

COVID 19 & Palliative Care: Resource for frontline homeless sector staff

Who this guide is for: Anyone supporting individuals who are rough sleeping or in temporary/insecure accommodation. This can include hostel staff, outreach workers, caseworkers etc.

What is it: Information about what palliative care is and how it fits into the support you are providing to people experiencing homelessness. It is meant as a supportive tool to help you identify and have conversations with individuals about their end of life in order to access support, for them and those around them.

Who to contact for support: **Niamh Brophy, Homeless Palliative Care Coordinator** for Greater Manchester.
Mobile: 07725957224 **Email:** Niamh.brophy1@nhs.net

What is palliative care? Palliative care takes an **integrated approach** to care and support for people with advanced ill health. This could be from a terminal illness like cancer where the illness is relatively predictable, or it could be due to a combination of physical ill health and substance use that leaves someone very unwell, but it is not easy to predict when they will die. A palliative approach is helpful in both these situations as it focuses on **quality of life** for clients and the people supporting them, like frontline staff. This approach affirms life and understands death as part of life too. Palliative care provides holistic care through:

- **Relief of symptoms** (e.g. pain, shortness of breath)
- **Helping to put extra supports in place** (e.g. practical, social, psychological etc.)
- **Understanding, and attending to, what matters to the client** (wishes, expectations, values)

How can I help provide palliative care as a frontline

worker? 1. Identify clients of most concern Individuals with underlying health conditions are at higher risk of death due to COVID19. A hierarchy of vulnerabilities can be found [here](#). Work with your team to identify who is most at risk in your service and aim to have conversations with them about what they would want in the event they became seriously unwell. Helping clients to plan for deteriorating health is not easy, but by doing this you increase the chance of them receiving person centred care that is in line with their wishes.

TIPS FOR HAVING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

- ✓ Identify who may be best placed to have these conversations
- ✓ Plan in advance what you want to ask/talk about. A list of suggested Qs [can be found here](#)
- ✓ [See here for suggested responses](#) to difficult client concerns
- ✓ Respect clients wish not to engage
- ✓ Get support for yourself

2. Speak to clients about their wishes and expectations

It is helpful to frame the conversation as “hoping for the best, but planning for the worst.” This approach enables planning for end-of-life care in line with the client’s wishes, while allowing the client to maintain hope. It is normal to feel anxious about having such conversations, but these feelings alone should not stop you from having them. Helpful online resources to guide you include [The Homeless Palliative Care Toolkit](#).

These important conversations are called Advance Care Planning (ACP). Without them, health professionals who do not know the person very well may have to make decisions without knowing their wishes. So timely, honest conversations are hugely beneficial to people, those close to them and the health professionals who work with them. You do not have to be a medical expert to have an ACP conversation. Having a connection and trust is more important.

Having these conversations may make you feel anxious or worried. This is a normal reaction to a difficult situation. Use the resources in this document to support you. A useful video on how to explore a client’s insight into their illness [here](#)

COVID19 GUIDELINES

- ✓ Groundswell have developed some [resources](#) to help organisations plan around Covid19. There are two leaflets for service users who are [sleeping rough](#) or in [TA](#)
- ✓ We have collected guidance related to homelessness and palliative care and put it all in one place [here](#)

What to talk about?

- Understanding of their illness/COVID19
- Concerns/hopes for future
- Coping strategies
- Relationships
- Treatment and care
- Where they’d like to be
- Legacy

USEFUL LINKS

- ✓ [Lasting Power of Attorney for Health:](#) Gov.UK
- ✓ [Capacity concerns:](#) Homeless Link
- ✓ [Substance use support:](#) Collective Voice
- ✓ [GM Mental health & Homeless Team](#)

3. Record client wishes and refer on

If you have had conversations and identified a client's wishes and preferences, ensure this information is passed on to the right people. Use the template at the end of this document to make a COVID Advance Care Plan. Keep hardcopies and share with the clients GP.

