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SUPPORTING END OF LIFE CARE DELIVERY: AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

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10.1136/bmjspcare-2011-000105.135

In line with the Hospice movement's key role in promoting the Liverpool Care Pathway (LCP) across health and social care settings, quarterly link nurse meetings involving care home, community nursing and hospital staff were developed by the Hospice LCP team in 2008. These have been successful in engaging staff from a range of settings, with a current membership of approximately 60.

The benefits of the LCP are well documented. However, the challenges of delivering any aspect of end of life (EOL) care requiring co-operation across social and healthcare settings has also been recognised, particularly in terms of the support needed by care home staff. Assumptions can be made about the impact of the group in meeting these support needs. However, as the Hospice education team look to deliver a more comprehensive EOL programme and to expand the remit of the group to reflect this, understanding representatives' perceptions of the group and its future direction seemed important to ensure ongoing engagement.

Questionnaires, using Likert scale and open questions to capture participants' perspectives on different aspects of the group's activities and on expanding the its remit, were e mailed to all representatives.

A response rate of 63% (n=38) was achieved. Responses are still being analysed but there is emerging evidence of the value placed, particularly by care home staff, on the opportunity to meet with those working in other settings and of perceived educational needs if taking on a wider EOL role.

Both the ongoing commitment of the group and the early results of this survey support previous work highlighting the importance of strong cross sector relationships (3,4).

When finalised, the Hospice education team will feedback to the link and EOL steering groups to inform the future direction of the link group and education initiatives.