



**East Cheshire  
Hospice**  
Where people come to live

**Quality Account  
2024-2025**



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# 01. Statement of Assurance from the Board of Trustees

"On behalf of East Cheshire Hospice, I am delighted to present our Quality Account for 2024–2025. This past year has been one of resilience, innovation and unwavering commitment to providing the highest quality palliative and end-of-life care. I am immensely proud of how our Hospice has adapted to challenges, fostered collaboration and continually evolved to meet the needs of our patients and their loved ones. Our commitment to adaptability has ensured that we not only support our current patients and their carers and loved ones but also remain well positioned to serve those who may require our assistance in the future.

East Cheshire Hospice continues to uphold the highest standards of care, as expected by the Care Quality Commission. Over the past year, we have made significant progress in delivering on the four key change programmes outlined in our 3-year Strategic Aims and Delivery Plan for 2024–2027. These achievements are described in more detail below, and include:

**Development of Existing Hospice Services:** By enhancing our capabilities in Dementia services and Hospice @Home provision we have expanded our reach to meet the growing demand for care and support closer to home.

**Hospice Sustainability:** We continue to ensure East Cheshire Hospice remains financially strong and sustainable to meet the demands for high-quality palliative and end-of-life care provision.

**System Integration for Palliative and End-of-Life Care:** A key milestone has been the establishment of a unified coordination hub for palliative care, providing a streamlined point of contact to improve access to advice and tailored support.

**Facilities Development:** Progress includes the refurbishment of our Inpatient Unit bedrooms to ensure the best possible environment for our patients and their loved ones.

This Quality Account is an opportunity to showcase the remarkable efforts made over the past year and to celebrate the innovative accomplishments of our relatively small yet profoundly impactful organisation.

Our dedication to environmental sustainability remains steadfast. We continue to take meaningful steps towards reducing our carbon footprint and adopting greener, more sustainable practices.

Despite the significant financial challenges from rising operational costs and a challenging fundraising environment, due to the cost-of-living crisis, our services have been maintained thanks to the unwavering support of our dedicated community – our supporters, patients, their loved ones and families, staff and volunteers. Their generosity and commitment have enabled us to sustain our existing services while also pioneering new initiatives, which through a 24/7 Advice Line provides easier access to coordinated palliative and end-of-life care for our local community.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on strengthening our sustainability through continued collaboration with partners. We are committed to ensuring that the incredible support from our communities directly benefits the patients and their loved ones that we serve.

Finally, I am pleased to confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, the information presented in this Quality Account accurately reflects the quality standards upheld at East Cheshire Hospice."

*Will Spiks*

Chair, East Cheshire Hospice



# Statement of Assurance from East Cheshire Hospice's CEO



"In the last 12 months our staff and volunteers have provided outstanding care with exceptional levels of compassion to people in East Cheshire facing the challenges of a terminal illness. It has been a privilege to care for so many patients and their loved ones when they need support, and we remain indebted to our teams for the dedication and commitment they have shown in the most challenging of times for the health and social care sector.

Our Inpatient Unit, Hospice @Home, Sunflower Living Well Centre, Dementia and Family Support teams have strengthened our collaborations and partnerships with colleagues in other charities, the NHS and Cheshire East Council to increase the number of patients and their loved ones we have cared for in 2024/25. This marks the third increase in the number of people we have supported in as many years and validates our ambition to meet the growing demand in East Cheshire for access to high-quality living well services and end-of-life care for people affected by a life-limiting illness.

In the year, Hospice Trustees agreed to fund two additional teams in our Hospice @Home service to give as many people as possible the opportunity of retaining choice and control and dying in a place of their own choosing. Following a major refurbishment programme, our Sunflower Living Well Centre helped more people managing life-limiting conditions or going through invasive treatments for a range of diseases than ever before. We are proud to report that our work supporting carers of people with dementia through our award-winning Dementia Carers Wellbeing Programme is now an integral part of healthcare provision in each of the five Care Communities in East Cheshire.

We adapted our reporting and monitoring practices in line with the Care Quality Commission's new Single Assessment Framework and we continue

to receive feedback which rates us as a low-risk organisation. The quality of our services and clinical practice is monitored and reviewed by our Patient Care & Clinical Governance Committee which reports directly to the East Cheshire Hospice Trustee Board. We continue our commitment to working in partnership with other healthcare organisations to improve quality, widen access and help to build a strong and sustainable integrated care system in Cheshire East Place and across the area covered by the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board.

This Quality Account reports on progress and ongoing developments under the four key change programmes we have identified in our rolling 3-year Strategic Aims and Delivery Plan. We are determined to continue to work tirelessly in partnership with a variety of organisations to increase access to high-quality, compassionate and co-ordinated palliative and end-of-life care for even more patients living in East Cheshire alongside the support offered to their loved ones.

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge, the information contained within this Quality Account is a true and accurate account of quality standards at East Cheshire Hospice."

*Karyn Johnston*

Chief Executive, East Cheshire Hospice

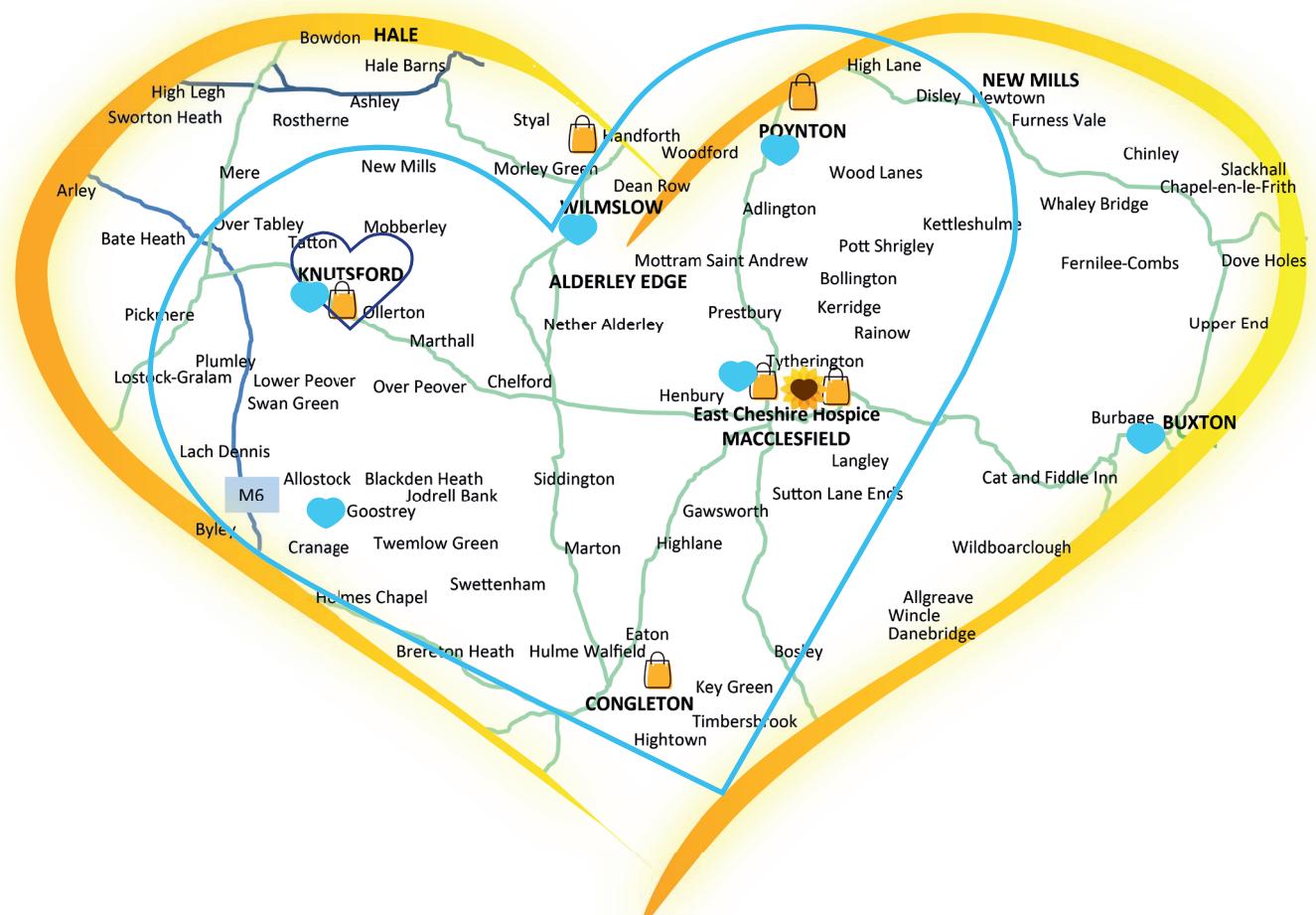
# Statement on Governance and Public Benefit

## How we serve the population of East Cheshire

East Cheshire Hospice cares for hundreds of patients (over the age of 18) every year who are affected by a life-limiting illness', while offering support to their families and carers too. Our services are delivered by a dedicated multi disciplinary team which includes Nurses, Doctors, Allied Healthcare Professionals, Complementary Therapists, Psychological Support Staff and Dementia Specialists.

We work in partnership with acute hospitals, community services, local authority social care providers and voluntary organisations to deliver care that is special and unique to each individual. We support patients and their loved ones right through their illness journey, from point of diagnosis through to treatment and beyond.

We provide services for patients and carers not only at our Hospice site in the heart of Macclesfield, but also provide dementia services in community venues across East Cheshire. In addition to these services we also have our Hospice @Home team which delivers care directly in the patient's home, supporting a patient to be in a place of their choosing at the end of their life. Our developing PACE team will work collaboratively with the Hospice @Home team, with Advanced Nurse Practitioners making assessments of people in their home and being able to prescribe end-of-life medication.



East Cheshire Hospice main site



Hospice @Home



Knutsford Home First



Community Support Groups



Retail outlets

## East Cheshire Hospice's Vision

By 2028, East Cheshire Hospice will be at the centre of a whole-system solution delivering or facilitating high-quality, seamless, and coordinated end-of-life care to people affected by life-limiting illness, ensuring they are prepared, supported, and cared for in a place of their choosing and with the minimum of stress and anxiety.

## Our Ambition is Continuous Improvement

Our commitment to continuously enhancing our services, efficiency and effectiveness is deeply embedded in our culture, plans and personal objectives.

We will demonstrate this commitment by using data from patient and family feedback, incident reports and frontline experiences to drive meaningful changes that lead to improved outcomes for those who rely on our support.

In 2025/26, we will evaluate the impact of having fully integrated services across Hospice, community and acute settings, ensuring patients and their loved ones have a seamless journey from the point of diagnosis.

We will also conduct a formal review of our existing services to assess their effectiveness within current funding constraints and to identify the resources needed to meet future demand or enhance service provision.

# Our CARE Principles

C

## Compassion

We ensure we put our patients, their families and carers at the centre of everything we do, and we always act with care and compassion.

A

## Association

We will work in partnership and collaboration, forming productive alliances in the interests of our patients.

R

## Resourcefulness

We will make the best use of our resources, ensuring that income from our communities is directly channelled into care and support for patients and their families.

E

## Excellence

We will invest in learning and development for our staff and volunteers - striving for excellence in all we do.

## Governance

### Equality & Diversity in our Hospice

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives have remained central to creating an environment where everyone feels safe, valued and a true sense of belonging. While the Equality Act 2010 provides legal protection against discrimination for both those receiving and providing care, our ambition has been to transcend mere legal compliance. We have continued to recognise the diverse attributes that shape an individual's experience when accessing or working within our services, including accent, caring responsibilities, culture, invisible disabilities, gender expression, mental health, neurodiversity, physical appearance, political opinion, paternity and family status, among other personal characteristics.

At East Cheshire Hospice, we acknowledge the individuality of every person who comes through our doors. Understanding that everyone has unique needs, values and beliefs – often shaped by multiple overlapping identities – has reinforced the importance of implementing meaningful EDI initiatives.

In January 2025, the collaborative EDI Lead shared between the three Cheshire hospices resigned and our EDI Forum became independent, with representation from staff and volunteers across the organisation. Despite this transition, East Cheshire Hospice has remained committed to advancing its EDI initiatives. Looking ahead to 2025/26, we anticipate re-advertising the EDI Lead position to strengthen collaboration, streamline operations and align individual strategies to foster a unified Cheshire-wide approach. By consolidating our efforts,

we aim to develop a more cohesive and impactful strategy that enhances EDI initiatives across the region.

During 2024/25 the dedicated efforts of our Dementia Services team and the EDI Forum and Homelessness service continued to strengthen best practices and build meaningful connections with various local community providers. This ongoing commitment aims to address the unique needs of these often overlooked and under served communities, to ensure that they are met with compassion and expertise. By maintaining strong partnerships with other organisations, we help individuals within these groups feel empowered to seek support and care from East Cheshire Hospice without fear of discrimination. This inclusive approach fosters a welcoming and supportive environment where everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, can access the assistance they need.

With new EDI leadership planned in 2025/26, this collaboration will be further strengthened, enhancing advocacy efforts and expanding our influence on policies and practices. Together, we remain committed to advancing EDI both within our organisation and across the wider community.



Clinical Director of Quality, Sarah Dale

## East Cheshire Hospice Delivery Plan & Strategic Priorities

April 2025 – March 2028

- 1** To ensure we have the capacity and capability to deliver or facilitate accessible, relevant and inclusive services which support people and their loved ones to live well whatever their condition.
- 2** To ensure that East Cheshire Hospice remains financially sustainable and meets our communities' needs.
- 3** To work with partners to fully integrate our services so that patients and their loved ones experience a crisis-free last year of life with choice and control right to the end.
- 4** To ensure our facilities are fit for purpose, efficient to run and safe to use.

### Update on Care Quality Commission (CQC)

East Cheshire Hospice is licensed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to provide treatment for diseases, disorders and injuries. The Hospice received a 'Good' rating during its last formal inspection in June 2016.

The new CQC Single Assessment Framework applies to providers, local authorities and integrated care systems, with the following five key questions remaining central to their approach:

- **Safe:** Are services protecting people from harm?
- **Effective:** Does care, treatment and support achieve good outcomes?
- **Caring:** Do staff involve and treat people with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect?
- **Responsive:** Are services organised to meet people's needs?
- **Well-led:** Does leadership ensure high-quality care and continuous improvement?

During an inspection, the CQC gathers evidence from individuals who have experienced the Hospice's services. This includes their lived experiences, satisfaction with the care, support and treatment received, as well as access to services and transfers between care.

Evidence is collected through various means, including emails, telephone calls, clinical systems, other healthcare providers, patients, carers and staff.

East Cheshire Hospice has worked tirelessly to meet and demonstrate the 'outstanding' standards expected. We operate each day with the mindset that the CQC could visit our organisation at any time.

## Integrated Care Board Changes and Challenges

On a regional level, we engaged actively with the Cheshire & Merseyside Hospice Provider Collaborative, advocating for patients living in East Cheshire, in various Integrated Care System (ICS) transformation and programme boards to guarantee fair access to high-quality care for everyone.