Please reach out to the Homeless Palliative Care Coordinator if you need support with ACP or other issues. Niamh.Brophy1@nhs.net | 07725957224

Loss and trauma: Supporting yourself and others

We are all experiencing loss in some way as a result of COVID19. We have all lost our normal routines and we are having to deal with the possibility of actual or threatened loss of the people we support and care about. We may be worrying about our own health, and the health of our vulnerable clients, our colleagues and loved ones, yet we may be cut off from our usual sources for support and coping. It is therefore crucial that we find ways to create new routines, find meaning and social connection in order to process our collective grief.

Supporting yourself through loss and trauma

Everyone will have their own way of processing loss. It may feel particularly difficult to do during this crisis, but self care is not a recommendation, it is essential. **Think self-care, sleep, routine, rest.** Stock up on compassion and let go of what you cannot control. Use the links in the Support Resources box to find tools that suit you and meets your needs.

Core conditions when supporting others

Empathy	No judgement	Be yourself	Keep your boundaries
I try to understand what it must be like for the person, show them that I have heard them and try to help if I can	I accept people for who they are and understand that we all react differently to loss	I can only be myself. I acknowledge my own feelings and try to do the best I can for others	I am aware of my own professional and emotional boundaries, what I feel safe to share and what I need to keep to myself

Supporting your clients through loss and trauma

Ensure clients are given choice and control about how they manage their feelings of loss. Be [trauma informed](#) in your approach and as always, be compassionate.

SUPPORT RESOURCES

- ✓ [NHS approved apps to reduce anxiety](#)
- ✓ [Podcast on Grief and Finding Meaning](#)
- ✓ [Frontline 19](#) for free counselling support to frontline workers
- ✓ [MIND tips for managing emotions safely](#)
- ✓ [Homeless Link webinar 5 Elements of Emotional Wellbeing](#)

Some things that may help: check ins (via phone/video), bereavement support sessions with the Palliative Care Coordinator, GM Mental Health Homeless Team, create wellbeing packs, sharing tips to [manage emotions safely](#), being mindful of risk and safety plans.

Supporting your colleagues through loss and trauma

Now more than ever we must demonstrate collective care at work. You can support your colleagues in much the same way you support yourself and your clients; simply offering time to check in with your team or sharing resources would be helpful.

GREATER MANCHESTER BEREAVEMENT SERVICE

0161 983 0902

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
Wednesday, 9am to 8pm
Except bank holidays



Greater-Manchester-Bereavement-Service.org.uk

St Ann's Homeless Palliative Care Service can provide **advice/support, counselling and training** to staff, teams and clients across Greater Manchester. To get support please contact the Palliative Care Coordinator

My COVID Advance Care Plan

Name:	NHS Number:
Who has a copy of this plan?	
Summary of my health condition(s):	
List of drugs I take (prescribed/recreational) and how they are administered	
Prescribed Drugs	Recreational Drugs

What is important to me....
 (e.g. what I like to do, what helps me feel happy and in control)

Any comments or additions from other people you are close to?

I'd like to talk to a doctor about my treatment options if I were to get COVID 19 e.g. ventilation : Yes/ No

Where I'd like to be cared for....
 (e.g. hospital, hostel, hospice)

1st Choice:

2nd Choice:

Comments:

Who is important to me...

Who else would you like to be involved if it becomes difficult for you to make decisions or if there was an emergency (key worker, family, trusted friend)?

Who would you NOT want to be involved?

Does anyone have official Lasting Power of Attorney? Y/N

My legacy....

(e.g. How I'd like to be remembered, who I'd like to have my belongings)

I also have...

(Note where these are kept)

- A will
- Lasting Power of Attorney
- Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment

They are kept:

Contact details.....

Use this page to record contact details of anyone who is involved in your care or who is important to you.

Name	Relationship to you	Contact Number