

Setting up an End of Life Steering Group for a Health and Social Care Economy: Start small, aim big!

Dr Sarah Wenham¹, Dr Andrea Whitfield², Dr Gillian Au³, Dr Michelle Martin⁴, Dr Susan Salt⁵, Kathryn Smith⁶

^{1,2,5}Consultant in Palliative Medicine, ^{3,4}Macmillan GP Facilitators and ⁶Clinical Lead for End of Life Care

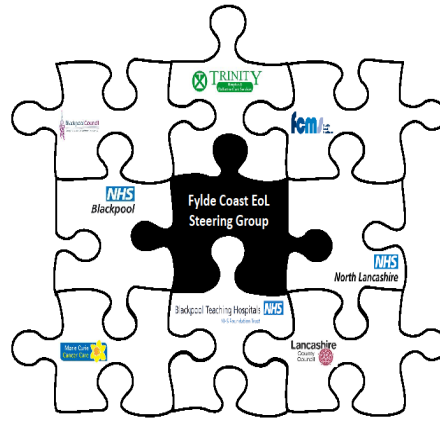
^{1,2,5}Trinity Hospice & Palliative Care Services, ²Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, ³NHS North Lancashire & ^{4,6}NHS Blackpool, UK

Background

- The End of Life Strategy (DOH 2008) recommends a care pathway approach for commissioning and delivering integrated end of life Health and Social Care Services
- The historical development and redesign of services within a large healthcare economy in the North West of England led to varying standards of end of life care provided by two primary care trusts, two local authorities, one acute hospital trust, one integrated Specialist Palliative Care Team and one out-of-hours service
- With the proposed changes to commissioning and service provision, along with the current economic climate, the structure of services was again under redesign
- This provided an opportunity to influence the strategic and operational direction of EoL services within the locality

Aim

- To set up an End of Life Group for the Fylde Coast Health & Social Care Economy



Method

- In order to facilitate partnership working, a small end of life operational group including key commissioning and provider representatives from all the local stakeholder organisations was established
- This group quickly demonstrated achievements in:
 - End of life care pathway design
 - Cross-organisational production of collaborative EoL guidance and documentation
 - Improving co-ordination and communication systems
 - Novel education and teaching initiatives
- This group was invited to put forward their vision, strategy and priorities for EoL care to the overarching H&SC Board for the locality

Results

Vision of Fylde Coast End of Life Steering Group

To improve end of life care through seamless transitions across the health and social care economy of Blackpool, Fylde & Wyre

Strategic Priorities

To deliver better outcomes for patients at the end of life in line with national, regional and local end of life strategy and drivers

- To increase the number of patients identified as being in the last year of life and listed on palliative & supportive care registers
- To increase the number of deaths in the patient's preferred place of death or their usual place of residence
- To reduce the number of patients dying in hospital and within 30 days of discharge from hospital
- To improve the quality of patient and carer experience at the end of life
- To increase the number of health and social care professionals trained in advance care planning and the North West End of Life Care Model

To improve collaborative working across health and social care organisations through joined up multi-agency partnership working

- Through representation from all stakeholder organisations involved in commissioning and providing end of life care on the Fylde Coast

Three workstreams to facilitate the delivery of these priorities

1. Co-ordination of Care

Tasked with:

- Developing an electronic locality register for end of life patients
- Developing an electronic communication system between all care providers
- Developing a single point of contact for patients and relatives
- Publishing end of life performance and outcome data

2. High Quality Services

Tasked with:

- Developing combined Health Economy End of Life Care Pathways, Policies and Procedures for all care providers
- Developing 'all hour' (24/7, in and out of hours) comprehensive care in the community in order to allow people to die in their usual place of residence

3. Education, Training & Awareness

Tasked with:

- Developing a training package & programme for the NW EoLC Model
- Rolling out the NW EoLC Model to be used by health and social care professionals across the Fylde Coast
- Co-ordinating all of the end of life education and training across the Fylde Coast
- Raising awareness of end of life issues within the wider community

Facilitating Factors

- Current changing political and NHS climate
- Vision and leadership of influential individuals
- Collective background, experience, skill, knowledge, and enthusiasm of members
- Mutual respect, commitment and willingness of individuals to work together to overcome barriers
- Cross organisational & boundary working
- Building on track record and achievements
- 'Can do' mentality driving productivity
- Shared drive for excellence in end of life care
- Professional & organised admin support

'Small is beautiful... the freedom to be creative'

Challenges and Barriers

- Managing the change
- Keeping focus on the vision and priorities
- Keeping everyone consulted and informed
- Managing the logistics of a bigger group
- Risk of demotivation and loss of enthusiasm
- Risk of loss of creative ideas
- Risk of loss of productivity to inertia of larger group
- Increasing workload and capacity
- How to ensure the locality listens to us

'We have the opportunity to nail it once and for all... to get it right for our patients in a collaborative, co-ordinated & cost effective way'

Key Lessons Learnt

- Share and agree a vision and purpose from outset
- Ensure given mandate from Healthcare Economy
- Ensure membership from key stakeholders
- Ensure individuals have right level of influence
- Ensure skilled senior leadership
- Ensure project management/admin support
- Harness enthusiasm and strengths of individuals
- Meet regularly initially to create momentum
- Make most of networking opportunities
- Listen to commissioners; work to their priorities
- Communicate, communicate, communicate!

'With a shared vision & aim, change happens'

Conclusion

- A small number of enthusiastic and dynamic individuals have demonstrated their ability to influence and direct the strategic structure of EoL care for a whole locality
- The success of this exciting opportunity was the drive, focus, enthusiasm and commitment of every individual member to work together in collaborative partnership, with the shared vision of improving and enabling high quality end of life care for all in all care settings across our Health and Social Care Economy
- Beginning small, allowing the original group to grow & evolve, and demonstrating achievements was central to the success of the setting up of the Steering Group