In the 2024/25 financial year, NHS England required Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to make budget cuts and implement structural changes that required East Cheshire Hospice to acknowledge and consider these challenges when planning our strategic priorities for 2025–28. In the face of financial constraints, increased patient demand, delegation of specialised services to the ICBs and improving integration and collaboration with integrated care systems, East Cheshire Hospice has ensured it remains focused on improving the lives of those living with a palliative diagnosis and aims to be the centre of a whole-system solution within East Cheshire.

The need for ICBs to reduce running costs by 30% could lead to tighter budgets for the Hospice for certain projects such as the Palliative Care in Partnership (PCiP) collaboration with our Hospice @Home service, necessitating more efficient use of resources. Effective collaboration with ICBs is crucial for seamless patient care, and any barriers to integration could affect the Hospice's ability to coordinate with other healthcare providers. Additionally, rising patient numbers and complex healthcare needs are resulting in increased demand for hospice services, requiring East Cheshire Hospice to expand its capacity and capabilities to meet these growing needs. Strategic planning, strong leadership and continuous adaptation are essential for navigating these challenges and maintaining high standards of care.

## Quality Partnerships and Collaborations

### Cheshire & Merseyside Hospice Provider Collaborative

We are an active participant in this regional grouping of hospices within the Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care System (ICS). Members of the Collaborative work together to share knowledge and expertise, consolidate good practices and to negotiate collectively with the Integrated Care Board for additional NHS funding. Through the Collaborative and the Cheshire & Merseyside Palliative and End of Life Care Programme Board, we advocate for patients living in East

Cheshire to ensure they receive equitable access to high-quality care.

Our plans aimed at strengthening the Integrated Care System and addressing local needs have been informed by Cheshire East Council population health data and the strategies of other local health and social care partners.

In partnership with the other Cheshire and Merseyside hospices we have provided inpatient data reporting, comparing like-for-like metrics across the hospices. We are also enhancing our reporting for Palliative Outcome Scales to demonstrate the benefits of the care provided at our Hospice, and we share this work with other hospices and clinical organisations both locally and nationally.

The Cheshire & Merseyside Hospice Collaborative has achieved significant success over the past year by consolidating good practices and considering shared resources and facilities. A notable accomplishment has been the development of a costed model for a 10-bed Inpatient Unit, which provides a comparator bed cost and highlights NHS underfunding for the sector. Over the next 12 months, we will focus on understanding the issues and barriers related to digital/electronic data flow and the risks to the ICB, which currently relies solely on end-of-life GP EMIS data for future service planning.

### Cheshire & Merseyside Palliative and End of Life (PEoLC) Clinical Network

The Network serves as the central hub for expert insights on palliative and end-of-life care, offering guidance on clinical matters. By integrating national guidance into local practices, the Network ensures consistent care standards and pathways, promoting uniformity across Cheshire and Merseyside.

In the 2024/25 period, the Network focused on improving access to emergency drugs out of hours, transitioning pathways for children and young persons into adult hospice services and maintaining 24-hour access to urgent community response for palliative care/support. This is particularly important during times of uncertainty with the future landscape of NHS England and ICBs. Additionally, ongoing discussions regarding the Assisted Dying Bill and its potential impact on palliative care services will continue.



## Cheshire & Merseyside Community of Practice (CoP)

The objectives of the CoP include:

- Establishing peer support through a buddy system for Hospice Registered Managers in the Cheshire & Merseyside locality.
- Sharing best practices across the Hospice Group.
- Facilitating innovation and a solution-focused approach.
- Enhancing the quality, safety and patient experience of hospice care.
- Contributing to the strategic development of hospice care.

Members have continued to work collaboratively this year, sharing information and support, resulting in a collective pool of resources, experiences, tools and strategies. Additionally, the group has identified the need for senior clinicians within the hospices to have their own dedicated support network and plans are in place to facilitate the development of this network in early 2025/26.

## The Cheshire Quality Leads Group

The Quality Leads (one from East Cheshire Hospice) work together and with the ICB Quality and Safeguarding teams. By fostering open dialogue and actively listening to the perspectives of colleagues and also the people we care for, we aim to strengthen our practices and embed a safety-first culture rooted in continuous learning – guided by the requirements of the 2023 NHS Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF).

East Cheshire Hospice, with support from the NHS Quality Team, has recently developed its own Patient Safety Incident Response Policy and Plan. The key features of this are:

**Learning-Focused:** Promotes understanding and improvement over blame.

**Flexible and Proportional:** Encourages tailored responses based on the scale and complexity of incidents.

**Systems Thinking:** Looks at wider systemic factors contributing to incidents.

**Patient and Family Involvement:** Prioritises openness and collaboration with those affected.

**Continuous Organisational Learning:** Shifts the focus to ongoing improvement rather than isolated investigations.

## End of Life Partnership (EOLP)

In 2024/25, East Cheshire Hospice continued its collaboration with the End of Life Partnership (EOLP) to enhance the experiences of individuals receiving palliative and end-of-life care. The staff training and education initiatives included:

- Advanced communication skills
- Resilience and conflict de-escalation training for managers
- Face-to-face induction training programmes for new Health Care Assistants
- Sessions delivered as part of the Dementia Carers Wellbeing Programme.



Clinical Services Manager,  
Claire Barber.

## Community Engagement

Our community engagement activities including collaborations with corporate teams, the Ambassador group and attendance at local groups such as the Women's Institute and community carer support groups allow the Hospice to better understand the needs of the communities we serve. This insight helps us develop responsive services while also creating opportunities to increase income generation and volunteer involvement.

## Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains a fundamental part of our culture, values and daily practice at East Cheshire Hospice. It reflects our unwavering commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone – particularly children and adults at risk – ensuring they are protected from abuse, neglect and harm.

Claire Barber, appointed in January 2024 as the Hospice's Safeguarding Lead, plays a key role in supporting staff and volunteers, consistently reinforcing that safeguarding is a shared responsibility and a fundamental priority across every aspect of hospice care.

We are committed to maintaining the highest standards through vigilant monitoring of safeguarding concerns and trends. We ensure that any issues are reported promptly to the Cheshire East Council Safeguarding Team, promoting timely and effective intervention. Our approach is



fully aligned with the principles of the Care Act 2014, ensuring that all safeguarding matters are addressed with responsiveness, transparency and integrity.

## Information Technology

Our IT Strategy has been updated in line with the East Cheshire Hospice Plan on a Page for 2025–28, incorporating strategies for Artificial Intelligence, Data and Business Analytics and Cyber Security. This comprehensive approach ensures we are well-prepared for future challenges and opportunities.

## Cyber Security

In terms of data security, we achieved Cyber Essentials Plus certification and the NHS Data Security Protection Toolkit for another year. Over the past six months we have launched our Cyber Security Policy and conducted cyber awareness training for staff. Monthly vulnerability scanning tools have been implemented to maintain our security standards.

## Data and Business Analytics

Our efforts in data and business analytics have been fruitful, and we have conducted a Data Maturity Assessment and developed Power BI dashboards for clinical reporting, activity and compliance data. We have implemented automation tools for approvals, recruitment and device management, and are continuously reviewing our data systems, including EMIS, Blackbaud and Vantage.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI)

There are early indications that the organisation could benefit hugely from innovations in AI. This is slowly being rolled out in different teams within the Hospice.

Key areas of progress are:

- Production of an Artificial Intelligence Strategy with a supporting policy.
- A small number of identified personnel are testing use of Microsoft Copilot AI.
- The IT team are researching AI tools for advanced healthcare planning, data analysis and business efficiency.

## Upgrades

System upgrades are ongoing, with the rollout of Windows 11 to PCs and a revamped SharePoint Homepage focusing on organisational news and key information. As EMIS updates and introduces new features, we will integrate them into our daily practices at the Hospice, including EMIS-X Mobile, Version 3 of the Bed Management module with patient flags and EMIS-X Companion.

This overview highlights our team's dedication to advancing our IT infrastructure, enhancing data security.



# 02. Review of 2024/25

In March 2025, the Board and Senior Management Team of East Cheshire Hospice came together for an inspiring and forward-thinking retreat. The focus: to reflect on our 2023–27 Strategic Aims and Delivery Plan, celebrate the remarkable progress of 2024/25 and set a bold, refreshed course with the launch of our 2025–28 Strategic Aims and Delivery plan.

This energising session was not only a chance to recognise the dedication and impact of our teams but also to ignite new ideas, strengthen collaboration and shape the next phase of our Hospice's future.

Exciting progress was made in our four key Change Programmes for 2024/25:

1

Change Programme 1:  
Development of Existing  
Hospice Services

2

Change Programme 2:  
Hospice Sustainability

3

Change Programme 3:  
System Integration for  
Palliative and  
End-of-Life Care

4

Change Programme 4:  
Facilities Re-development



Figure 2.1. - Our Advantage circle



## Change Programme 1 - Development of Existing Hospice Services

**Sandra Jones**, who recently retired as Clinical Director of East Cheshire Hospice after nearly a decade of dedicated service, made a profound impact on the Hospice's clinical services. With over 40 years of experience in adult nursing, Sandra brought a wealth of knowledge and compassion to her role.

During her tenure, Sandra was instrumental in implementing numerous change programmes, and her leadership in safeguarding practices earned her a prestigious award from the Cheshire East Safeguarding Adults Board.

Navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sandra demonstrated exceptional resilience and adaptability.

Sandra's passion for delivering high-quality care and her ability to lead through times of change have left a lasting legacy at East Cheshire Hospice. Her contributions have significantly enhanced the Hospice's ability to provide compassionate and effective care to its patients and their loved ones.



Recently retired, Sandra Jones

Sandra's retirement marks the end of an era, but her impact will continue to be felt for years to come!

### Dementia Services

Following the substantial investment in Dementia services in 2023/24, the expansion of the service has exceeded all expectations. The Dementia Carer Wellbeing Programme has expanded from half days in the five communities to five full days.

Alongside the structured programme offered to support carers, they now have access to a number of activities they can attend together with their loved ones in community venues, including Dementia Café drop ins, a Sunshine Social group with games and music, Singing Together and Love to Move exercise sessions.

The Hospice has continued to raise awareness among referrers about the expansion of Dementia services, resulting in increased engagement and referrals.

The team is now fully staffed with two new part-time Health Care Assistants who joined the team at the end of March 2025. To support the ongoing development of the service, line management has transitioned to the Clinical Services Manager. This change will allow for closer oversight and more responsive support as the programme continues to evolve.

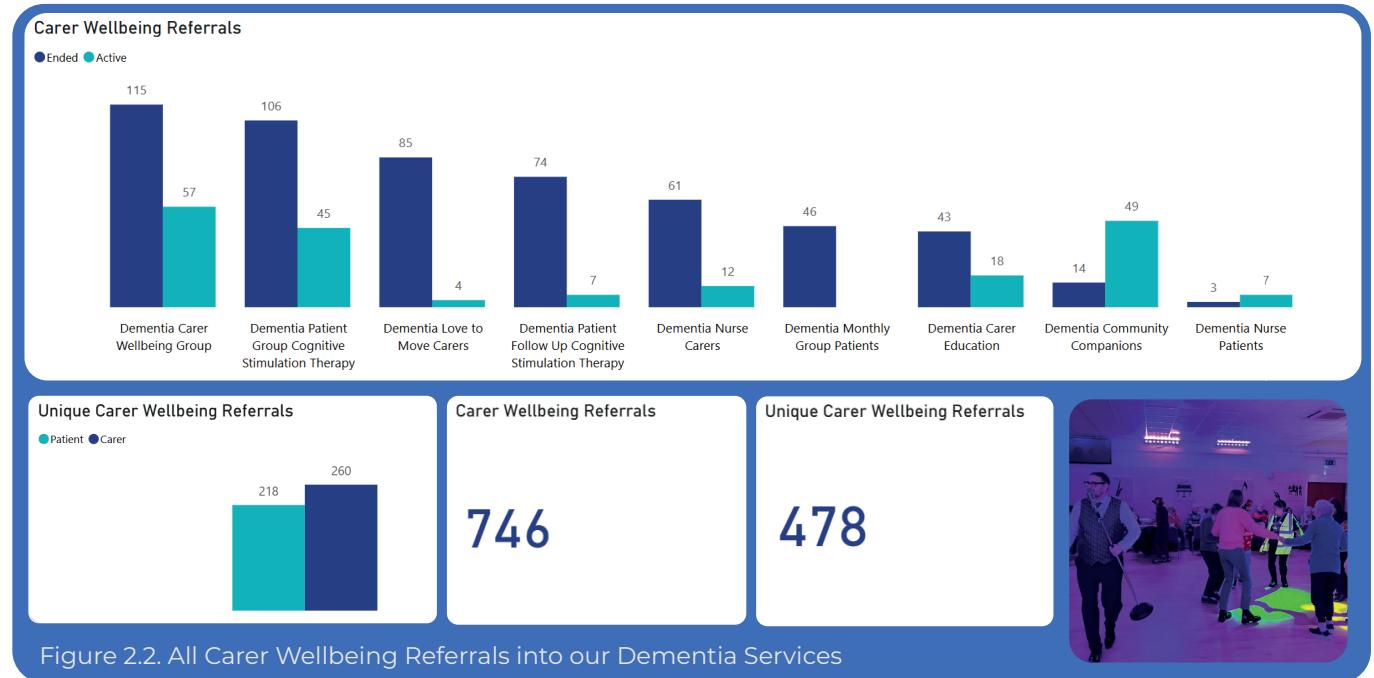


Figure 2.2. All Carer Wellbeing Referrals into our Dementia Services



## Family Support Services

Our Family Support Services – which include Art Psychotherapy, Spiritual, Pastoral and Religious Care and our dedicated Bereavement Teams for children, young people and adults – provide compassionate, high-quality support to individuals who are anticipating a death or grieving the loss of a loved one.

These services are delivered in line with national guidance, including NICE Quality Standards, the National Palliative Care Strategy and the Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care framework. We are committed to upholding the core values of confidentiality, respect, equality, safety and quality, ensuring that everyone receives appropriate emotional and psychological support tailored to their needs.

At the end of 2024/25, we initiated a comprehensive review of our Family Support Services to ensure they continue to meet the evolving needs of the diverse communities we serve. This review is a vital step in strengthening our commitment to inclusive, person-centred care and ensuring our support remains accessible, relevant and impactful for all who need it.

The referral process has also been evaluated and streamlined, resulting in improved data collection and a better understanding of current demand. This has allowed for the identification of service gaps and the addressing of extended waiting times. As a result, several "quick win" changes have already been implemented, improving overall efficiency.

An early indication from this review was identifying the need for more immediate, lower-complexity bereavement support. To meet this need, a new bereavement support group – STAR:

Share, Talk and Remember – will launch in May 2025.

A development timeline has been set, aligned with the long-term vision outlined in the transformative 10-year plan, ensuring continued growth and innovation across the service.

