

England's palliative care funding challenge



palliative,
neurological
and bereavement
support

The current situation

Palliative care is the care and support given to people with life-limiting conditions like cancer, heart failure and lung disease. Sue Ryder is one of the country's leading specialist palliative care providers, providing expert and compassionate care to people at the end of their lives.

Currently, **less than 50%** of all people dying in England receive palliative care, yet **up to 90%** may have palliative care needs.

What's more, demand is projected to increase from **245,000 patients** in the coming year to **379,000 by 2030/31**. This is due to a number of factors such as increased mortality rates caused by demographic changes, as well as a growing desire by patients to die at home rather than in hospital.

Such a significant increase in demand for these services is leading to a crisis in the charitable care sector and it does not even address the number of people who need palliative care but don't receive it.

New research findings

Sue Ryder has recently commissioned independent research to examine the costs required to meet the demand for palliative care services over the next ten years. It found that the cost of hospice provision of palliative care is estimated to be **£947m per year** between now and 2030.

Given the future increase in demand over the next decade, if Government funding continues in line with its current model of covering 37% of these costs, **hospices will be required to raise £597m each year** through fundraising. This is simply unrealistic, and the hospice sector cannot be balanced on this fragile basis.

This research has highlighted the stark reality of **the danger facing the independent hospice sector**. If high-quality patient outcomes are to be preserved and the hospice sector is to continue to be able to provide these essential services, it is clear that the Government needs to commit now to an increase in funding to ensure its future sustainability.

What needs to change

Despite the Health Secretary affirming in Parliament that the Government is committed to investing in 'high quality palliative care', no sustainable funding has, as yet, been forthcoming.

Without a Government commitment to significantly increase levels of statutory funding to cover clinical costs for palliative care services, there is a **genuine and serious risk of services being withdrawn** and patients and their families losing out on the specialist, holistic support that hospices offer.



The collapse of the independent hospice sector would be disastrous, with **the NHS forced to take on the extra demand**. The COVID-19 pandemic has already created a massive backlog in hospital activity. To further increase reliance on NHS services would inevitably lead to poorer patient outcomes for those at the end of their lives.

A commitment to fund 70% of total palliative care costs is the minimum required to ensure the sustainability of the hospice sector and these vital services in the medium term. This would cost the Government an **additional £313m per year, or a total of £663m per year**.

The alternative is likely to be hospice closures, resulting in the overstretched NHS having to provide end-of-life care services at an **additional cost of £484 million each year** for the Government, **or a total of £834m**.

While Sue Ryder recognises the difficulties facing the public finances, it is essential that the Government takes this important step and sets the independent hospice sector on a positive and sustainable path for the future, allowing it to support all those who need it.

How you can support

Sue Ryder is urging MPs of all parties to support its call for a new Government funding settlement to ensure statutory funding for all of the charitable sector's clinical costs for palliative care services.

You can support our call by:

- Seeking a parliamentary debate to raise awareness of the funding crisis facing palliative care
- Tabling written questions or raising at departmental question time in Parliament
- Writing to the minister to raise your concerns about the future of palliative care funding
- Tweet your support using the hashtag **#FundHospiceCare**
- Initiate a Private Members' Bill seeking to increase statutory funding for palliative care for the next financial year
- Raise the issue with your parliamentary colleagues and support Sue Ryder's efforts to build parliamentary support

Draft PQs and letters can be found here: shorturl.at/ktPWX

Contact

For further information or resources to support with the above, please contact:

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