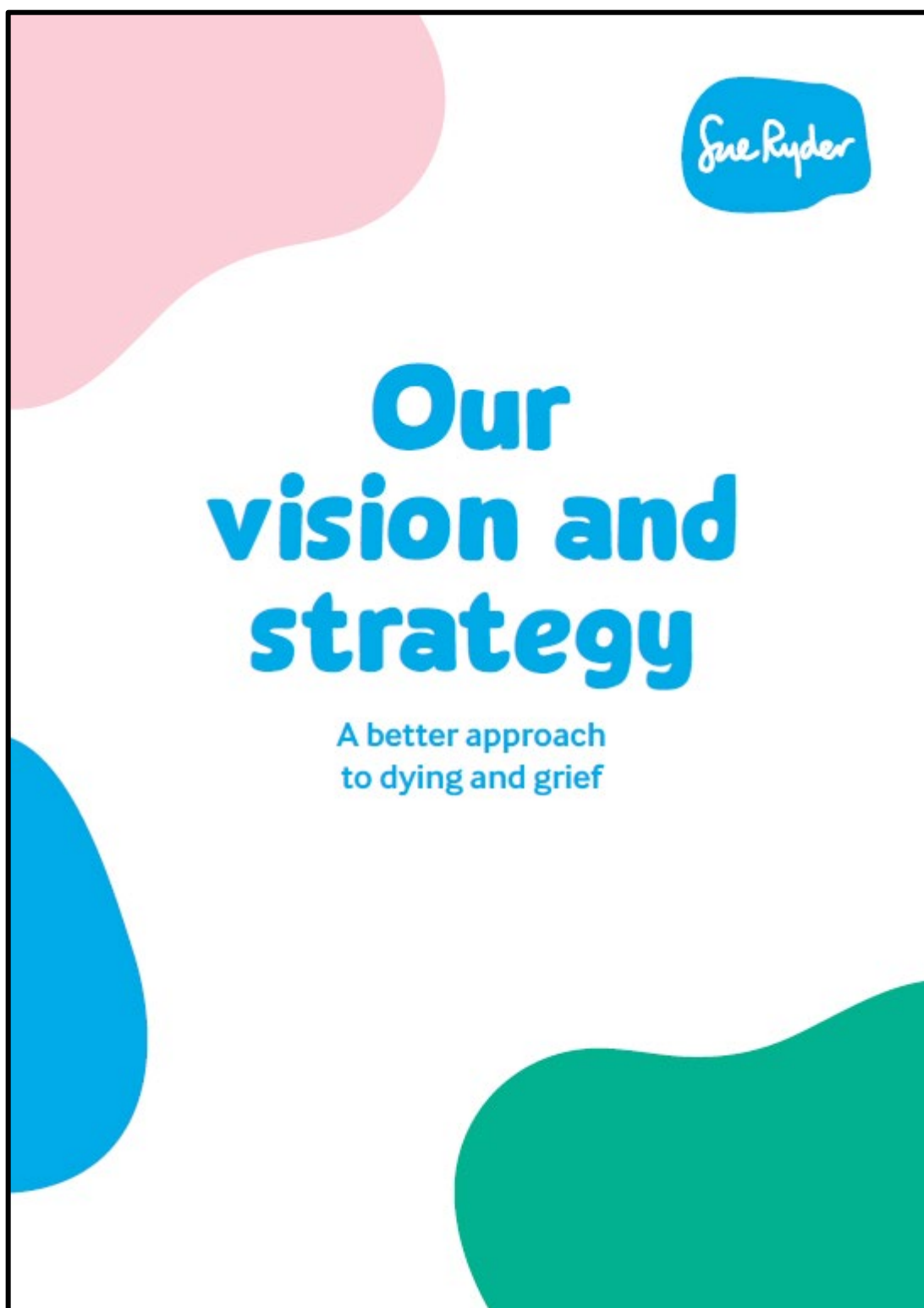


Our vision and strategy

A better approach to dying and grief

Sue Ryder

Accessible PDF version



Our new vision and strategy

We are pleased to present our vision and strategy which aims to transform the experience of everyone facing dying or grief in the UK. We are proud to be spearheading this movement for change, with the support of our experienced staff, dedicated volunteers and our supporters.