## Living Well Services

The Sunflower Living Well Centre, which offers Outpatient appointments and Living Well programmes for people living with a terminal diagnosis, has recently undergone a significant transformation and was relaunched in April 2024. The Centre now boasts modern facilities designed to better serve patients and their loved ones and informal carers. The renovation project, costing £1.3 million, was completed over nine months and included enhancements such as increased natural light, smart technology integration and dementia-friendly designs such as colour-coded areas.

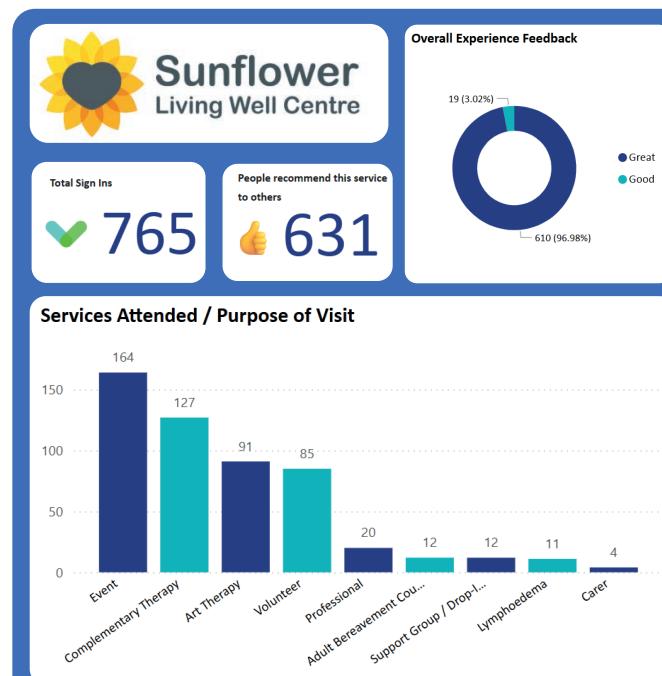


Figure 2.3. Living Well services attended and feedback

The new-look Centre has seen an increase in activity since relaunching and footfall has more than doubled. We will now be able to support up to 400 patients and their carers weekly. The recruitment of a Volunteer-Led Services Lead was successful and Ameera Fletcher will join East Cheshire Hospice in May 2025. Ameera's role will be central to expanding volunteer-led initiatives and is expected to boost Centre activity over the next 6 to 12 months, particularly during out-of-hours periods.

The relaunch was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by notable supporters and donors, and it is wonderful to see such a valuable resource being enhanced to better serve the community.

More Complementary Therapists have been recruited to expand the range of holistic support available to patients and carers attending the Centre or through our outreach services in the community, further enhancing the quality and reach of our services.



## Change Programme 2 - Hospice Sustainability

### Ambassador Group Fundraising

The Ambassador group includes approximately 20 highly successful individuals from the local community who, together with the Hospice Philanthropy team, are dedicated to raising funds to help the Hospice launch innovative new service programmes. The proven method of 5-year seed funding has helped launch the Hospice @Home service, Coordinated Care service and the expansion of the Dementia Carer Wellbeing programme. The Ambassador group are currently fundraising for the PACE (Palliative Advice Centre East) project.

### Fairer Distribution of Statutory Funds

We have worked with our NHS Partner Providers to agree terms which keep our funding at least in line with current inflation in the healthcare sector, accepting that the real-terms decline in statutory funding over the past 15 years is unrecoverable. We have also worked closely with our partner hospices in the Cheshire & Merseyside Hospice Provider Collaborative to contribute to a review of funding for palliative and end-of-life care services. The aim of this review is to identify disparity of service provision and inequitable funding arrangements in each of the 9 Places which make up Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB). We are confident that when this review concludes East Cheshire Hospice will be independently verified as an efficient, reliable and productive provider of palliative and end-of-life care services for the people of East Cheshire.

We are continuing to engage with the Department of Health and Social Care to access the balance of the monies made available

from the NHS Capital Budget promised for the financial year 2025/26. We stand ready to act on any and all opportunities to grow income from statutory sources as they arise.

The East Cheshire Hospice @Home team remains adaptable to the diverse needs of end-of-life care patients at home, offering carer breaks, night care and rapid response. This year, over 200 patients achieved their preferred place of care at home. However, there is a need for expansion to meet the demands of those requiring Continuing Health Care Fast Track funding. Central Cheshire Integrated Care Partnership (CCICP) have proposed a funding increase to the ICB following a service review of the Palliative Care in Partnership project. This could increase our funding per annum. Contracts for 2024/25 have been renewed with CCICP to enable East Cheshire Hospice to continue to deliver care directly into patients' homes in East Cheshire, while discussions with the ICB are ongoing to ensure our service plan aligns with evolving healthcare needs.

### Individual Giving

We have worked hard this year to support friends and loved ones of those who have received Hospice care and now wish to support the Hospice in the future. Our Friends and Family Fundraiser, Amy Williams, is on hand to support people through this process and offer them different ways to 'pay it forward' by funding ongoing Hospice care. One of the most meaningful ways to do this is through purchasing a leaf on our Memory Tree at the Hospice, which creates a lasting legacy to a loved one while also providing the Hospice with a sustainable, renewable source of income.

Amy has helped to build positive relationships across the Hospice with patients, their loved ones and crucially with clinical colleagues. This has



proven highly beneficial to our wider fundraising and engagement work. We have recruited an Individual Giving Assistant this year, to support with the paperwork and admin side of the role, so that Amy can spend more time getting to know people and building those invaluable relationships across the Hospice.



## Change Programme 3 - System Integration for Palliative and End-of-Life Care

Our focus is aligned with the Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care framework, ensuring:

- Individualised and personalised care
- Equitable access to care
- Enhanced comfort and wellbeing
- Coordinated care
- Well-trained staff
- Community preparedness to provide support

### Development of the Palliative Advice Centre East (PACE)

The launch of the first phase of PACE in early 2025 is the first step in offering a single point of access to coordinated palliative and end-of-life care for individuals with life-limiting illnesses and their loved ones or carers in East Cheshire.



The developing PACE team, currently comprising of Advanced Nurse Practitioners and a Clinical Coordinator, will work cohesively with the Hospice @Home team and other community palliative health care professionals to improve quality of life for patients and carers throughout patients' last 12 months of life by providing support at the right time in the right place by the right people and so reducing crises.

The aim of the new service is to significantly improve access for patients and family carers to clinical support and advice and onward referral to relevant services.

To effectively demonstrate impact and efficiency, we developed the new service within EMIS, along with custom templates and reports to support staff in their work. We also introduced a new 24-Hour Advice Line template to capture and report consultations directly in EMIS. This information can be shared with other healthcare professionals involved in the patient's care, promoting clear, efficient and effective communication.

These achievements in the development of PACE highlight our commitment to improving palliative and end-of-life care, ensuring that patients and their families receive timely support and the reassurance of coordinated care.



## Other System Integration Achievements and Ongoing Developments

- **Advanced Nurse Practitioner home visits:** These face-to-face assessments allow prescribing of end-of-life medication in the community, facilitating coordinated and supportive care for those who wish to remain at home and preventing unwanted admissions to acute care.
- **Daily 'huddles':** These have been extended to all community teams from the five Care Communities, ensuring seamless collaboration across Hospice, community and hospital settings. An additional huddle on Friday afternoons ensures patients with complex symptoms or needs have direct access to support over the weekends.
- **New Community Consultant:** Started in August 2024, they now provide expert clinical support and strengthen the connection between the Hospice and the Specialist Palliative Care Teams.
- **Band 6 clinical workforce:** Now covering seven days a week, providing the ability to rapidly respond in all clinical areas, offering senior support and clinical guidance both in the Inpatient Unit and in the community.
- **Knutsford Home First:** This initiative providing specialist palliative care and support to patients with a Knutsford GP in their own homes is part of the broader Hospice @Home programme run by East Cheshire Hospice. Thanks to significant funding, the programme has expanded from care at home in the last few months of life to care and support for up to 12 months. The team works closely with GPs and District Nurses to ensure patients receive the right care when and where they need it, helping to avoid hospital admissions during the final year of life.



## Change Programme 4 - Re-Development and Patient Bedroom Refurbishment

During 2024 our Inpatient Unit bedrooms underwent major refurbishments. The project goals included optimising the comfort levels for our patients and their loved ones. For example:

- Precise lighting control was installed to help reduce patient stress and create a comfortable and relaxing environment. The new lighting features include colour temperature control, smart dimming and remote-control keypads to allow patients to choose their own preferred lighting.
- All bathrooms are now fitted with automatic door release, while in the en-suite bathrooms easily accessible wall pads now promote patient independence, as there is no need to pull on heavy fire doors.
- We have replaced all bedroom windows and external doors into our gardens with patio-style doors. The glazing in the doors and windows have integral blinds fitted between the glass, offering low maintenance, improved energy efficiency, enhancing privacy and light control and making them resistant to dust and moisture – which reduces the risk of infection.



### Media Wall, Furniture and Fabrics

To create a comforting environment for our patients' bedrooms:

- A media wall was a welcome addition to each room, housing smart TVs and bespoke shelving for patients to display their own personal trinkets and family photographs. A foldable table and chairs attached to the media wall allows a patient's loved ones to dine with them at mealtimes.
- We opted for curtains and bedding fabric designs which are warm and inviting, complementing each room with a different coloured feature wall.
- Each bedroom has its own chair bed enabling patients' loved ones to stay in the room with them overnight, or sit with them in comfort during the day.

### Electrical Works

We have replaced three main electric distribution boards in the main Hospice area, along with new electric cables and fixed wire testing to enable future safe installation of new equipment and additional electrical supply. We are continuing to replace any old existing lighting with new LED lighting.



### Replacement of Sedum Roof

The flat 'green roof' on the Inpatient Unit corridor and clinical offices has been removed and resurfaced with a strong watertight material to improve insulation and prevent water ingress.



# 03. Outcomes and Quality Improvements - Support Services 2024/25

We understand that the value of our work and services extends far beyond clinical outcomes alone. The success of our organisation is closely tied to the efficiency of our business operations and the dedicated efforts happening behind the scenes. It is through the collaboration of various teams that we are able to uphold the high standards of clinical care and service quality we consistently deliver. We deeply appreciate and recognise the invaluable contributions of both our business support teams and committed volunteers.

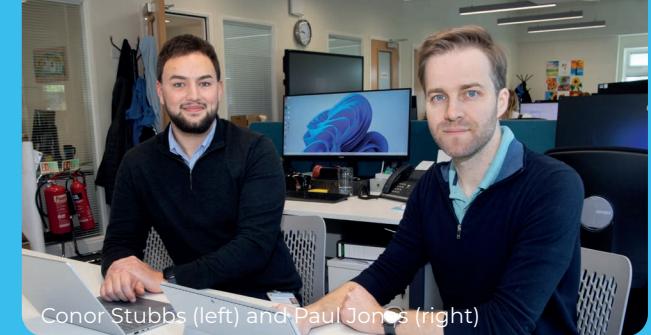
## Information Technology

Over the past year, our team has made significant strides in various areas, showcasing our commitment to innovation, security and continuous improvement. We welcomed a new IT Apprentice who is currently undertaking a Level 3 apprenticeship, and our Head of IT successfully completed Data Protection and SIRO training with certification. Additionally, our IT Technician completed training on Security and Microsoft Defender, enhancing our team's expertise.

### Key achievements:



Our key achievements include several infrastructure upgrades, such as a new phone system for the main Hospice site and all our shops, a new Wi-Fi system at the Hospice and new smart TVs and room lighting control for Inpatient Unit bedrooms. We have integrated sound, lighting, room control and A/V at the Sunflower Living Well Centre, provided IT equipment for clinical services expansion and implemented a new Nurse Call System for Inpatient and Outpatient units. Additionally, we have introduced IT and digital signage for the new Congleton shop.



Conor Stubbs (left) and Paul Jones (right)



We have enhanced our digital capabilities with interactive Microsoft Whiteboards that share real-time patient activity and department dependency and capacity between our clinicians regardless of their physical location. Digital applications are now replacing paper-based processes and forms, with the latest development being digital sign-in pads on Reception desks and electronic feedback forms. Our Inpatient Unit digital signage screens now feature data dashboards within Reception and the clinical units.



Our ongoing work on the Data Analytics programme aims to improve the data provided from EMIS Web, with a new activity dashboard under construction to display patient activity more clearly, available for Q1 2025/26.



We designed and tested a new referral process to ensure that reporting meets the needs of the Hospice and provided training to all users who make referrals into EMIS. This new process was successfully launched on 1 April 2025. EMIS Web has now been re-configured to simplify the collection of this referral data, integrating additional Hospice services to improve patient flow and reporting.



We have been proactive in providing staff IT training through user guides, monthly newsletters, 1:1 sessions and IT induction packs for new starters. This initiative helps our staff understand more about our vision and the key information about the systems they use.



We have updated all IPOS Dashboards for the Inpatient Unit, Sunflower Living Well Centre and Hospice @ Home using new graphs to display data more clearly. We supported the Hospice UK ICT and Data team by presenting our data collection for the annual Hospice UK data set.



At East Cheshire Hospice, we have provided our patients and visitors with Virtual Reality headsets. The use of VR has promoted relaxation and stress relief, enabling users to explore places such as beaches and forests, or personal hobbies such as motor racing and plane flying. We are continuing to promote the use of VR for our Hospice services with plans to simulate staff training and Hospice virtual tour.



VR Experience Rating

**4.77**

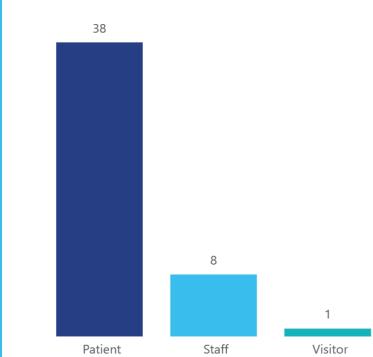
Average Rating



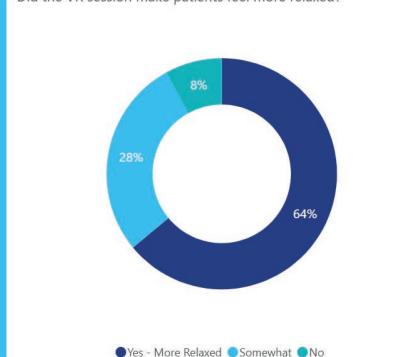
User Comments

"I really enjoyed the experiences through the VR headset"  
 "Great experience really enjoyed"  
 "It was good fun I enjoyed swimming with the fishes in the ocean"  
 "Loved the Elephant Safari experience"

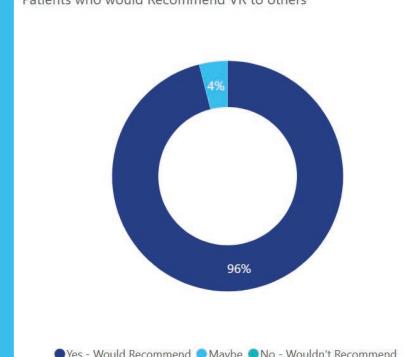
Who has used VR?



