

Severn Hospice at Home launched



SPECIAL
EDITION
NEWSLETTER



- Read about our exciting new community service
- Learn more about the staff who support patients in their own homes
- Take part in a new Will writing scheme and raise funds for our work

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Welcome from our Chief Executive

I am delighted to introduce our latest Severn Hospice newsletter. This edition is particularly special because we are throwing the spotlight on a burgeoning aspect of our work – end of life care in the community.

Over recent years we have developed a number of specialist caring teams who work in the local community to provide comfort and relief from pain and distressing symptoms for patients who want to be treated at home. These teams transport our special brand of care beyond the walls of our three Hospice sites and into towns and villages across Shropshire and Mid Wales, effectively acting as a Hospice in your street.

Our community teams have been working alongside one another for a number of years to provide all round support to enable patients to remain at home if that is their wish.

As demand from local people to have the choice to be treated at home has continued to grow, our community teams have developed and have naturally been moving towards integration during the last few years.

This growth and development has provided us with the perfect opportunity to look at the way we organise our community services. Following very positive talks with our colleagues in the local NHS, we are very excited to announce that we are formally merging all of our community teams into a single, unified service called **Severn Hospice at Home**.

I am very pleased to announce that, as part of the merger, all of the region's former Macmillan community nurses will officially become part of the new Severn Hospice at Home service and will now be managed by Severn Hospice. The integrated team will be known as Severn Hospice Clinical Nurse Specialists and their coming together will improve services for patients by offering greater choice in where they receive their treatment and care supported by a *unified* specialist team working in close partnership with local GPs and community staff.

Severn Hospice at Home marks an exciting new chapter for the Hospice and for our patients. The new service will improve access to our community services for patients with a life-threatening illness and will allow us for the first time to move towards caring for patients with a much wider spectrum of conditions.

This newsletter provides an interesting insight into the work of the staff who make up our Severn Hospice at Home team and outlines all of the services they provide in communities like yours.

I hope you enjoy reading what's inside and learning about this important and ever-expanding area of our Hospice's work.

P. Cronin

Paul Cronin
Chief Executive





What is Severn Hospice at Home?

Severn Hospice at Home combines different groups of Hospice community staff who work in partnership to deliver a range of care and support to patients in their own home.

The service is a natural extension of the work we do in our inpatient and Day Hospice facilities, meaning our care really is delivered locally where it is needed the most.

Below is a complete list of all the support provided by the newly created Severn Hospice at Home service.

List of Services Available

- **Severn Hospice Clinical Nurse Specialists** – these nurses provide advice, symptom control and support to patients at home.
- **Hospice at Home team** – this team of nurses and healthcare assistants provide hands-on nursing care at a patient's home during the day and throughout the night in the last weeks of life.
- **Occupational Therapists** – our OTs assess the physical abilities, home environment and equipment needs of patients to assist their wish to be cared for at home.
- **Social Workers** – our social workers provide advice, and emotional and psychological help to patients, families and carers including support following bereavement.
- **Compassionate Communities (Co-Co) volunteers** – these volunteers visit patients with long-term illnesses in the community to provide friendship and support with day-to-day activities.

Former Macmillan nurses join Severn Hospice

Following an approach by the local NHS, we are delighted to announce that our Hospice has agreed to formally join together with a group of nurses originally created by national cancer charity Macmillan.

Severn Hospice now manages all of the region's former Macmillan community nurses after many years of working in close partnership together.

The move comes after discussions between the Hospice and Shropshire County Primary Care Trust (PCT) and NHS Telford and Wrekin, who have been financially supporting the nursing posts since the original funding from Macmillan ended eight years ago.

The former Macmillan nurses are now part of our group of Severn Hospice Clinical Nurse Specialists, who sit within the new Severn Hospice at Home service.

Heather Palin, Nursing Director, said: "This is a very positive move as it will not only support the development of an equitable service and specialist education across the county it will also enable the Clinical Nurse Specialists to provide expert advice and support to professionals providing care for patients with other life-limiting conditions who are approaching the end of life.

"The Specialist Nursing team will have the full support of the entire Hospice clinical team to assist these developments.

"We are very grateful to the Macmillan charity for creating these nursing posts in the first place and are very excited to be moving these very skilled nurses into a new way of working by welcoming them into our Severn Hospice at Home service."

'It's like coming home' – Menna comes full circle

Menna Wigley was part of the first group of nurses recruited to work at Severn Hospice when our Shrewsbury site opened its doors in 1989.

As a recently qualified 20-year-old nurse, Menna responded to an advert in the local newspaper looking for nurses to come to work at the new Hospice and was thrilled to get accepted.

"I was here when it all began over 20 years ago," she said. "The ward was very small then with only four beds but everyone who worked here at the time knew we were creating something very special.

