Creating a Template to Improve Recording End of Life Discussions/Plans in a Custodial Setting

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Background In April 2018 the Dying Well in Custody Charter was published. This Charter provides a framework to assist all prison staff in supporting an individual who is preparing to die in a custodial setting. Projections indicate that 20% of the population aged 50 plus held in custodial settings is increasing rapidly. There is strong evidence that this older population in prisons experience higher burden of physical/mental health problems. Prison staff highlight that initiating discussions about end of life care/preferences in relation to place of death/care was challenging and that the recording and tracking of these discussions/plans was problematic leading to possible unnecessary hospital admissions.

Aims Design/develop an end of life template focused on the Dying Well in Custody Charter. The template to be given a designated area on the computer system (SystmOne) that all prisons use nationally. The template can be used as a passport of end of life discussions/planning if the individual moves to another location e.g. other prison, hospice, community setting. Provide multi-professional education focused on planning/recording of end of life care in prisons.

Method Collaborative working with hospice and two prison healthcare/IT teams. Staff comments/ideas gained through group discussions to develop the template.

Implementation To trial the template in two prisons and one hospice over six months. First prison has a high percentage of elderly individuals and the second prison has a health-care unit. The hospice uses the same computer system and covers both prisons.

Evaluation Discussion of the use of the template monthly and amend as appropriate until a template has been formed that meets the needs of individuals and can be used nationally to improve end of life care/planning in custody.

Innovative Partnership Working to Help Support the Needs of Diverse Communities

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Highland Hospice covers an area 20% larger than Wales with a population less than 8% the size. The delivery of services equitably has proven extremely challenging. Whilst the concept of a hospice running a volunteer befriending service is not innovative, we believe our approach to rolling this out across the Highlands through partnership with local communities is.

Helping Hands is a volunteer befriending and support service established in 2016. The service has four objectives: build community capacity to deal with death and dying; support carers to sustain their caring roles; mitigate impacts of social isolation for clients; support wider health and social care system to cope with increasing demand.

The service is open to all individuals in need, regardless of their diagnosis. In order to extend the service across the whole Highland region we deliberately sought small, locally run organisations with a close connection to their community. To date we have established five partnerships each at a different stage of development. One partner had an existing befriending service we were able to augment, the others had no similar services. The partnerships work with small populations dispersed across large areas. Local knowledge and contacts support the recruitment of volunteers and helps people feel more comfortable referring to the service.

Seeing success, the hospice has committed to establishing more partnerships to develop local services. Our 2018–2021 strategy, ‘Supporting our Compassionate Community’, reflects the fact that we wish to support our wider community so that together we can help address palliative and end of life care needs.

We recently identified two rural Highland communities with under-provision of social care who want to work with us to pilot partnership delivery of social care services. Working in this new way can prove challenging but the opportunities of supporting people in their own community is worth it.