Did the VR session make patients feel more relaxed?



Patients who would Recommend VR to others



## Finance

Key measures in 2024/25 include:

**2369**

batches of data with an income value of £4.4 million extracted from the Fundraising database, Raisers Edge, and imported into Sage.

Over  
**4000**

purchase invoices processed, worth over £1.7 million.

Over  
**1100**

lottery prize cheques issued, worth £78,000.

Over  
**440**

donation tins emptied and counted by the Finance volunteer.

**1280**

individual shop reconciliation's and postings to Sage, with an income of over £730,000.

**2190**

payslips issued to staff, a 12% increase due to service expansion.



Figures 3.1. VR headset feedback

## Fundraising activities and supporter engagement this year included:

The Hospice Fundraising team set themselves an ambitious target this year, to increase our income by 10% from last year. Despite a challenging financial climate, we were delighted to achieve this goal, raising £2.1 million compared to £1.8 million last year, an increase of almost 17%.

We had a packed calendar of both Hospice-run and Community Events throughout the year. Some of our major events were the Starlight Walk, Fashion on the Edge and Light Up a Life. We also kept busy with all the usual favourites – coffee mornings, open gardens, plant and cake sales, quiz nights, fêtes, golf days, festivals, balls and more.

Fundraising income of  
**£2.1million**

against an original budget of £1.8million.

# £160,000

This year's Christmas Tree Collection – our 25th year – raised more than £160,000 and collected 7234 trees. During the weekend, the total amount raised for the Hospice since the Collection first began passed £2 million! What an amazing legacy for our founding volunteers, Pete Chapman and Richard Raymond, who still run the Collection each year.



# £10,000

One of the highlights of the Art Fair was when our new Patrons, Noddy and Suzan Holder, were surprised to come face to face with a mini paper mâché version of Noddy, complete with guitar, made by renowned local artist Patty Callaghan. The model was snapped up by a keen buyer on the night, but Noddy and Suzan were so impressed they commissioned a second version which was subsequently raffled off, raising more than £10,000.



Our Philanthropy team launched a new campaign to raise money for a new way of delivering Hospice services, the Palliative Advice Centre East (PACE). The £1.55 million target will pay for the first five years of the service delivery. The Philanthropy team also held several events this year, including a special Meeting of the Minds with our Patron Nick Robinson, a thank you event at Biddulph Old Hall and our traditional Christmas Carol Concert at Capesthorne Hall.



# £35,000

In November, a team of 11 brave supporters took part in our Land of Fire and Ice 3-day trekking challenge in Iceland. The trek itself was really challenging due to the terrain and weather conditions, but the team emerged intact and raised an amazing £35,000.

# £47,821

We were proud to be chosen as one of AstraZeneca's Charity Partners again this year. Not only did they share their expertise and support with us throughout the year, but they also generously donated £47,821 to the Hospice in 2024, through sponsorship, employee fundraising and matched giving.



# £45,000

Our biennial Art Fair in October showcased the work of local and nationally renowned artists. All art sold raised money for the Hospice, and in total the Art Fair brought in almost £45,000. This event would not have been possible without the contribution of a massive team of volunteers who took part in the event during the week, manning tills, serving tea and cakes and stewarding the exhibition rooms.



Our handmade goods volunteers have had another amazing year, creating knitted, sewed, crocheted, carved and other lovingly created items to raise money for the Hospice. In addition, our volunteers continue to create "pairs of bears" and "pairs of hearts", providing matching mementos that are shared between someone nearing the end of their life and their family/carer as a sign of their ongoing love.



# £32,000

Our glamorous Fashion on the Edge event held at Alderley Edge Cricket Club was so popular this year that we had to extend our marquee to accommodate more guests. A total of £32,000 was raised.



Our What Women Want supporter group have now raised a staggering £447,000 for East Cheshire Hospice since they began their fundraising journey. Whether it's a bingo night or a fashion show, their events are always filled with fun, laughter and a heartfelt passion for supporting our work. We couldn't be more grateful for their dedication and generosity.

# £447,000





## RETAIL

This was a year of expansion within our Retail team. We began 2024 with four shops, but by the end of the year we had five open shops and an additional premises on the way.

We have been hoping to expand our Retail offering for a while now and have been looking for suitable locations in both Congleton and Knutsford for several years. This year we happened to find ideal locations in both towns. Our Congleton shop is based on West Heath Retail Park, a popular and busy retail location. The shop space is larger than any we have had before and transforming it from its previous use as an Indian Restaurant into a boutique-style charity shop was a significant project. The store opened in December 2024 and is proving to be a phenomenal success, selling clothes, bric a brac and pre-loved furniture.

Our second new shop is in Knutsford and is due to open in July 2025.

Each of our shops is led by a dedicated manager and supported by team of assistants who are shared across our four locations. We also have a full-time Furniture Coordinator who keeps things running smoothly across all the shops and looks after our amazing volunteer van drivers. But the real heart of our shops is our team of incredible volunteers. Their commitment to the Hospice and their belief in the difference it makes in our local communities is nothing short of inspiring. We simply couldn't do it without them.



## Facilities and Housekeeping

The Housekeeping and Catering teams are integral to the holistic care approach in hospices, ensuring that patients receive comprehensive support that addresses their physical, emotional and social needs.

Housekeeping ensures that the Hospice remains clean and hygienic, which is vital for infection control and the overall wellbeing of patients. A clean environment helps prevent the spread of infections and provides a comfortable space for patients and their loved ones.

A tidy and well-maintained environment contributes to the comfort and dignity of patients. Housekeeping staff often go beyond their cleaning duties, offering emotional support and companionship to patients, which can be particularly important for those who may not have regular visitors.

By maintaining high standards of cleanliness, housekeeping staff support the clinical team in providing safe and effective care. Their work ensures that clinical areas are ready for use and that any potential hazards are promptly addressed.



## Catering

The Catering Team is responsible for preparing and serving meals that meet the dietary needs and preferences of patients. Good nutrition is essential for maintaining strength and health, especially for those with serious illnesses. The catering team also plays a role in making mealtimes a pleasant and social experience.

Both housekeeping and catering teams contribute to the overall quality of life for patients. They help create a homely and welcoming atmosphere, which can make a significant difference in the emotional and psychological wellbeing of patients and their loved ones.

### Staff Training and Development

- Food Safety Level 2
- Leadership and management (in-house course)
- Essential car maintenance and safety (in-house for fleet management)
- Basic life support
- Fire safety and how to use fire extinguishers



An average performance score of **99%**

**27,994**  
meals and snacks served to patients

**3700**  
meals provided to patients attending Daycare services

**14,540**  
staff and visitors' meals provided

**46,234**  
meals, snacks and hospitality provided through 2024/25

**140**  
maintenance and housekeeping issues identified and addressed

**26,580**  
health, safety and environmental inspections completed



## Volunteering

We are blessed to have 400 volunteers that give their time to us on a regular basis – this can be in the Hospice itself, out in the community or in our Retail team. We estimate that without our volunteers giving us their time for free, we would have to employ additional staff at an annual cost of over £600,000 just to run our essential services. This figure would be doubled if we included the additional services our volunteers help us deliver, such as our Community Befriending, Daycare activities or the arrangements of fresh flowers filling our rooms.

Our volunteers also play an invaluable role in helping strengthen the strong bond we have with our local community. They bring us their skills, talents and fresh perspectives to enhance our work in so many ways, and we are unbelievably grateful.

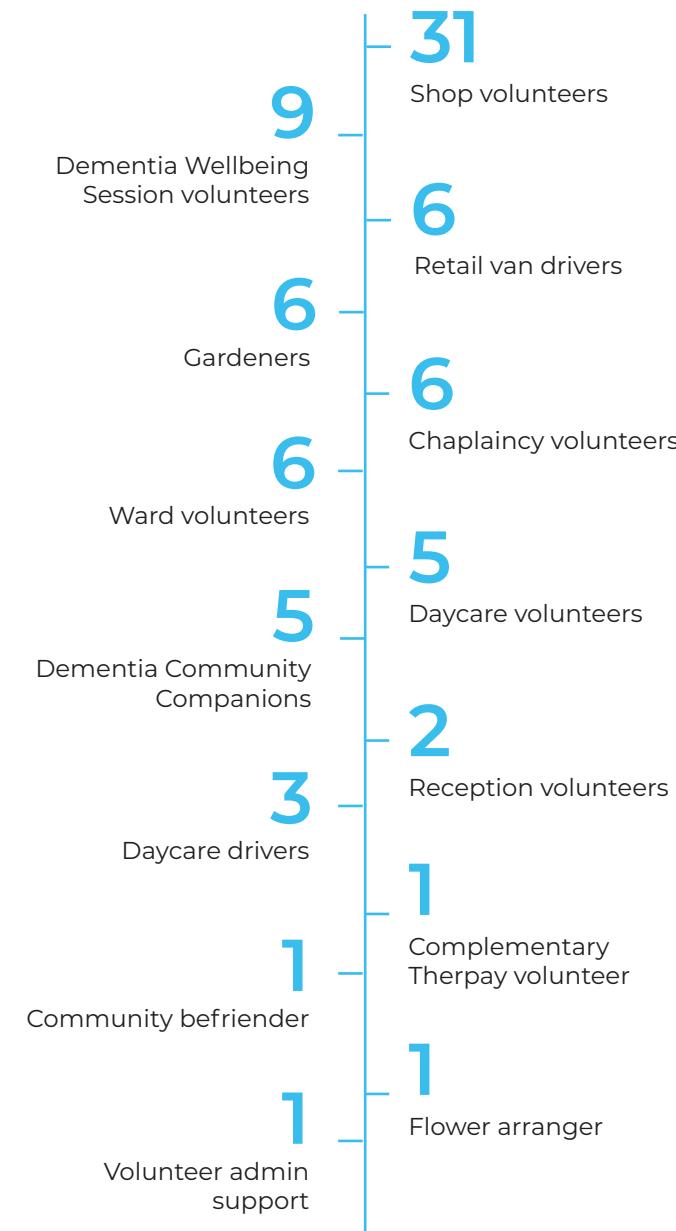
**365**  
days

Covered on  
the Hospice  
Reception - over  
3,500 hours.

**1,000**

Over 1,000 hours  
volunteered by the  
gardening team.

**During 2024/25 the Workforce Team have recruited 83 new volunteers, over 14 roles:**



Pat Dawson is the longest-serving volunteer gardener, an involvement lasting more than 25 years, including helping with floral arrangements. Pat said: "I enjoy coming here and have made many good friends, meeting lots of different people."

The gardening team works alongside Michelle Walker-Brown, Head of Facilities and Hospitality at the Hospice. Michelle said: "We've got more gardeners now than ever before which is great. They do a wonderful job in all weathers and play such an important role creating memories for patients and their loved ones. We use raised beds which are wheelchair accessible so patients can plant their own herbs, vegetables, tomato plants and spring onions. The impact that had on a day care patient last year was amazing. The lady loved her garden but couldn't look after it anymore."



## Environmental and Sustainability Group

To us, sustainability means we act responsibly, consider the wider implications of our actions and strive to better our practices to minimise waste, energy use and our carbon footprint while achieving the charity's service objectives and ensuring patient care is not adversely impacted. We encourage environmental responsibility amongst our staff, volunteers, stakeholders, supply chains and Trustees.

2024/25 gave East Cheshire Hospice the opportunity to review and refresh the Green strategy with the aim to assure our stakeholders of our determination to prioritise sustainability, promote responsible resource use and minimise waste. By embracing all aspects of sustainability, we can shape a better future for the Hospice and the communities we serve.

We have worked hard to ensure we are doing all we can to be a sustainable organisation – from using recycled baked bean tins from the kitchen as planters on fencing in the gardens to engaging corporate volunteers to repaint the furniture every year. These small steps are still making a difference.

### 2025-28 Aims and Ambitions

Over the next three years we aim to identify which specific actions and initiatives we will prioritise to lay strong foundations for our longer-term net zero strategy by focusing on four key areas:

#### Ecologi

Although the Hospice has already implemented some Environmental and Sustainability (E&S) interventions, we will work with Ecologi to carry out an environmental audit to identify our overall

carbon footprint. This will help us establish and calculate a baseline from which to compare the changes we have implemented.

#### Workforce sustainability

At East Cheshire Hospice we define the workforce as all staff members and volunteers.

We believe that a sustainable workforce is more than just filling roles, it is more about building a team that thrive together, adapt and contribute to providing the best experience for our service users and stakeholders.

Increase our engagement and opportunities for corporate and community collaboration

The Hospice is extremely fortunate to have support from local businesses and corporate partnerships as well as a huge level of community support. Working with all support streams we aim to:

- Address the environmental issues that are most important to the communities and people we serve
- Find out what specific E&S improvements would most benefit our local community, staff and overall organisation.
- Build an E&S network of contacts within our support partnerships to learn from and share best practice
- Increase engagement with local retailers to increase potential donations.
- Encourage engagement with local schools and colleges, especially those who support and take part in the Christmas "Runs".
- Promote the Christmas Tree Collection in new areas, especially when we open new retail premises.

Embrace, monitor and evaluate our pre-2028 approach to become more carbon neutral

- The Hospice has clear milestones and performance indicators to track progress

towards carbon neutrality and adjust strategies accordingly.

- Staff are engaged in sustainable practices and carbon reduction initiatives to ensure collective ownership and action.
- The Environmental and Sustainability Group regularly report and communicate outcomes and learnings to promote transparency and continuous improvement in achieving carbon neutrality goals.



# 04. Quality • Performance and Activity 2024/25

At East Cheshire Hospice, our clinical team is more than just a group of healthcare professionals – they are the heart and soul of the care we provide. With compassion at the core of everything they do, these skilled individuals offer expert, dignified support to patients and their loved ones navigating life's most difficult moments.

Every member of our team brings a wealth of experience in end-of-life care, ensuring that each patient receives personalised attention, effective symptom relief and emotional comfort. Whether it's managing pain, easing anxiety or simply offering a hand to hold, their presence makes a profound difference.

But their impact goes beyond clinical and medical care in the last few weeks and days of life. They are trusted guides through the emotional, ethical and practical challenges of this journey – helping loved ones understand, cope and find peace amidst uncertainty. Their ability to connect deeply and authentically reflects the very essence of our Hospice's mission to provide or facilitate the highest quality care and support to the people we serve.

Guided by our "CARE" principles, our team lives out the values of compassion, empathy and professionalism every day. They not only care for individuals and their loved ones but also

engage with our wider community, collaborate with fellow professionals, raise vital funds and champion the cause of hospice care.

Their dedication is what makes East Cheshire Hospice a place of comfort, hope and humanity.

