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CLINICAL AND MARKETING TEAMS WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SERVICESJane Sutherland, Jane Frame *Saint Francis Hospice, Essex, UK*

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Improving access to palliative care has been high on the agenda for hospices for a number of years. Barriers to access are many and varied. Much work has been done to identify and reduce them but still evidence suggests that barriers remain.

In 2008 our marketing team carried out a consultation exercise to gain a better understanding of the challenges the hospice faced in improving access for our locality. Over 400 local people, service users and providers were asked their views. A range of methods were used including key stakeholder focus groups and one-to-one interviews with the general public.

Results demonstrated significant barriers to accessing our services. Many were not aware of services on offer nor who could use them; and there was a real need for literature that clearly communicates the work of the hospice and the range of services it provides.

The consultation exercise resulted in a rebranding in 2009. Since then our marketing and clinical teams have worked in partnership to raise the profile of the hospice and reduce barriers to access through a range of promotional and marketing initiatives. We have produced a range of service information leaflets and clinical literature and have successfully developed networks and collaborative working relationships with colleagues in non-cancer specialities.

Some 3 years on we are beginning to see the results of our partnership working. We have achieved more by combining our marketing and clinical expertise than we could have achieved singularly. Statistics suggest that we are beginning to improve access to people not previously accessing our services well. While there is still a long way to go we can see that our joint working and enhanced information giving is raising the profile of our hospice and the services it provides, paving the way for more patients to access them.