

- ▶ St Nicholas Hospice in partnership with a local HEI have a Foundation Degree starting in 2011 with 2 candidates to date.

**Future steps** Evaluation of the foundation degree programme throughout training and 12 months post qualification. Evaluation will include perceptions of course participants on course content, delivery and relevance to role, followed by observational activity analysis post qualification and delivery of Assistant Practitioner role.

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#### DEVELOPING THE ASSISTANT PRACTITIONER ROLE FOR PALLIATIVE AND END OF LIFE CARE

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In 2009 Foundation Degree Forward and Help the Hospices encouraged member hospices to collaborate in developing a Foundation Degree in Palliative and End of Life Care. The objective was to provide a nationally recognised qualification for palliative care professionals, who traditionally, have not engaged in career development through academic achievement. A uniformity of approach would provide consistency and transferability across sectors. Within palliative care, this 'new' role would assist the delivery of future workforce planning, through cost effective and flexible skill mix enrichment.

Three pilot initiatives emerged from across the UK; St. Ann's Hospice Manchester, St. Margaret's Hospice, Somerset and St Nicholas Hospice, Bury St Edmonds.

A steering group was formed with representation from relevant provider organisations including Strategic Health Authorities, educational providers, Social Services, community providers and hospices. A scoping exercise ascertained how the Assistant Practitioner role could be integrated into existing services. Job descriptions were subsequently written encompassing the Palliative Care and End of Life module. Recruitment to the degree programme commenced in 2010.

#### Pilot implementation

- ▶ St Ann's Hospice in partnership with NHS North West and NHS Bolton: 15 Trainee Assistant Practitioners (TAP's) commenced Foundation Degree programme in January 2011 (University of Bolton as the Education provider)
- ▶ St Margaret's Hospice in partnership with Strode College commenced a level 5 Diploma for TAP's in 2011