## Workforce

East Cheshire Hospice recognises that our greatest resource is our workforce. We are proud to employ 183 members of permanent staff, 22 bank staff, numerous multidisciplinary contracts for service workers, approximately 400 regular volunteers and more than 400 fundraising volunteers. We pride ourselves in prioritising both the wellbeing and development of our workforce and are committed to comprehensive and tailored learning and development programmes for all staff and volunteers to ensure consistently high-quality services and compassionate, comprehensive and specialised delivery of care.

Our clinical colleagues possess the knowledge, expertise and sensitivity necessary to address the unique physical, emotional and spiritual needs of both patients and their loved ones. Our Hospice staff offer comfort, dignity and support during this delicate stage of life.

Several of our qualified nurses are expanding their professional roles by training as student assessors, further enhancing their skills and contributing to the development of future nursing talent.

We have continued to strengthen our partnerships with universities and colleges to facilitate nursing student placements. In September 2024, we demonstrated our ongoing commitment to staff development by enrolling Kayleigh, one of our Healthcare Assistants,

onto the Nurse Apprenticeship Programme at Staffordshire University.

These student placements have proven to be a positive experience, resulting in the successful recruitment of two newly qualified nurses who will join East Cheshire Hospice upon receiving their PIN registration. To support their transition, we have implemented a comprehensive nurse preceptorship programme, providing the guidance and encouragement needed to build their confidence and clinical skills within a palliative care environment.

## Training and Development

East Cheshire Hospice values the importance of extensive training and is reliant on the clinical workforce ensuring that symptom management, pain relief and palliative care interventions are delivered effectively, enhancing the quality of life for patients and facilitating a peaceful transition. Additionally, their expertise in end-of-life care enables them to navigate complex ethical dilemmas, facilitate difficult conversations and nurture meaningful connections with patients and their loved ones, fostering a sense of trust, reassurance and emotional wellbeing. Ultimately, the presence of a well-trained clinical workforce in the Hospice embodies the values of compassion, empathy and professionalism. East Cheshire Hospice holds within its "CARE" principles while offering comfort and solace to those in their most vulnerable moments.

In October 2023 the Hospice appointed a Practice Education Facilitator role to specifically support clinical learning and development, to drive our ambitions to provide gold standard end-of-life care to our patients, their loved ones and the community. This year we continued to utilise our skills lab where clinical colleagues can undertake practical skills in a safe and controlled



environment. We have implemented clinical skills.net, a new learning platform to support all clinical colleagues, re-launched our competency framework to ensure we are acknowledging our skilled and experienced staff and updated our mandatory training programme.

We purchased nursing training manikins "Gladys" and "Norman" to improve staff confidence and enhance skills. And we will be looking at how VR can support our clinical training in the near future.

To ensure the safety and up-to-date knowledge of our volunteers and supporters who provide an invaluable service to our Hospice in various capacities, it is crucial that we offer them comprehensive induction, education and training. Effective induction and training equips them with the necessary skills and information to navigate their roles while adhering to the latest guidelines and best practice.

During 2024/25 East Cheshire Hospice delivered a number of bespoke face-to-face training sessions for our volunteer workforce specific to their volunteering role, including Moving Around Safely and Dementia Awareness training. Volunteers also had the opportunity, in addition to their annual online volunteer mandatory training, to attend sessions on mindfulness, "menopause matters" and Christmas wreath-making, and to receive specialist training in Conversations around Child Bereavement run by the Ruth Strauss Foundation.

- 66 new volunteers completed our online volunteer training package.
- 43 new volunteers completed our bespoke Guidance for Retail Volunteers online training.
- 39 volunteers completed a total of 140 modules on the Bluestream e-learning platform.

October 2024 gave the Hospice another opportunity to work in partnership with the local Andrews Pharmacy, enabling staff to attend sessions made available exclusively for Hospice staff.



Figure 4.1 East Cheshire Hospice training reports April 2024 - March 2025

## Clinical Mandatory Training (CMT) & Essential Skills

**18** CMT sessions

**100%** attendance

**147** clinical staff attendees for CMT

**10** essential skills training sessions for HCAs

**52** Nurses legally compliant

**48** HCAs and AHP's legally compliant



**100%** said this training met their expectations

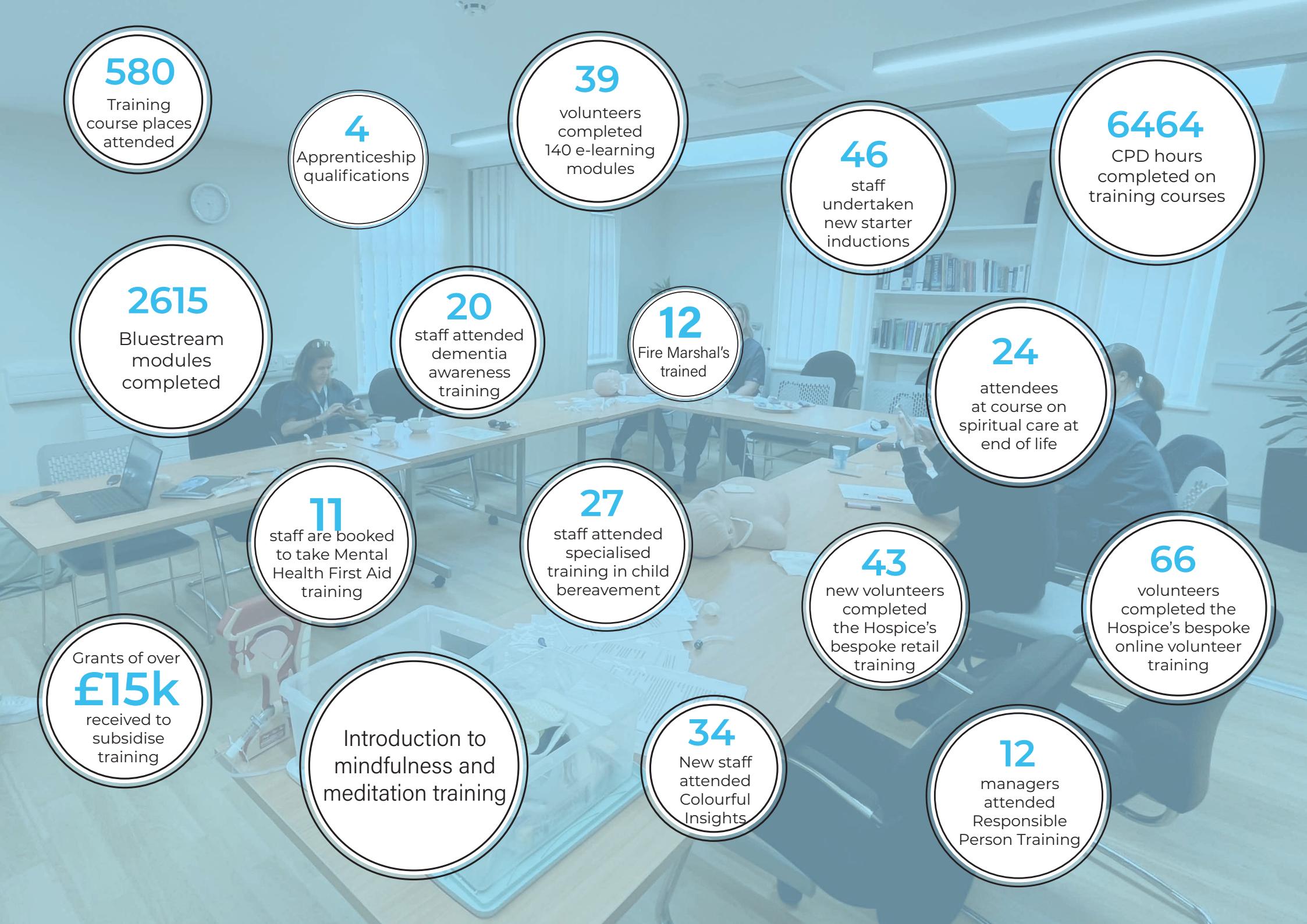


**15** mandatory topics covered



**6** essential skills training sessions for nurses





**580**

Training course places attended

**4**

Apprenticeship qualifications

**39**

volunteers completed 140 e-learning modules

**46**

staff undertaken new starter inductions

**6464**

CPD hours completed on training courses

**2615**

Bluestream modules completed

**20**

staff attended dementia awareness training

**12**

Fire Marshal's trained

**24**

attendees at course on spiritual care at end of life

**11**

staff are booked to take Mental Health First Aid training

**27**

staff attended specialised training in child bereavement

**43**

new volunteers completed the Hospice's bespoke retail training

**66**

volunteers completed the Hospice's bespoke online volunteer training

Grants of over **£15k** received to subsidise training

Introduction to mindfulness and meditation training

**34**

New staff attended Colourful Insights

**12**

managers attended Responsible Person Training

## Clinical Activity

At East Cheshire Hospice, ensuring a safe and hygienic environment for our patients, staff, volunteers and visitors remains a top priority. In 2024/25, our Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures have continued to play a critical role in safeguarding the wellbeing of everyone who enters our care.

Over the past year, the Hospice has upheld its strong track record of minimising healthcare-associated infections through rigorous adherence to evidence-based IPC practices. There have been no outbreaks of infection within the Inpatient Unit, and all clinical areas have consistently met or exceeded internal hygiene and cleanliness standards.

Key measures in 2024/25 include:

### Compliance Monitoring

Regular audits of hand hygiene, environmental cleanliness and PPE usage were carried out throughout the year, with compliance rates consistently exceeding 95%.

### Staff Training

100% of clinical and non-clinical staff completed mandatory IPC training within required time frames, reinforcing best practices across all departments.

### Policy Updates

IPC policies and protocols were reviewed and updated in line with the latest national guidance, including preparedness for seasonal pressures and emerging infections.

### Collaboration

We continued to work closely with local health protection teams and NHS partners to ensure our practices align with broader system

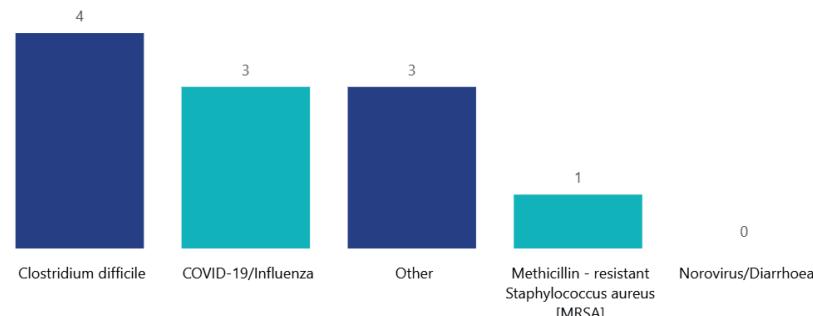
Over the past year, a total of eight IPC audits have been completed within the clinical departments at East Cheshire Hospice, reflecting our ongoing commitment to maintaining the highest standards of safety and hygiene. These audits are a vital part of our quality assurance framework and are conducted by IPC nurses in collaboration with clinical teams within each department.

By facilitating these regular audits, IPC nurses help ensure that staff practices remain fully aligned with the latest evidence-based infection control guidelines. This proactive approach not only supports compliance with national standards but also empowers teams to identify areas for improvement, share best practices and address any potential risks promptly.

The insight gained through these audits enables the Hospice to respond to challenges with greater efficiency and flexibility, maintaining a consistently safe care environment for patients, visitors, volunteers and staff. It also reinforces a culture of accountability and continuous improvement, where infection prevention is embedded into everyday clinical practice.

Our proactive approach has not only prevented infection-related incidents but also enhanced confidence among patients and their loved ones in the safety of our care environment. As we move forward, East Cheshire Hospice remains committed to continuous improvement, investing in education, innovation and vigilance to uphold the highest standards of infection prevention and control.

Surveillance Data - Number of Patients



All patients were admitted with pre-existing infections and were cared for under strict IPC procedures, ensuring the infections remained contained and did not spread.

Figure 4.2. Surveillance data - number of patients





## Improving Patient Experience and Outcomes

At East Cheshire Hospice, we are unwavering in our commitment to patient safety and the delivery of high-quality care outcomes. Every aspect of our service is guided by the principles of transparency, compassion and continuous improvement. We uphold the duty of candour as a core value – ensuring that we are always open and honest with patients and their loved ones, particularly when things do not go as expected.

Feedback is central to how we grow and evolve. We actively encourage input from patients, families, staff or our wider community and treat every comment as an opportunity to reflect, learn and enhance the care we provide. These insights are vital in helping us maintain the highest standards and ensure that our Hospice continues to be a place of safety, dignity and trust.

Our IT team have started to introduce Virtual Reality for patients and visitors to enhance wellbeing and provide relaxing experiences.

Telephone Advice Requested from (%)

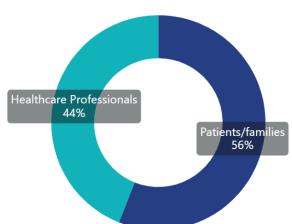


Figure 4.3 Telephone advice requested from

Timing of call to 24/7 Advice Line (Jan to Mar 2025)

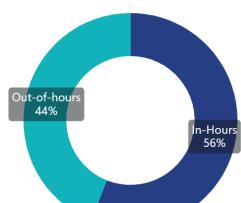


Figure 4.4 Timing of call to 24/7 Advice line (Jan to Mar 2025)

## 24-hour Advice Line and PACE

The number of calls that we are receiving through our 24/7 advice line has been steadily growing over the last few years. Over the last 12-18 months we have reviewed and analysed the calls and identified that there are a significant number of callers, especially those who call outside of usual working hours, who would benefit from having a clear single point of contact, answered by a senior clinician to advise, support, and coordinate care. In close collaboration with other palliative care services across East Cheshire, we are developing a Palliative Advice Centre where enhanced palliative care support and coordination is accessible 24/7 for people with a life-limiting illness, with the aim of avoiding unnecessary and often unwanted admissions to hospital.

Our Medical Director is currently working with other hospices across Cheshire & Merseyside to peer review our advice given, to ensure it is consistent and evidence -based.

Calls to our 24/7 Advice Line have been consistently increasing over the last 12 months. In the first three months of 2025, helped by the initial stages of our developing Palliative Advice Centre East (PACE) model, we have seen a three-fold increase in calls compared with the same period in 2024. This demonstrates some of the previously unmet need of people who are anticipated to be in the last 12 months of their life. In the development of PACE, the experienced and dedicated Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) are taking calls 7 days a week during daytime hours, and our caring trained nurses on the Inpatient Unit are taking calls overnight, supported by additional senior Band 6 nurses. Our aim is for our ANPs to undertake responsive assessments of people in their home when



required and to coordinate their ongoing medical and nursing care. As well as being able to prescribe medications, they will offer reassurance and support to help patients and families cope better.

Over the next 12 months, in our “test & learn” phase of PACE we will continue to develop our collaborative working with community teams, identify and support people earlier in their palliative journey and collect and learn from user feedback. At this early stage, we are in the process of collecting quantitative and real-life case study advice line data to demonstrate the benefits of PACE, such as preventing crisis A&E attendance and hospital admissions as well as supporting people to die in their place of choice.

