

PALLIATIVE & END OF LIFE CARE NETWORK

2025/2026 - A YEAR IN REVIEW



Network Overview

During 2025–2026, the Palliative & End of Life Care Network focused on strengthening strategic foundations, addressing health inequalities, and improving collaboration across NHS Grampian. Progress was made towards developing a local Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy aligned with Palliative Care Matters for All, supported by closer working with Public Health and improved use of health intelligence to understand variation in access and experience of care.

Health inequalities remained a core focus, with updated analysis using SIMD and protected characteristics informing early identification of underserved populations and future prioritisation. Partnership working across local, regional, and national organisations continued to support shared learning, reduce duplication, and align strategic intent with delivery. Education and workforce development remained central, supporting staff confidence and promoting open, compassionate conversations about future care planning.



PEOPLE

EDUCATION

Education remained a core area of focus, with continued support for palliative and end of life care learning across a wide range of professional groups. The Network promoted open and compassionate conversations about death, dying, and future care planning through established national and local programmes, helping to build confidence and consistency across services. Education and awareness activity was aligned with national priorities and local need, reflecting emerging policy direction and practice within Grampian.



PATHWAYS

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Work to address health inequalities progressed through ongoing collaboration with Public Health colleagues, using local palliative and end of life care data informed by SIMD and protected characteristics. This work strengthened understanding of variation in access to services across Grampian and supported early identification of underserved populations and emerging priority areas. Alongside analytical work, planning and early engagement activity helped raise awareness of health inequalities within palliative and end of life care. Together, this activity began to shape more targeted, proportionate, and evidence-informed approaches to reducing inequality and improving access to care.



PATHWAYS

ENGAGING WITH LOCAL AND NATIONAL GROUPS

The Network maintained active engagement in relevant NHS Grampian and national forums, ensuring palliative and end of life care considerations informed wider system discussions. Links with third sector partners and key stakeholder groups were strengthened, supporting collaboration, shared learning, and more integrated approaches to care delivery. There was an increased focus on including a broader range of professional and community voices to shape future work, helping to ensure developments are informed by lived experience, frontline insight, and local context.



PEOPLE

PALLIATIVE CARE STRATEGY

During 2025–2026, foundational work was undertaken to support the development of a local Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy for NHS Grampian. Local discussions and emerging priorities were aligned with national policy direction, particularly Palliative Care Matters for All, to ensure a coherent and consistent approach. Early engagement with stakeholders helped inform the strategic principles and priorities that will guide further development in the coming year.

PALLIATIVE & END OF LIFE CARE NETWORK



2026/2027 OBJECTIVES



PEOPLE

EDUCATION

To strengthen workforce capability and confidence in delivering high-quality palliative and end of life care across NHS Grampian.

Key actions:

- Continue to support and promote accessible education and training opportunities for health and social care staff.
- Build on existing programmes promoting open, compassionate conversations about future care planning.
- Work with partners to identify education gaps, particularly relating to health inequalities and complex care needs.
- Support consistent messaging and signposting to national guidance and learning resources.



PATHWAYS

HEALTH INEQUALITIES

To reduce inequalities in access to palliative and end of life care and improve outcomes for underserved populations.

Key actions:

- Continue collaborative work with Public Health colleagues to use data and intelligence to identify inequalities in access and experience.
- Embed equity considerations into all Network activity and strategic planning.
- Use insights from data and engagement activity to inform targeted improvement work.
- Support increased awareness of health inequalities amongst the workforce through education and discussion forums.



PATHWAYS

ENGAGING WITH LOCAL AND NATIONAL GROUPS

To strengthen partnership working and ensure local palliative and end of life care activity is connected, informed, and person-centred.

Key actions:

- Maintain and strengthen relationships with local, regional, and national partners.
- Review existing engagement forums and identify opportunities for improved stakeholder involvement.
- Facilitate meaningful engagement with service users, carers, and professionals to shape Network priorities.
- Share learning and best practice across organisations and sectors.



PEOPLE

PALLIATIVE CARE STRATEGY

To progress the development of a comprehensive local Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy for NHS Grampian.

Key actions:

- Develop and agree strategic priorities aligned with Palliative Care Matters for All.
- Use local data, intelligence, and engagement findings to inform strategic direction.
- Support co-production approaches involving staff, carers, service users, and partners.
- Ensure strategic work aligns with wider NHS Grampian priorities and transformation programmes.