Our research shows that we are facing a crisis and we must act. Demand for palliative care across the UK is increasing and people who have been bereaved are not able to access the support they want and need. Conversations about dying and grief are too often avoided, which can leave people unprepared for their own or a loved one's death and many others unable to reach out for support with their grief.

We believe that there is much more that can and should be done to improve our approach to dying and grief and our organisational vision and strategy is our commitment to do just that. A commitment to not only develop and expand the expert and compassionate services for which we are so well known, but to continue to work with the Government and local decision-makers to ensure that the voices of people living with a life-limiting condition or with grief are heard, and access to the care and support they need is unlocked. It is a commitment to reduce the stigma surrounding death and dying to enable everyone to have open and honest conversations about dying and grief with their friends and family.

To deliver our strategy, we must remain agile and responsive, while putting the needs of people at the end of their lives and those living with grief at the heart of our work. When it comes to equity of access, we are focused on breaking down barriers so that people from all communities can access high-quality, culturally relevant palliative care and bereavement support. We

are determined to help create a society where people support one another and can reach out for support and access a range of services and advice when they need it.

This vision and strategy sets out how we plan to achieve our goals and build a society that supports everyone through dying and grief. It's the kind of society we will all need at some point, and we invite you to be part of it.

With best wishes,

Dr Rima Makarem
Chair of Trustees

Heidi Travis
Chief Executive

The challenges we face

Right now, across the UK, many people who are approaching the end of their life or living with grief are unable to access the support they need, with certain demographics finding it harder to access appropriate services than others. End-of-life care is fragmented and underfunded, and services haven't evolved to meet the changing and increasing needs of the population. GPs have shared their concerns about limited services, long waiting lists and the lack of a bereavement pathway linked with NHS services.

Difficult conversations about end-of-life and after-death wishes often go unspoken, deterring people from accessing palliative care services earlier on, and loved ones are left to dwell on whether there was more they could have done. People who are

bereaved are often unable to reach out for support from friends and family and struggle to find the support and information they want in the form it is needed. For some people, the right support means specialist palliative care or professional bereavement support. For others, it means access to information and resources, financial help, or support from within their community. For many, it means simply having support from friends or family, but we're not great at talking about death in the UK.

We want to change that. We want everybody who is grieving or living with a life-limiting condition and their families to be supported through the most difficult of times.

The figures

- Every year in the UK around 600,000 people die, and it is estimated that nine people are affected by bereavement for every death (**note 1**).
- Just under 50% of all people dying in England receive palliative care, yet estimates suggest that up to 90% may have palliative care needs (**note 2**).
- Currently, 245,000 people in England are expected to receive specialist palliative care in the coming year and this is expected to increase by 55% to 379,000 people per year by 2030/31 (**note 3**).
- Over a quarter of people (27%) who had a loved one die without access to specialist end-of-life care, excluding the occasional GP and hospital visit, felt they could have had a better death elsewhere (**note 4**).

- Three-quarters of people would choose to die at home (74%) (**note 5**).
- 60% of people have not spoken to anyone about their own end-of-life wishes and 86% have not documented their wishes in an advance care plan (**note 6**).
- 70% of people who experienced a close bereavement reported they could not access the support they wanted (**note 7**).
- Almost 1 in 5 people cited that the barriers preventing them from accessing formal support were a lack of culturally relevant services (**note 8**).
- 86% of people who have been bereaved in the UK felt alone in their grief (**note 9**).
- 44% of the British public admit to feeling unsure of what to say when someone tells them a close friend or relative has died (**note 10**).

Note 1: Pearce C, Honey JR, Lovick R, **et al** 'A silent epidemic of grief': a survey of bereavement care provision in the UK and Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic. 'BMJ Open' 2021.
DOI:10.1136/bmjopen-2020-046872

Note 2: Sue Ryder research, 'Modelling demand and costs for palliative care services in England', February 2021

Note 3: Sue Ryder research, 'Modelling demand and costs for palliative care services in England', February 2021

Note 4: Censuswide survey on palliative care commissioned by Sue Ryder, March 2022

Note 5: Censuswide survey on palliative care commissioned by Sue Ryder, March 2022

Note 6: Censuswide survey on palliative care commissioned by Sue Ryder, March 2022

Note 7: Sue Ryder research, 'A better route through grief', June 2022

Note 8: Sue Ryder research, 'A better route through grief', June 2022

Note 9: Censuswide survey on grief commissioned by Sue Ryder, July 2021

Note 10: Censuswide survey on grief commissioned by Sue Ryder, July 2021

Our vision

We want a society that supports everyone through dying and grief.