"The opening of the Hospice marked the start of a dedicated specialist end of life care facility for Shropshire."

Menna worked on the wards for the next 13 years, helping to care for hundreds of inpatients during that time.

"Before I joined the Hospice I worked on a hospital ward and I used to get frustrated when I couldn't give the patients all of my attention all of the time. The Hospice was a completely new way of working and I enjoyed the different approach," she said.

In 2002 Menna decided she wanted to explore end of life care in the community and left Severn Hospice to join the national Macmillan charity as a community nurse.

"I wanted to use the knowledge that I had gained working at the Hospice and use it to help people out in the community. It was a natural progression for me at the time," she said.

"I really enjoy helping patients in their own homes as it is a completely different way of working to what I was used to on the wards. It was nice because although I was a Macmillan nurse, I was still able to work alongside the Hospice."

The transfer of the former Macmillan community nurses to the new Severn Hospice at Home service means Menna's career has come full circle and she is now officially part of the Hospice again after nearly nine years working with the national charity.

"Coming back to the Hospice has been like coming home. I'm Severn Hospice born and bred," she said. "I think we are going to dovetail in nicely with the other Severn Hospice Clinical Nurse Specialists.

"The merger will be a good thing for patients as it will hopefully result in quicker access to our services and we, as former Macmillan nurses, will have face-to-face contact with all of the other Hospice teams which will give us an excellent support network."



Menna Wigley supports patients at home as a Severn Hospice Clinical Nurse Specialist

End of life nursing care at home set to expand into Wales

End of life patients in Montgomeryshire who want to be cared for at home will soon be treated by our Hospice at Home team.

Plans are being finalised to expand this important service into Mid Wales for the first time following an agreement with the local NHS.

The Hospice at Home team provides hands-on nursing care to terminally ill patients who are in the last six weeks of life and want to remain at home.

Since the service started in 2003 it has cared for 1,539 people in the Shropshire area and it is hoped that many more patients will benefit when the team covers Mid Wales.

Maggie Broaders, manager of the Hospice at Home team, said: "We are very pleased that we will soon be able to offer our nursing care to Welsh patients for the first time.

"The proposals mean that we will be in line with all the other Severn Hospice services which cover Shropshire and Mid Wales which is a significant development.

"We are currently in the process of recruiting new nurses and healthcare assistants to staff the expanded service so it is a very exciting time for the team."

Maggie added: "Since the team was introduced eight years ago, we have seen an overwhelming response as more and more patients are able to choose to receive treatment in their own home at the end of their life. This is something we hope will continue when we go into Montgomeryshire.

"Our team offers support and nursing care, day or night, to enable people who are very ill to remain in their own home if that is their wish.

"All of our nurses and healthcare assistants not only provide appropriate high-quality end of life care to patients, they are also skilled in giving psychological and emotional support to both our patients and their families and carers during what can be a very distressing time.

"Our service is offered not just to cancer patients but also to people with a variety of life-threatening illnesses."



Above: The Hospice at Home team is now part of the Severn Hospice at Home service

Left: Cloris Bendall is one of the healthcare assistants who support patients at home during their last six weeks of life

OTs give patients and families confidence to cope at home

Living at home with a life-threatening illness can be a painful, difficult and distressing experience without proper specialist support.

Everyday tasks such as bathing, getting out of a chair and moving around become monumental challenges for both the patient and their family members to overcome.

Our Hospice's Occupational Therapists (OTs) assist those patients who wish to remain at home or return home following a stay at the Hospice by providing specialist equipment, advice and guidance to help them maintain their independence.

Nina Pardesi, is based at Severn Hospice Telford and provides OT support in Telford and the surrounding areas, while Liz Ellis-Neal and Karen Jones work from Severn Hospice Shrewsbury and cover west Shropshire and Mid Wales.

The team last year made 262 home visits to meet patients and family members and discuss how best they could help them improve their quality of life at home.

Liz said: "We always start by looking at the patient's wishes and if they want to return home after being on the wards or remain at home during treatment we will look to find a workable solution to enable them to do so comfortably and safely.

"Our role is to look at the practicalities of having a patient with a life-limiting illness at home, whether that is by providing specialist equipment, giving helpful advice on how to cope with everyday tasks or looking at what other support the Hospice can offer.

"We are trying to get away from the perception that what we do is all about equipment. This is a big part of the job but we also look at many other areas that help give patients and families confidence to cope at home. Things such as self esteem and confidence issues, fatigue and breathlessness management, and coping with anxiety and safety."

Nina added: "We look to find ways to help a patient achieve their wishes. We work with people who are facing the end of their life and it is our job to look at what they want to do in their last few weeks and then work out how we can help them.

"Sometimes patients just want to be able to go home for a few hours, spend some time in a familiar environment and sort things out.