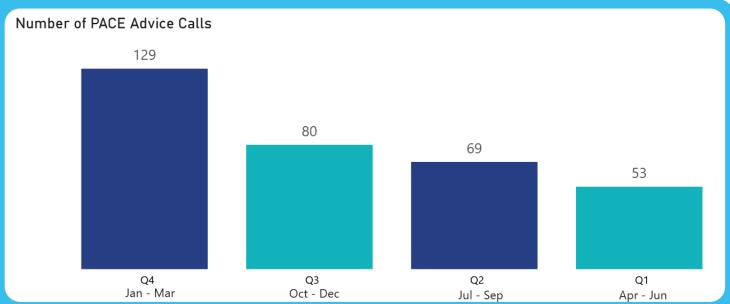
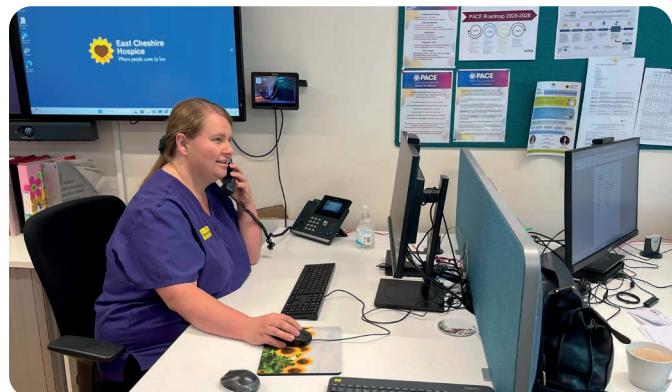


Figure 4.5 Number of advice calls received 2024/25



## Clinical Activity Overview 2024/25

East Cheshire Hospice remains committed to delivering compassionate, high-quality care that meets the diverse needs of our local community. In 2024/25, we provided specialist palliative and end-of-life care to a total of 932 patients across our services. Alongside this, we supported 382 people caring for loved ones, ensuring that these carers – who face challenges from the moment of diagnosis – were equipped with emotional, practical and psychological support..

Our multidisciplinary team continues to deliver care across a range of settings, with activity for the year as follows:

- Inpatient Unit: 260 patients received 24/7 specialist care within our 15-bed Inpatient Unit.
- Hospice @Home: 428 patients were supported in their own homes, receiving personalised end-of-life care from our skilled community team.
- Outpatient Services & Community Befriending: 507 referrals were received to enable patient access to symptom management, therapy, wellbeing sessions or support through visits from our volunteer

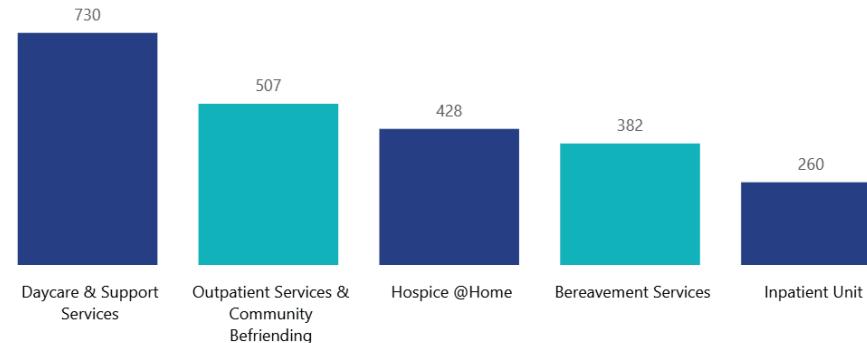
Befrienders.

- Bereavement Services: 382 family members and carers accessed 1:1 and group bereavement support following the loss of a loved one.
- Day Services & Supportive Care: 730 referrals were received into services/support groups that allowed patients and carers to access support from various activities that promote social connection, emotional wellbeing and holistic support.

A total of 3717 referrals were received across the clinical teams, as all patients were offered – and accepted – support from one or more of the 23 available supportive services during their time of support from East Cheshire Hospice. This ensured that every patient received the holistic care that is central to our mission.

These figures highlight the breadth and impact of our clinical services, delivered with professionalism, empathy and respect. As we reflect on the year, we remain focused on continuously evaluating our activity to identify areas for growth, innovation and improvement – ensuring the very best care for those who need us most.

### Clinical Activity



Total number of referrals

3717

Figure 4.6 Clinical activity overview 2024/25

## Outcome Assessment and Complexity Collaborative

East Cheshire Hospice provides specialist palliative care for adults over 18 with progressive, life-limiting conditions and complex needs, delivered through a skilled multidisciplinary team (MDT). To ensure care remains effective and person-centred, we use the Outcome Assessment and Complexity Collaborative (OACC) suite of validated measures. This has been embedded in our Inpatient Unit since 2019, with consistent quarterly data collection and strong staff engagement.

In 2024/25, we undertook a focused review of OACC data, specifically exploring how we support the psychological needs of inpatients, as identified through the Integrated Palliative Care Outcome Scale (IPOS) tool. The review highlighted the wide range of supportive services we offer, including chaplaincy, art psychotherapy, bereavement support, complementary therapies, VR technology and psychological input from our broader MDT.

Pharmacological support for agitation is used appropriately when needed, however, the data revealed that while these additional holistic services are available, many are underutilised and psychological issues and accessed support are not consistently captured in documentation – physical symptoms remain more frequently reported.

In response, our next steps include enhancing education and training around psychological assessment, promoting non-pharmacological approaches we have in place and repeating the review in six months to monitor progress. Early 2025 has already seen an increase in volunteer chaplaincy support and further exploration of VR therapy.

As part of a system-wide approach, OACC data continues to guide triage, admissions and care planning across inpatient, hospital and community teams, ensuring that patients receive the right care, at the right time and in the right place.

The Senior Clinical Team sought a better method to help staff and the Board of Trustees understand the pressures on our clinical units. This method would need to quantify "busy" beyond occupancy rates, demonstrate increases in referrals and complexities and provide a clear tool to support the mobilisation of staff to areas with the highest patient needs, ensuring patient flow, service continuity and safety.

In early 2024, East Cheshire Hospice introduced a phased implementation of the **Dependency and Hospice Escalation Activity Tool** (HEAT) modules within the Vantage data management system. Originally developed by Hospice care in Devon and showcased at the Hospice UK conference in November 2023, these tools were identified as a valuable and adaptable resource for our setting. We extend our thanks to Hospice care and Vantage for their generous support in tailoring the modules for our use.

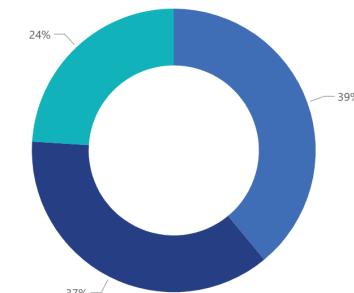
HEAT provides the Senior Clinical Team with a robust framework to:

- quantify clinical pressures and identify periods of high demand ("quantify busy")
- demonstrate trends in increasing referrals and case complexities
- support the strategic deployment of staff to areas experiencing increased activity and patient need
- safeguard team wellbeing by proactively managing workload and capacity
- enable timely planning and action to de-escalate high-pressure situations
- focus on overall activity levels rather than occupancy alone.

The integration of the HEAT and Dependency tools has already yielded valuable insights, clearly evidencing a significant increase in clinical demand and patient dependency during the winter months. These tools have empowered the clinical leadership team to monitor staff wellbeing more effectively and ensure safe staffing levels, while continuing to deliver high-quality, responsive patient care across all areas.

HEAT Levels for Palliative Care Services Q3 2024/25

● Amber ● Red ● Green



HEAT Levels for Palliative Care Services Q4 2024/25

● Amber ● Red ● Green

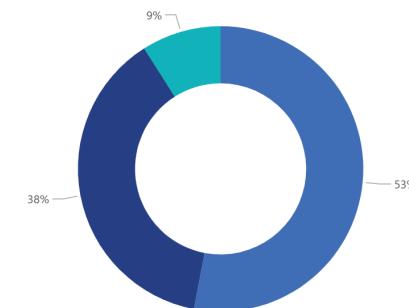


Figure 4.7 HEAT levels for Palliative Care Services Q3 and Q4 2024/25



## Inpatient Unit

In the 2024/25 period, our Inpatient Unit welcomed 260 patients, with an average stay of 11.8 days and a bed occupancy rate of 63.8%, compared to 66% in 2023/24. Notably, 29 patients had multiple stays, showcasing our commitment to continuous care and support.

Importantly, there was a 53% increase in patients achieving their preferred place of death on the Inpatient Unit due to improved advance care planning, better communication and responsive transfers from Hospice @Home or hospital.

This year, our Inpatient Unit has undergone significant improvements to enhance patient and visitor experience:

**New Nurse Call Bell System:** We have introduced Medicare, an improved nurse call bell system that has separate Assist and Emergency buttons, to ensure prompt and efficient communication between patients and staff.

**New Leadership:** We are pleased to welcome Pippa Williams as our new Ward Manager, along with new Band 6 Sisters Jess, Rachel and Karen.

Based on the comparison between the data for 2023/24 and 2024/25, here are the observed trends:

**Referrals:** Overall, referrals are increasing. There was a notable rise year-on-year in Q2 (July–September 24) and Q4 (January–March 25), i.e. in both 2023/24 and 2024/25 the rise in referrals is specifically in the summer and winter months.

**Admissions:** The most significant increases in patient admissions occurred in Q1 (up 17% from 2023/24) and Q2 (up 18% from 2023/24), while deaths saw the highest rise in Q2.

These year-on-year trends suggest an overall increase in referrals and patient admissions, but a decrease in discharges and out-of-hours admissions. We suggest that one reason for these trends is that since the launch of the daily huddles and working more closely with the community palliative care teams to coordinate care, patients are being identified in a timely manner and receiving responsive access to support on the Inpatient Unit.

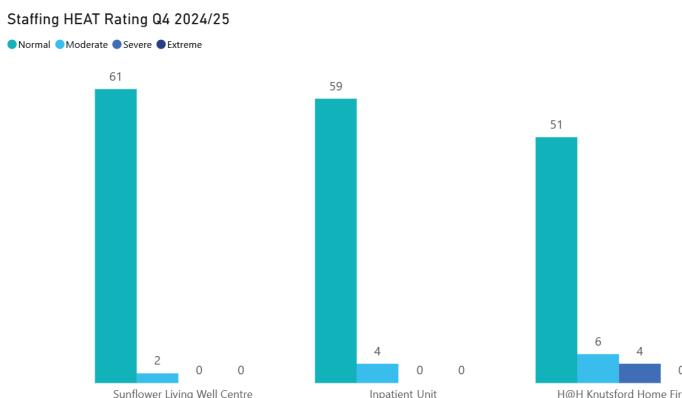
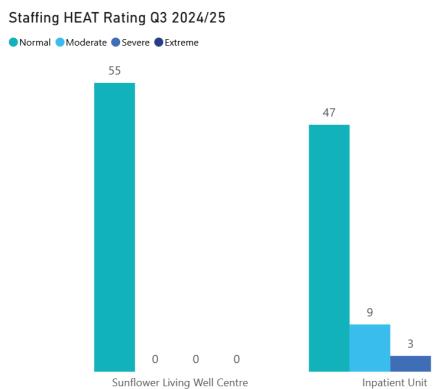


Figure 4.8 Staffing HEAT Levels Q3 and Q4 2024/25



**Refurbishment of Side Rooms:** We've upgraded our side rooms with mood lighting and assisted door opening technology to create a more comfortable and accessible environment.



**Chair Beds for Patients' Loved Ones:** We have added chair beds to allow relatives to stay overnight as well as sit comfortably during the day.



**Digital Information Board:** Our new digital information board displays essential information, including daily staff names, patient safety details, visiting times and more, keeping visitors well informed.



## 8 out of 10

patients during IPU care had pain stabilised or had improved

## 9 out of 10

patients during IPU care had breathlessness stabilised or had improved

## 9 out of 10

patients during IPU care had anxiety stabilised or had improved

## 10 out of 10

patients during IPU care had nausea stabilised or had improved

Change in IPOS scores from first admission to discharge or death (of patients with a score >1 on admission)

● Last IPOS score ● Initial IPOS Score

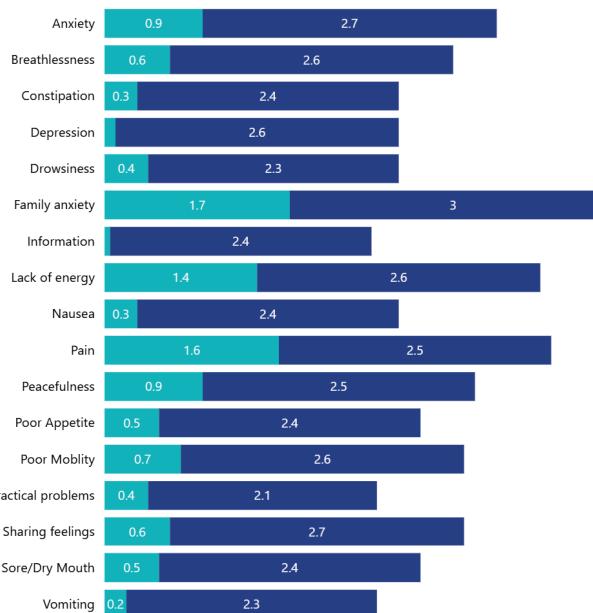


Figure 4.9 Improvement in IPOS scores from admission to discharge or death for our Inpatient Unit (for patients with score >1 on admission). A lower score indicates improvement in symptoms.

## IPU Clinical Activity

● Discharges ● Deaths ● ALOS (Days) ● Admissions ● Referrals

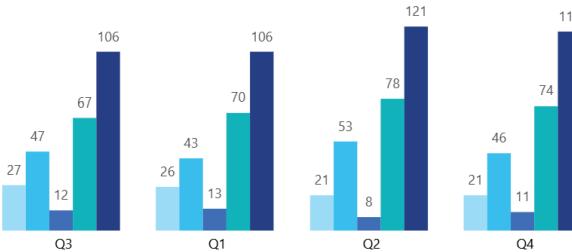


Figure 4.10 Clinical activity on the Inpatient Unit 2024/25

## AKPS Score on Admission to Inpatient Unit

● All patients ● All patients with IPOS score >1

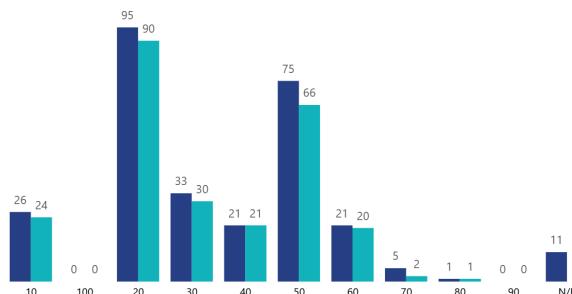


Figure 4.11 AKPS score on admission to Inpatient Unit

## Phase of Illness on Admission

● All patients ● All patients with IPOS score >1

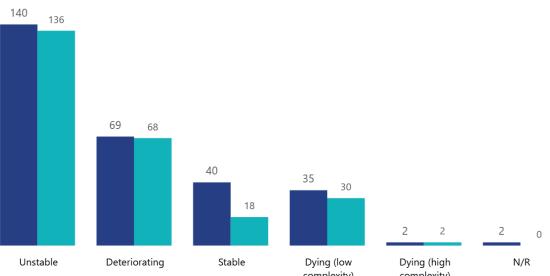


Figure 4.12 Phase of illness on admission to Inpatient Unit

## Sunflower Living Well Centre

The newly refurbished Sunflower Living Well Centre opened to patients on Monday 7 May 2024 following the over-run of the building project. There has been ample time allowed for staff and volunteers to become acquainted with the space and learn how to operate the various pieces of new technology.