A society where the voices of people who are dying or grieving are heard, where everyone gets the care and support they need and services are integrated with the wider healthcare system. A society where everybody can have open and honest conversations with their friends and family to help them prepare for death and where people with a life-limiting diagnosis are supported to live well in the time they have left. Where trusted resources, information and bereavement services are accessible to everybody who needs them and where communities across the country provide compassion and support to those in need so that nobody grieves alone.

Our three key goals

To ensure our strategy becomes a reality for people across the UK, we have set ourselves three key goals:

Better grief support for everyone

Helping people who are dying to live well

Speaking up for people who are dying or grieving

Better grief support for everyone

We will:

- Build a nationwide movement of grief kindness; starting conversations, sharing stories, and providing resources and tools to encourage and support the UK to be Grief Kind. We will help to create a society where people feel comfortable talking about grief and where support is readily available from friends, family and the wider community so that no one goes through grief alone.
- Provide grief support for everyone who needs it regardless of the place or cause of death, through volunteer-led community services across the UK and our suite of online grief support services, information and resources. These will be expanded and developed to reach a wider and more diverse audience.
- Develop resources including webinars, training and information for organisations to enable them to better support their staff and customers with grief; and provide training for healthcare professionals to support their patients and families so that everybody feels supported in their day-to-day life.

- Collaborate with the NHS, and other charities and organisations, to reach the people they support with our bereavement services.

Helping people who are dying to live well

We will:

- Create a social movement that breaks down the barriers to talking about death and dying through activities, resources and information that enable open and honest conversations, and support people to prepare and plan for their deaths.
- Transform our services to meet the evolving needs of the people we support and the increasing demand. We will ensure that everybody in need of support can access care how and where they choose, delivered through us and other providers, so they can live as well as possible in the time they have left.
- Work collaboratively to ensure that people can access the care they want and that the system works together so that care is joined up and coordinated.
- Break down the barriers of inequality which prevent communities from accessing services by working with groups and organisations they trust, listening to them, understanding their needs and ensuring we meet those needs, and feed the learnings into national conversations.
- Provide support for healthcare professionals around death and dying so that all healthcare professionals have easy access to expertise.

Speaking up for people who are dying or grieving

We will:

- Increase public and political understanding of our work and of the issues affecting people who are dying or grieving so that they are high on the agenda and that more people understand what we do and why it is important.
- Build new partnerships and work collaboratively with the wider end-of-life and bereavement sector, government, and local and national stakeholders, to make the biggest difference for people who are dying or grieving, so that sector issues are addressed in a coordinated way.
- Build on our research and use our evidence and insight to work with MPs and policy-makers to help shape and influence policy that relates to dying and grief.
- Amplify the voices of people who are grieving or facing the end of life and use their views and experiences to evidence issues and to campaign and call for change to improve outcomes.

Our values

Our values – supportive, connected, and impactful – underpin and inform how we approach our work and will help us to deliver our vision and strategy.

Supportive

Equity, diversity and inclusion. We are inclusive, value diversity and actively work to reach different communities with our services, information and support, and ensure they are accessible.

Our people. We want Sue Ryder to be a great place to work and volunteer, where everyone feels they belong. We are committed to creating an inclusive culture in which everyone can thrive, develop and feel valued.

Connected

Working collaboratively. We work in partnership, learn from others and share our expertise to enable everybody to get the best possible care and support.

Our supporters and volunteers. Our work would not be possible without the generosity of our supporters and our volunteers. We will inspire more people to fundraise, donate, volunteer, campaign and advocate for us.

Impactful

Putting people who are grieving or living with a life-limiting condition at the heart of our work. We listen and learn from people who have been affected by dying and grief. We use their experiences to help us design new services, information and resources and to inform the issues on which we raise awareness and campaign for change.

A sustainable organisation. We act responsibly and are committed to becoming a truly ethical and sustainable organisation financially, operationally and environmentally.

There when it matters

- Sue Ryder

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