



What Is Palliative Care?

Answer

‘Death and dying are inevitable. Being able to live as well as possible until we die is something that we all value.’
(NHS England).

‘Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients (adults and children) and their families who are facing problems associated with life-threatening illness. It prevents and relieves suffering through the early identification, correct assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, whether physical, psychosocial or spiritual’.
(WHO definition).

The approach is delivered by primary, community and hospital teams with leadership from specialist Palliative Care teams.

Palliative Care is an essential medical specialty which...

- Supports people with **any** life limiting condition from diagnosis to death,
- For **both** the patient and their loved ones,
- Provides **holistic** care – physical, social, emotional and spiritual support,
- Often when there are **complex unmanaged symptoms** e.g. pain, nausea,
- Uses a **multidisciplinary team**, collaborative approach,
- With the **patient’s** wishes **central** to the care provided,
- In **all** settings – hospital, home, hospice and beyond,
- Any time **before, during and after** death.



What Does This Look Like?

This is what essential palliative care services should include to avoid unmet needs:

Across services	Inpatient	Community
Specialist palliative care advice 24/7 for support in managing complex symptoms and in crisis situations. Specialist palliative care assessment and management 7 days a week.	Access to Consultant-led specialist palliative care inpatient beds 24/7 including in an emergency.	Out of hours community response 24/7 for symptom management and crisis support.
General palliative care training for all health professionals.	Hospital Specialist Palliative Care Team.	Community Specialist Palliative Care Team.
Transition services for young people moving from paediatric to adult care.	Social work/family support worker.*	Access to carer support, both day and night, to enable people to stay in their own home.
Pre and post bereavement support including counselling for adults and children.	Chaplaincy team support.*	Out of hours access to essential palliative care medications for crisis support.
Access to therapy services – e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy.	Complementary therapy support.*	Medical and nurse led specialist outpatient clinics.
Timely access to procedures for symptom control e.g. nerve blocks, ascitic drains, stents.	Access to other specialties for advice and support.*	Specialist clinics including Lymphoedema clinics, MND multidisciplinary clinics.

* Can also be across services.

"You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die."

Dame Cicely Saunders, Palliative Care pioneer/ founder of the first modern hospice