"I recently took a gentleman from our inpatient ward home for an afternoon because he desperately wanted to sit in his garden, drink a cup of tea out of his favourite mug and look at the bulbs he had planted.

"This turned out to be the patient's last visit home so it was nice to have been able to help him realise one of his last wishes. Although it is often a very emotional journey you go through with a patient and their family, it is also very rewarding to support and help them during a difficult time in their lives."



Top Right: OTs Nina Pardesi (left) and Liz Ellis-Neal

Bottom Right: Liz with one of the pieces of equipment used to help patients at home

A glass half-full of Co-Co

Being on one's own every day is an all too common experience of long-term illness for many people. This is not only a great sadness but can also lead to crisis.

After their professional carers have been and gone, often it is the terrible loneliness which people face that becomes their greatest problem.

Since January 2010 Severn Hospice has set out to address this need through the Compassionate Communities (Co-Co) scheme.

The initiative supports local towns and villages to establish their own volunteer befriending schemes, helping people living with serious long-term illness to keep in contact with their communities.

First to address this challenge was the community of Church Stretton in January 2010, which will be followed in the coming weeks by the communities of Clun and Cleobury Mortimer.

In each location, local GPs who may have concerns about a person in their community make contact with a local organiser who then matches the person with a volunteer with similar interests. The volunteer then starts to visit, usually on a weekly basis, keeping in contact by phone inbetween.

And what a difference it is making.

Feedback from those receiving the visits has been overwhelmingly positive and already the local professionals are noticing a difference in the demands from the visited people on local services.

Whether it be helping with paperwork, picking up prescriptions, helping with gardening or accompanying the person to the shops, the team of volunteers are giving practical assistance and linking those with such illnesses back into their communities.

They also act as the 'eyes and ears' of the professional carers, and are able to feedback any concerns they may have about the visited person's health to the local GPs who can then respond accordingly.

The development of the Co-Co volunteers is an important and exciting new initiative for Severn Hospice involving, as it does, working with new partners in communities such as The Mayfair Centre, Church Stretton; the Clun and Clun Valley Good Neighbours Group; and the Cleobury Mortimer Patients' Voice.

Paul Cronin, Chief Executive, said: "Co-Co is a brilliant example of communities doing it for themselves but with the backing of the specialist staff at Severn Hospice.

"I have been humbled by the willingness of ordinary people to give up some of their precious time each week to help a neighbour feel part of their community.

"There are a lot of 'glass half-empty' attitudes in society today but it has struck me, in each community we work with, that the glass is more than half full with people willing to show their compassion for their neighbours."



Left: Co-Co service user Jack Branney (left) enjoys a walk with volunteer John Millham

Help take care of the future today

Demand for all of our services continues to grow every year as we care for an increasing number of people from across Shropshire and Mid Wales.

We expect more patients in the future will want to receive support at home through our Severn Hospice at Home team.

It is thanks to the ongoing generosity and good will of our supporters that we are able to continue providing and developing our much-needed services such as Severn Hospice at Home.

In order to thank our supporters for all they do for our Hospice, local solicitors Linder Myers is running a new Will writing scheme in aid of our work.

Linder Myers is offering all staff and supporters of Severn Hospice and their families the opportunity to write a basic Will for free.

The lawyers are waiving their normal fee in the hope that those who take part will make a donation to the Hospice to help fund the vital care and support we provide to thousands of local people every year.

Norma Ross, Appeals Director, said: "We are incredibly grateful to all our supporters who make our work possible and who's ongoing generosity will enable us to continue providing services such as Severn Hospice at Home for many years to come.



"We are delighted Linder Myers is fundraising for us through its Will writing scheme and we hope many of our staff and supporters will take part and make a donation towards our work.

"Legacies, or gifts people leave in Wills, are an important source of funding for the Hospice, accounting for around one third of the voluntary income we receive.

"Leaving a legacy to the Hospice is not compulsory to participate in the Will writing scheme, but preparing a Will is the one opportunity many of us have to make a real difference and support a cause that is important to us personally. We hope that people may consider our Hospice worthy of such a special gift."

Richard Ashton, Partner and Head Trusts and Estates at Linder Myers Shropshire, said: "Our Will writing scheme is an excellent opportunity for Severn Hospice staff and supporters to make a difference both to their own family's future and for the patients and their loved ones who are cared for by such a worthy local cause.

"We understand people are sometimes reluctant to think about making a Will but it is never too early to take that step and our lawyers will help make the process as hassle free as possible."

If you would like to take part in the Will writing scheme, please contact:

David Driver de Valle

on: 01743 231491

email: severnhospice@lindermyers.co.uk

or write to:

Linder Myers, Irelands Mansion office,
29 High Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 1SQ

The Will writing promotion runs until the end of October 2011.

Making a Will brings peace of mind to you and those you love