The relaunch of the facility was an excellent opportunity to showcase not only what the Centre already provided but to seek input from our community as to what it could be used for in the future. The clinical team facilitated several open days and visits by community groups and local businesses over seven days and the Income Generation team used the opportunity to engage with donors and attract potential donors to our cause, all of which proved successful.

Existing staff have worked flexibly and across departments to accommodate patient programmes and we expect this trend to continue as we increase both numbers of patients and introduce new sessions. We anticipate that when we are up to maximum capacity an additional 50 volunteers will need to be trained to deliver meaningful interventions which do not require clinical input.

An increase in the staff of the Centre was approved and took the form of:

- **A Volunteer-led Services Manager** (37.5 hrs/week)
- **An Activity Co-ordinator** (30 hrs/week)

Unfortunately, our Volunteer-led Services Manager who had transferred from our Volunteer Services team resigned shortly after the Centre was opened. Their replacement was successfully recruited at the end of this financial year and we look forward to seeing how this role creates new



opportunities to develop volunteer-led services in 2025/26.

We fully expect the activity within the Centre to increase from a weekly current rate of 179 to 400 people within two years following the refurbishment. It should be noted that this does not include programmes which are co-ordinated by the Sunflower Living Well Centre Team and happen off site, nor does it include the separate work to expand Dementia Carers Wellbeing services into community venues.

The Sunflower Living Well Centre recognises the need to support not only the patients but the unpaid carers as it is essential not only for improving their lives but also for enhancing the quality of care and overall experience of hospice patients. Palliative services play a crucial role in providing caregivers with much-needed respite. Continuous care giving without adequate support can lead to burnout, but support groups and resources can help carers manage their responsibilities more effectively, reducing this risk.

Our wellbeing services offer caregivers valuable time off and comprehensive support in various forms. Caregivers can participate in support programmes alongside their loved ones within our Centre or attend sessions tailored specifically for them, including one-on-one psychological support sessions.

Unpaid carers often face high levels of stress and emotional burden while caring for their loved ones. Providing support can help alleviate these pressures, improving their overall wellbeing. When carers are supported, they are better equipped to provide high-quality care at home. This includes having access to timely and accurate information, which can enhance their resilience and care giving skills.

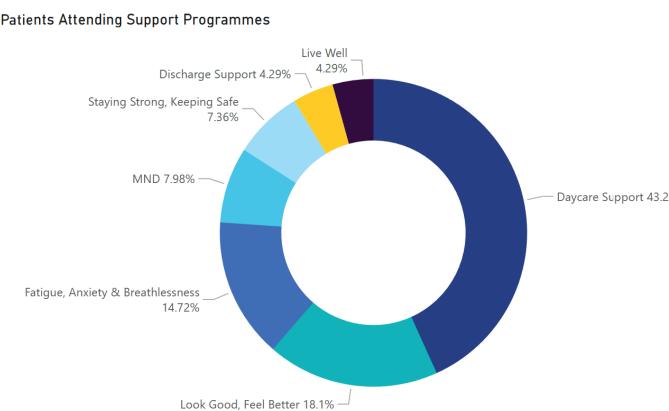


Figure 4.13 Number of patients attending various support programmes within the Sunflower Living Well Centre

#### Patients & Carer Referrals for Holistic Support:

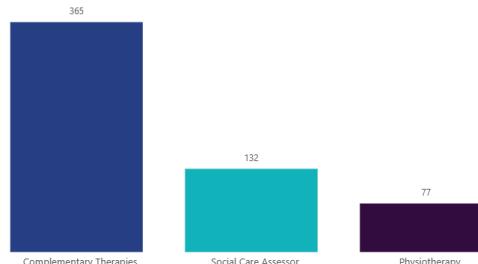


Figure 4.14 Number of referrals for holistic support for both patients and carers



## Hospice @Home and Palliative Care in Partnership (PCiP)

Our Hospice @Home service provides specialist palliative care to patients in the comfort and familiarity of their own homes. The service is designed to reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and to support patients in remaining where they feel most secure and at peace. By delivering personalised, compassionate care, we honour individual preferences and strive to enhance quality of life during what can be a profoundly challenging time.

The team continues to deliver the PCiP model, focusing on supporting the most vulnerable individuals who choose to spend their final weeks at home. Backed by the Integrated Care Board (ICB), this forward-thinking approach aligns with national Continuing Healthcare guidelines and offers a comprehensive range of services for patients in the last few months of life.

Our 24/7 service ensures patients receive care tailored to their unique needs, including practical nursing support, symptom management, psychological care and respite for family caregivers. We work in close collaboration with Marie Curie and the community District Nursing teams to maintain seamless continuity of care and reduce the need for hospital intervention.

Through this integrated and compassionate model, we remain committed to delivering the highest standards of end-of-life care in the community, respecting patient choices and providing holistic support throughout the final stages of life.

#### Expansion and Enhanced Support

The 2024/25 year has been a remarkable period of growth and achievement for the Hospice @Home service. We have successfully



expanded our team, allowing us to provide more comprehensive support to a greater number of individuals in our community. This expansion has been pivotal in ensuring that we can meet the increasing demand for our services and continue to deliver high-quality care to those in need.

### Knutsford Home First – a Milestone Year

This year marked the first full year of the Knutsford Home First (KHF) initiative. We are proud to report the successful recruitment and full integration of the KHF team. The team has settled seamlessly into the Knutsford care community, working collaboratively with the District Nursing team. This partnership has been instrumental in our success, enabling us to keep more people at home, where they wish to be, and significantly reducing unwanted hospital admissions.

### Strengthening Leadership

We are delighted to announce the recruitment of Charlie Guerin, a Band 6 nurse, who has joined our team to strengthen our senior leadership. Charlie's expertise and leadership have already

made a positive impact, enhancing our service delivery and supporting our team in providing exceptional care.

**Collaboration with the Developing PACE Model**  
 The Hospice @Home team has also established strong links with the developing PACE (Palliative Advice Centre East) model. This collaboration will ensure that our rapid response nature is effectively meeting the needs of patients in the community. The synergy between Hospice @ Home and the early stages of our PACE model has helped us deliver timely and responsive care. In summary, 2024/25 has been a year of significant progress and achievement for the Hospice @Home service. The expansion of our team, the successful integration of the KHF initiative and the strengthening of our leadership have all contributed to our ability to provide outstanding care. We look forward to building on these successes in the coming year, progressing our work with the developing PACE model and continuing to support our community with dedication and compassion.

Thank you to all our team members, partners and supporters for their unwavering commitment and hard work.

### Trends Observed Between 2023/24 and 2024/25:

**Significant Increase in Referrals and Assessments:** Year on year, there is a notable increase (22%) in the number of referrals and first assessments across most quarters.

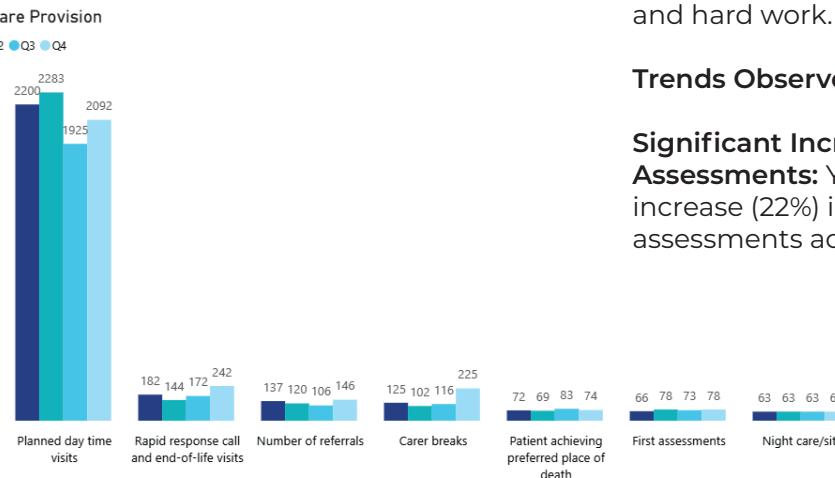


Figure 4.15 Hospice @Home care provision

**Stable Night Care/Sits:** The number of night care/sits has remained constant throughout both years.

**Growth in Planned Day Time Visits:** There was a substantial increase (approximately 34%) in planned day time visits, especially in Q2 and Q4.

**Mixed Trends in Carer Breaks:** Carer breaks show a mixed trend with increases in Q1 and Q4 but decreases in Q2 and Q3.

**Fluctuations in Rapid Response Calls:** Rapid response calls and end-of-life visits show varied changes, with increases in Q1, Q2 and Q4 but a decrease in Q3.

**Increase in Patients Achieving PPD:** There is a consistent increase (approximately 32%) in patients achieving their preferred place of death across all quarters.

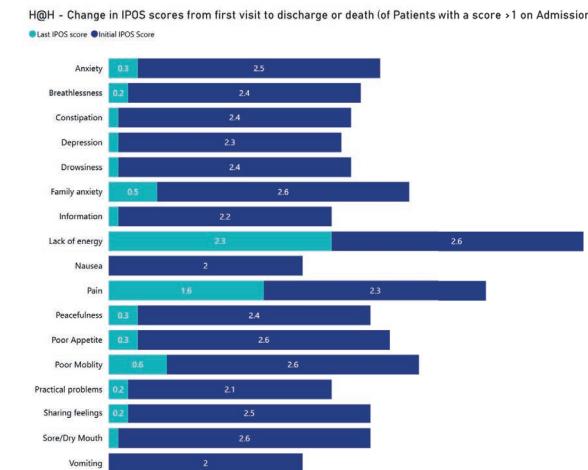


Figure 4.16 Change in IPOS Scores from first visit to discharge or death for Hospice @Home (for patients with score >1 on first visit). A lower score indicates improvement in symptoms.



## 7 out of 10

patients during Hospice @Home care had pain stabilised or had improved

## 7 out of 10

patients during Hospice @Home care had breathlessness stabilised or had improved

## 8 out of 10

patients during Hospice @Home care had patient concerns stabilised or had improved

## 7 out of 10

patients during Hospice @Home care had family concerns stabilised or had improved

AKPS Score on Admission Hospice @Home

● All patients ● All patients with IPDS score >1

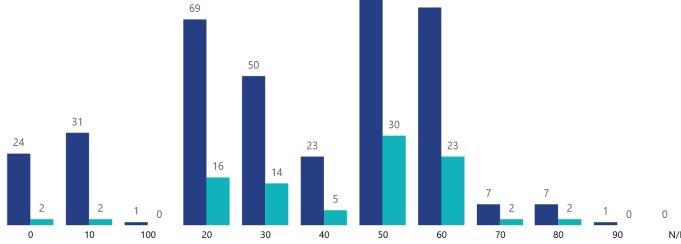


Figure 4.17 AKPS score on first visit for Hospice @Home

Phase of Illness on Admission

● Sum of All patients ● Sum of All patients with IPDS score >1

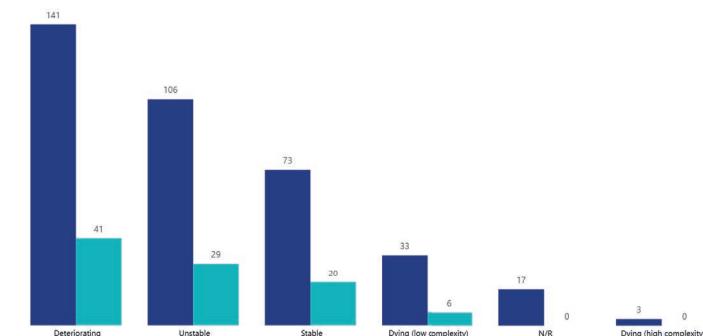


Figure 4.18 Phase of illness on first visit for Hospice @Home

## Family Support Services

Support services for family, carers and friends are essential in helping to manage the emotional challenges of end-of-life care, offering strategies to cope with grief and loss.

Our Family Support Services play a crucial role in assisting both adults and children through the difficult journey of anticipated death, loss and grief.

As expected, the Family Support Services have had another busy year, not only in terms of activity but also in developing new processes and support services under the new leadership of Claire Barber, Clinical Services Manager. The team has been restructured and now includes Art Psychotherapy, Chaplaincy/Pastoral Support and Bereavement Services for both adults and children.

## Bereavement

The Adult Bereavement Service at East Cheshire Hospice provides high-quality, compassionate support to individuals who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The service ensures a structured, professional and person-centred approach to bereavement care. Counselling is available to carers, family and close friends of individuals who accessed East Cheshire Hospice services before their passing (within the last three years). Service users must reside in East Cheshire or the High Peak area of Derbyshire and be registered with a local GP.

The Adult Bereavement Service offers:

- Pre/anticipatory bereavement and post-bereavement counselling through face-to-face, Teams video call or telephone sessions.
- Specialised bereavement therapy / Emotional

Freedom Technique (EFT) / Trauma Indoor Group – “I was offered EFT after my mother passed away just after Christmas, having had CBT and other therapy in the past for PTSD due to combat stress whilst serving as a field medic in the military. I’d never had any success with any previous treatment but was very pleased from the very first session with Helen. My own experience was that EFT changed the way I thought of what was affecting me and somehow reduced the trauma I was feeling.”

- Outdoor Forest Therapy Group. There have been 59 attendances at the forest group in the past year. “I was sceptical at first but very quickly realised the huge impact these walks were having on me. The opportunity to speak with other grieving people in a safe, natural and confidential manner has been overwhelmingly beneficial to me. In particular, after chatting to one of the members in the group, it hit me that I’d been suppressing grief regarding a different family member whilst trying to grieve for my recent loss. This was huge to me. Without this walking group I really don’t think I would have confronted this.”



The Children and Young People's Bereavement Service accepts referrals for anyone age 4-18 years in East Cheshire. The bereavement team offer age-appropriate resources and a supportive environment to help children understand and experience their grief. They support children anticipating loss by encouraging them to express many emotions, ask questions and receive reassurance. The care offered meets the unique needs of grieving children and their loved ones, and helps them navigate complex emotions and adjustments that come with the loss of a loved one. Therapeutic interventions, counselling and tailored group activities support children educationally and developmentally, and fosters healing, emotional resilience and coping skills. We offer family events, 1:1 counselling, youth group events and parent education and support.

