

Palliative and end of life care programme

Palliative Care is for those living with a serious or progressive medical condition that is unlikely to be cured such as advanced respiratory disease, heart failure, renal disease, neurological conditions and dementia.

Last reviewed
18 June 2026

Key messages

For key terms and phrases you will hear regarding palliative care please click [here](#).

• A Palliative Care approach...

- Aims to achieve the best possible quality of life for people with serious illness
- Cares for all aspects of the person - mind, body and spiritual
- Is beneficial for anyone with a non-curable illness, regardless of age or condition
- Supports family, friends and carers both during an illness and afterwards
- Should be considered as early as possible
- May be suitable for a number of years, not just the weeks and days at the end of life.

• Palliative Care is for...

- A baby born with such serious difficulties that they are unlikely to survive
- A child or young person with a condition that will shorten or severely limit their lives

- An adult of any age facing conditions such as motor neurone disease, cancer or other advanced chronic disorders
- An older person who may be facing a number of advanced progressive conditions affecting their quality of life
- Family members and carers during the illness and afterwards.

What is palliative care?

Palliative Care services can be delivered either by generalist staff or by staff who specialise in palliative care.

General palliative care is delivered by multi-disciplinary teams in primary and community care settings, hospital units and wards.

A general palliative care approach is required by most people and is provided by General Practitioners, District Nurses, Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and Social Workers.

Professionals within these fields recognise when specialist palliative care is needed. Specialist palliative care is the management of unresolved physical, emotional, social or spiritual symptoms. It is delivered by specialist multi-disciplinary teams dedicated to palliative care.

What does palliative care do?

Palliative care:

- provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms;
- affirms life and regards dying as a normal process;
- intends neither to hasten or postpone death;
- integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care;
- offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible until death;
- offers a support system to help the family cope during the patients illness and in their own bereavement;
- uses a team approach to address the needs of patients and their families, including bereavement counselling, if indicated;

- will enhance quality of life, and may also positively influence the course of illness;
- is applicable early in the course of illness, in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to prolong life, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy, and includes those investigations needed to better understand and manage distressing clinical complications.

Where is palliative care available?

In Northern Ireland Palliative Care is provided by General Practice, Health and Social Care Trusts (Belfast, Northern, Southern, Southern, South Eastern, Western and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service), Northern Ireland Hospice, Southern Area Hospice Services, Foyle Hospice and Marie Curie.

Palliative Care is also provided by a range of voluntary and community organisations such as Macmillan.

For a comprehensive list of services broken down by county across the Northern Ireland go to the website of the Irish Association of Palliative Care at:

www.iapc.ie/iapc-directory.php

Palliative Care Week (6-12 September 2026)

The 2026 campaign will take place from Sunday, 6- Saturday, 12 September 2026.

Find out more about events taking place throughout the week, our wide range of campaign resources and order printed promotional materials below.

[Click Here for more Info](#)

It is being coordinated by the All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care (AIHPC) and we want to encourage serious but positive conversations. We aim to raise a deeper public understanding of palliative care regarding when it can be used, who it is for and what its benefits are.

The campaign website is live, you can view it at www.palliativecareweek.com

Transforming your palliative and end of life care programme (2013-2015)

Transforming your palliative and end of life care programme

Marie Curie is working in partnership with the Health and Social Care Board and local partners to design and deliver high quality end of life care.

[Transforming end-of-life care - agendaNi](#)

The Northern Ireland-wide ***Transforming your palliative and end of life care programme*** aims to design and support the delivery of co-ordinated services to enable people with palliative and end of life care needs to have choice in their place of care, greater access to services and improved outcomes at the end of their lives.

This two-year programme will support the implementation of *Transforming Your Care* recommendations in Northern Ireland. The programme is based on the Delivering Choice methodology developed by Marie Curie which uses a whole systems approach to improve care and outcomes.

More information can be found [here](#).

Programme updates are listed below;

[Transforming Your Palliative and End of Life Care - Update \(Feb 2014\).pdf](#)

[Transforming Your Palliative and End of Life Care - Update \(May 2014\).pdf](#)

[Transforming Your Palliative and End of Life Care Update \(June 2014\).pdf](#)

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Key terms and phrases

For key terms and phrases you will hear regarding palliative care please [visit the Palliative Hub.](#)

Key resources for palliative and end of life care services

- [northern-ireland-palliative-care-tools-guidance - The Palliative Hub Professional](#)
- [Palliative Care Knowledge Zone | For professionals | Marie Curie](#)
- [Information and support | Marie Curie](#)
- [NI Assembly Research and Information Service: Briefing Paper - Current Provision of Palliative and End of Life Care Services in Northern Ireland](#)
- [Welcome to the Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland](#)
- [Full Membership for Senior Doctors in Palliative Care | APM](#)
- [Irish Hospice Foundation - To Die and Grieve Well Wherever the Place](#)