages and rapid response Advanced Nurse Practitioner support for many of these patients. The service is making sure that people in Northamptonshire have a good and dignified death, providing real quality and expertise.

## The keys to our success

- Operates 8am – 1am, 365 days a year
- Good partnership arrangements between organisations
- Tailors care packages that are based on what the individual wants
- Complements existing services and works closely with them
- Quick response with visits to a patient within 60 minutes of request
- Supports patients to die in a place of their choosing



## What next?

It is expressed Government policy to let people at the end of their lives to die at home where possible and when it is their choice to do so. The innovative partnership between Primecare, Nene Commissioning and Age Concern is proof that private and public partnerships work.

We will continue to evaluate the success of the services and are keen to establish pilots in other areas that support people to stay out of hospital.

Working in partnership with Nene Commissioning and Age Concern has allowed Primecare to develop innovative, cost effective solutions to manage the care of patients at the end of their life.

## Patient case study

A man with bowel cancer who had come into A&E with excessive bleeding and was within the last week of his life was helped by the End of Life team to die at home. After telling a nurse in A&E that he wanted to go home and die in his favourite armchair and be with his family, the nurse referred his care to the End of Life team. The End of Life team coordinated all his medication and care needs and he went home that night. Together the End of Life team and the community nursing team cared for him at home for a week and he died, in his favourite armchair, as he had wanted to.

Who do I contact for more information about the End of life Service?

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