Feedback directly from the children and young persons accessing this support is that they leave the sessions less anxious and scared after spending time with the counsellors – the positive outcomes are recorded upon discharge from the service to ensure the service is evaluated and adapted to meet the needs of future clients.

“Counsellor was very helpful. I liked coming to talk about my feelings”

#### Bereavement Sessions

● Adult Post-Bereavement ● Adult Pre-Bereavement ● Children and Young Persons

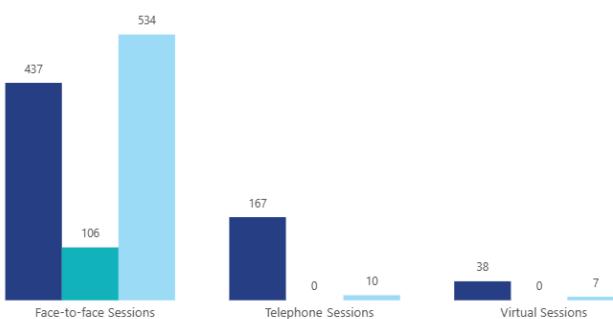


Figure 4.19 Bereavement sessions 2024/25

## Art Psychotherapy

Art therapy is a recognised form of psychotherapy that utilises creative expression to support emotional wellbeing. Facilitated by a qualified art therapist, this approach allows individuals to explore and communicate thoughts and feelings through the use of art materials, providing a non-verbal outlet for expression in a safe and supportive environment.



The service plays a vital role in addressing the psychological and emotional challenges often experienced following the diagnosis of a life-limiting illness. For many, it can be difficult to articulate complex emotions verbally; art therapy offers an alternative means to process these experiences.

Patients and carers may benefit from art therapy if they are:

- struggling to come to terms with a diagnosis or treatment
- experiencing anxiety, fear, or distress
- feeling overwhelmed, low in mood, or tearful
- experiencing anger, confusion, or emotional turmoil
- finding it difficult to cope with changes brought about by illness or treatment
- suffering from sleep disturbances
- facing uncertainty about the future
- feeling a loss of control
- confronted by unresolved past experiences triggered by current circumstances.

Regardless of the specific emotional challenges faced, art therapy offers a compassionate and confidential space to support self-expression and psychological resilience.

In the past year, the Art Therapy Service received

143 referrals, reflecting its continued importance in supporting both patients and carers, including during pre- and post-bereavement phases.

## Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care: All Faiths, All Beliefs, All Welcome

Spiritual care encompasses the search for meaning, hope, love and purpose – elements that can be profoundly affected during times of serious illness or major life change. Our Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Service is here to offer compassionate, non-judgemental support to anyone navigating these experiences, whether patients, loved ones, carers or friends.

For some, spirituality is found in personal achievements, life relationships or a deep connection to nature. For others, it may be grounded in religious belief and faith-based practices. Whatever form it takes, spiritual care at our Hospice is person-centred, inclusive and available to all – regardless of faith, belief system or none.

Our Chaplain and dedicated volunteer team have provided meaningful support to all who seek it, respecting each individual's beliefs and wishes. Many people with no religious affiliation have valued the opportunity to speak openly with someone, to be heard and supported, always in confidence and without judgment.

Chaplain Marion has continued to work closely with local faith leaders to ensure that patients and their loved ones receive appropriate spiritual and cultural support. The ongoing success and attendance of our monthly Time to Remember services, as well as the deeply meaningful Light up a Life services held each December, highlight the enduring importance of remembering loved ones and the vital role of spiritual care in our community.



# 5 Patient Safety

## Patient Safety

In 2023/24 East Cheshire Hospice revamped our approach to learning and enhancing processes after incidents and the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF), aligning with the NHS's commitment to robust systems for handling patient safety incidents. This last year has been a period of training and learning not only as a hospice but system wide. East Cheshire Hospice has been supported by the Integrated Care Board Patient Safety Lead for Cheshire and Merseyside to develop a Patient Safety Incident Response Plan (PSIRP) detailing how we will seek to learn from patient safety incidents reported by staff and patients, their loved ones and carers as part of our work to continually improve the quality and safety of the care we provide, and in turn improve the experience for all involved.

To ensure robust oversight and timely response, the Patient Safety and Quality Management Forum and the Patient Care and Clinical Governance Committee meet on a quarterly basis. These meetings provide a structured opportunity to review reported incidents in detail, identify key learning points and implement targeted action plans. This proactive and reflective approach supports continuous improvement and drives positive changes in practice to uphold and enhance the quality of patient care.

## Audits

The annual Clinical Audit Programme at East Cheshire Hospice continues to be a cornerstone of our commitment to continuous improvement in patient care and clinical governance. It supports compliance with Care Quality Commission standards and underpins our dedication to delivering safe, high-quality and compassionate care.

Our audit programme, developed by the Patient Safety and Quality

Management Team, is strategically designed to identify areas for improvement, reduce clinical risk and reinforce a culture of learning and excellence across the organisation. Each year, the programme evolves to reflect emerging priorities, best practice and feedback from previous audit cycles.

In the current reporting period we have completed six re-audit cycles, ensuring that recommendations from previous audits have been actioned and have resulted in measurable improvements. We have also conducted 11 new audits focused on compliance with clinical policy and best practice standards, and five service or process reviews. Action plans have been developed and implemented where necessary, ensuring continuous refinement of our services.

Through this structured and reflective approach, East Cheshire Hospice remains at the forefront of delivering outstanding end-of-life care.

### Clinical Incidents

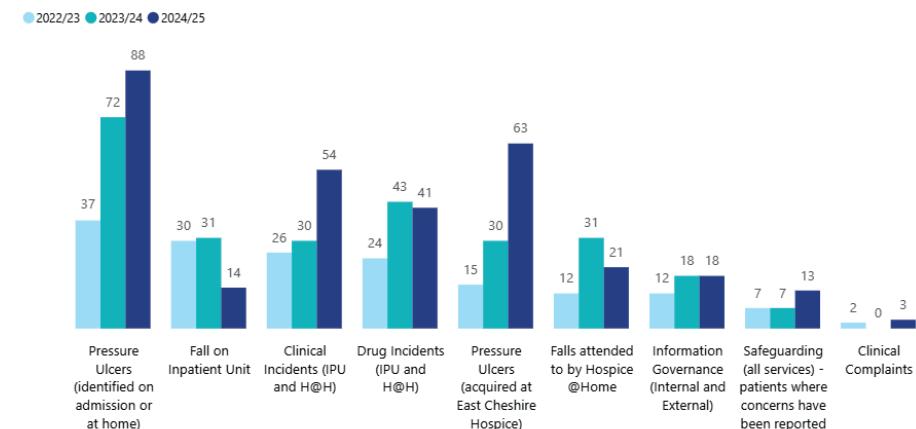


Figure 5.1 Clinical incidents 2024/25



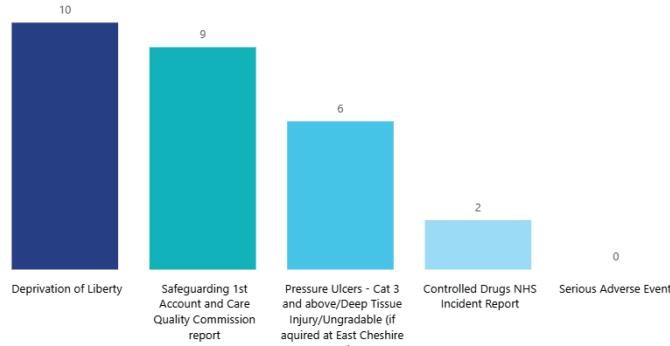


Figure 5.2 Care Quality Commission/C&M Integrated Care Board - Patient safety team /NHS controlled Drugs Incidents

### Clinical Audits and Review Competed 2024/25

#### Q1

- Quarterly Controlled Drugs Audit
- Quarterly Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) – Commode
- Mouth Care Audit
- Catering Audit
- Re-Audit Remote Prescribing Audit
- Re-Audit Protected Characteristics review

#### Q2

- Quarterly Controlled Drugs Audit
- Quarterly IPC – Handwashing (all clinical areas)
- Safeguarding Adults and Children Audit
- Dementia Referral Response Times Audit
- Thromboprophylaxis Audit

#### Q3

- Quarterly Controlled Drugs Audit
- Quarterly IPC – Re-audit Commodes
- IPC – Mattress Audit
- IPU Pressure Ulcer Audit
- Re-audit of Medication Allergies
- Re-audit of Hospice @Home phone line support
- Antibiotic Stewardship Audit
- IPOS Review
- Family Support Services Review
- Knutsford Home First Service Review

#### Q4

- Quarterly Controlled Drugs Audit
- Quarterly IPC – Re-audit Handwashing (all areas)
- IPU Medications Audit
- SLWC Recording of Advanced Care Planning and Preferred Place of Death
- Hospice @Home Incident Reporting Audit
- Lymphoedema Service Review
- Review of HEAT Modules and use



# Patient Safety Data for the Inpatient Unit

As part of our commitment to excellence, we leverage the expertise of Hospice UK to benchmark our data and establish high standards for performance evaluation. This allows us to compare our Hospice's safety performance with others highlights areas where we excel or underperform and learning from peers helps identify best practices and avoid repeated mistake. We also ensure that our findings are clearly communicated to key stakeholders, including the Cheshire and Merseyside ICB and the Patient Safety Team and our regulators, the Care Quality Commission. These agencies value the evidence of benchmarking and sector engagement in quality assurance.

## Inpatient Unit Reporting

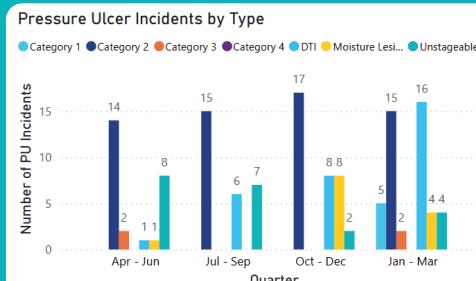


Figure 5.1 Pressure ulcer incidents by type

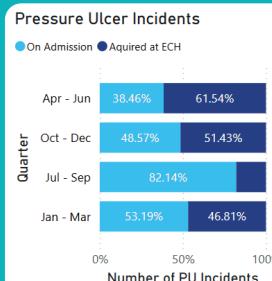


Figure 5.2 Pressure ulcer incidents

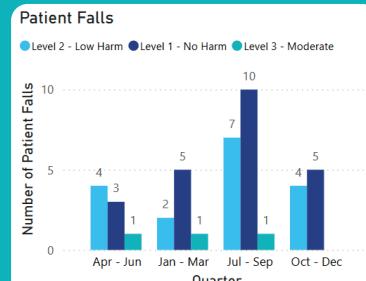


Figure 5.3 Patient falls

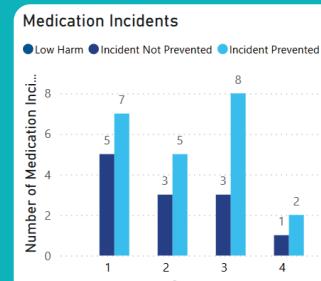


Figure 5.4 Medication incidents



12



7



Figure 5.5 Types of safeguarding concerns we identified

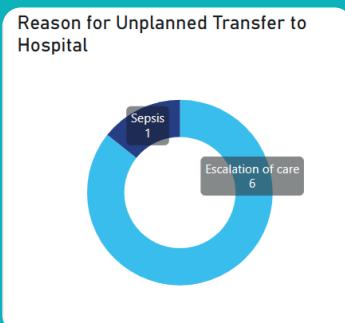


Figure 5.6 Reason for unplanned transfer to hospital

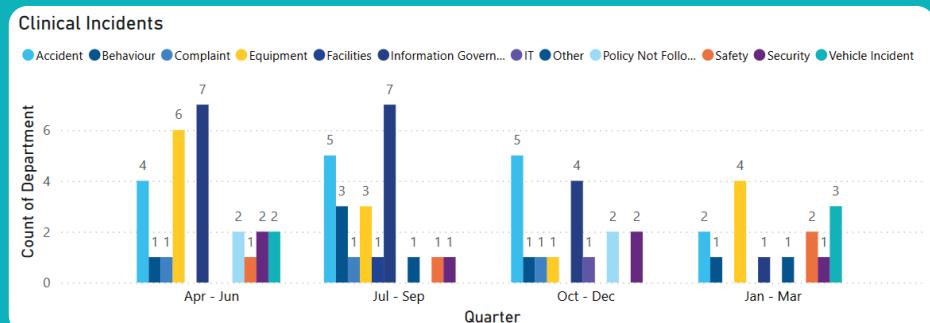


Figure 5.7 Clinical incidents



# 6 Feedback

"Our heartfelt thanks to everyone for all you have done to support us over what has been a difficult and emotional time. Our loss is insurmountable, but we know you made a difference in sharing stories and laughter with her."

"From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for the remarkable care and kindness you showed our mum in her final days. Your compassion and warmth brought her comfort and peace and that means more to us than words can express. Knowing she was in such gentle and capable hands made an incredibly difficult time a little easier for us all. We will always be grateful for the way you not only cared for Mum but also supported us as a family."

"We were very happy with the care that our mother received using Hospice @Home. After our Dad passed at East Cheshire Hospice, we wanted the same level of care and were panicked when we heard there were no beds available. However, we needn't have worried. Providing palliative care to a family member in your own home is very stressful, but I rang many times for advice and support and felt like my worries were always taken seriously. The nurses who came in after mum's passing were also very respectful, even after her passing she was treated with upmost respect."

"Your smiling faces and calm professionalism as you arrived were so welcome and calming for us both. Your personal care for Mum ensured she maintained her dignity to the end. Something which was so important to us and to her. The way in which you carried out your duties with such grace and tenderness was beautiful and gave us so much solace during a very traumatic time."

## Supportive Statements

"At Willowbrook Hospice, we are proud to contribute to East Cheshire Hospice's Annual Quality Account and to stand alongside our partners in demonstrating a shared commitment to outstanding end-of-life care. As a specialist palliative care provider rooted in our local community, we believe that collaboration across the sector is essential to ensuring people receive compassionate, dignified and person-centred care when they need it most. Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen partnerships with our Cheshire and Merseyside Hospice colleagues to improve collaboration which has enhanced the quality of care we provide and helped to reduce inequities in access. We remain committed to working together to ensure that every individual we support feels heard, valued and cared for – today and into the future."

**Lynda Finney**

Executive Clinical Director at Willowbrook Hospice  
13 May 2025

"It is recognised that the individual effort of staff, volunteers and teams within East Cheshire Hospice make a huge impact to patient care at the end of life and are committed to improving palliative and end-of-life care, ensuring that patients and their families are supported. NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to East Cheshire Hospice for their high quality and effective care given to the local population."

**Chris Douglas MBE (she/her)**

Executive Director of Nursing & Care NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB







[www.eastcheshirehospice.org.uk](http://www.eastcheshirehospice.org.uk)