

PALLIATIVE & END OF LIFE CARE NETWORK

2024/2025 - A YEAR IN REVIEW



Network Overview

In 2024–2025, the PEOLC Network advanced its commitment to equitable, high-quality care across NHS Grampian. Key achievements included progressing the review of the NHS Grampian Palliative and Supportive Care Plan, aligning it with national Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines to reduce duplication and improve consistency. We addressed health inequalities by analysing updated local data using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and protected characteristics. This informed our understanding of access gaps and supported the early development of a local strategic framework. A planned inequalities webinar will further raise awareness and promote collaboration.

Significant progress was also made in prison-based palliative care through a multi-agency approach involving the Scottish Prison Service, third sector partners, and healthcare professionals. This work, highlighted at our annual conference, has improved communication and outcomes for individuals in custody. Looking ahead, we remain focused on building a responsive, inclusive approach to palliative and end of life care shaped by national priorities and local voices.



PEOPLE

SUPPORTIVE CARE PLAN REVIEW

The review of the NHS Grampian Palliative and Supportive Care plan is ongoing. A review group was established and it was collectively agreed to direct healthcare professionals to the Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines. This approach aims to minimise duplication between NHS Grampian guidance and existing national guidelines. Progress was temporarily paused pending an update to the "Care in the Last Days of Life" section on the Scottish Palliative Care Guidelines website. This initiative will resume as part of our educational objectives for 2025/2026.



PATHWAYS

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

We have engaged in preparatory work towards addressing health inequalities in palliative and end of life care. By collaborating closely with public health colleagues, we explored new ways to analyse and interpret data, incorporating both the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and protected characteristics. This effort included updating palliative care data from 2019 to 2024, which will enable us to better understand variations in access to care across Grampian and laying the groundwork for the development of our local palliative strategic framework. Furthermore, we initiated plans for an inequalities webinar, aimed at raising awareness, fostering collaboration, and emphasising the importance of equitable access to palliative and end-of-life care.



PATHWAYS

PRISONS

As a network we have successfully addressed the lack of palliative and end of life care within the prison setting through a collaborative multi-agency approach that brought together health care providers, Scottish Prison Service, third sector organisations, secondary and specialist care.

A workshop was delivered at our annual network conference, giving insights into how healthcare is delivered inside the prison. With support from Marie Curie and growing interest from healthcare professionals, communication and networking between healthcare professionals and the prison service has improved, bringing prison services into focus and driving better outcomes for prisoners requiring end of life care.

This work continues to strive and patients' wishes are now delivered and supported providing the best possible outcome for all those involved.

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2025/2026 OBJECTIVES



EDUCATION

Efforts are underway across Grampian to enhance public understanding and professional capacity in palliative and end of life care. This work aims to ensure individuals and families are better informed and supported, while also empowering the health and social care workforce.

Public awareness: Reviewing and updating the Care and Support Booklet to provide clear, accessible information on available services. Undertake a palliative care website review to understand information needs.

Workforce development: Supporting ongoing professional education and training, and evolving the Grampian Palliative and Supportive Care Plan into a comprehensive NHSG signposting document.

Open conversations: Collaborating with the Realistic Medicine Team to refine the Kind and Courageous Conversations workshop and continuing support for the EASE programme, helping both professionals and the public feel more confident discussing future care planning, death, and dying.



HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Ensuring fair and timely access to palliative and end of life care for all population groups across Grampian remains a key priority. Focused efforts aim to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes, particularly for those in deprived or vulnerable communities.

Collaborative working: Ongoing engagement with NHSG Public Health colleagues and active participation in the NHSG Screening and Equity Group.

Data-driven insight: Regular review of health intelligence data to identify and address disparities in access and awareness of palliative and end of life care.

Strategic alignment: Designing public health workstreams in line with the forthcoming National Palliative Care Strategy and Implementation Plan to ensure a coordinated and equitable approach.



ENGAGING WITH LOCAL AND NATIONAL GROUPS

Enhancing palliative and end-of-life care across NHS Grampian by fostering robust engagement between the MCN and both local and national stakeholders, ensuring a unified, person-centred approach that aligns with evolving health priorities.

Strengthen Strategic Partnership: Collaborate with local health and social care partnerships, voluntary services and national bodies to align efforts and share best practice.

Facilitate Stakeholder engagement: Review current forums and establish new forums, workshops to gather insights from service users, carers and professionals ensuring their perspectives are heard.

Align with National Frameworks: Ensure that local strategies and care models are in harmony with national frameworks promoting consistency and quality across services.



PALLIATIVE CARE STRATEGY

To initiate the development of a comprehensive local Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy that reflects national priorities, responds to local needs, and is shaped by those who deliver and receive care. This foundational work will:

Respond to national direction by aligning with the Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy: Palliative Care Matters for All (Scottish Government, 2025), ensuring local efforts are consistent with national ambitions.

Use local data to drive improvement by analysing health intelligence and service data to identify trends, gaps, and opportunities for enhancing access, equity, and quality of care.

Engage meaningfully with stakeholders through a series of engagement sessions with professionals, carers, service users, and community partners to co-develop a shared vision and priorities for palliative and end of life care in Grampian.