Method
- Work collaboratively with partners to achieve a local Dying Matters coalition;
- Hired ‘The Diary Rooms’ camper van for three days during Dying Matters Awareness Week;
- Scope of local area, who did we want to reach out to?
- Range of craft activities and resources available in addition to recording videos.

Results
- Funding received from commissioners;
- Approximately 50 stories heard and recorded (awaiting edited video and numbers at time of abstract);
- Visited two learning disability community venues with The Diary Rooms camper van. Adapted room for those unable to access the camper van. Two people communicated through ‘eye speak’ communication devices and impromptu Death Café hosted outside;
- Visited areas of multiple deprivation, BAME communities, college and hostel;
- Collection of video stories to share and learn from.

Feedback
‘Thank you for including us in the tour. Our residents really enjoyed your visit’ (Hostel manager)
‘Reflecting about our own thoughts and wishes for death and dying. An uplifting afternoon’
‘A thoughtful and reflective afternoon for us all’
‘People are more comfortable with talking and showing their grief. I have spoken with my children about death, my mother and mother in law have died from cancer, so they are aware they are slightly different from their peers who have a Nan in their lives’.

For Dying Matters Awareness Week 2019, Kirkwood Hospice hosted a variety of events, designed to encourage open discussions around death and dying, through the perspective of performance, literature and informal settings.

The week began in partnership with Kirklees Libraries, and an event called ‘Story Endings’, supported by Kirkwood Hospice staff and a number of library staff and volunteers. Librarians had curated a selection of books, suitable for a range of ages, along with some conversational prompts and a display of information. As a drop-in event, people passing by also joined in the discussions and engaged with the materials on display. The conversational prompts proved to be a useful introduction to remembering loved ones and exploring people’s own feelings about how they would like to be remembered. The librarians involved felt privileged to be a part of the event and were keen to host another similar event.

Through the course of the week, Kirkwood Hospice held a ‘The Last Post Pub’ in Holmfirth, with a special themed ale on sale called The Last Nail Ale. Four sessions were held during the week, with the opportunity for people to talk through will making, legal aspects and local support available. The sessions included involvement from Kirkwood’s Specialist Palliative Care Social Workers, Chaplain, Counsellor, Admiral Nurse and Trusts and Legacies Fundraiser and also included input from local funeral directors who were engaged with the idea of facilitating discussions within an informal setting.

The week concluded with a performance of ‘Spread the Word’, developed in partnership with a local theatre company and exploring the themes of advance care planning and dispelling myths around hospice care. This was performed to a large audience of professionals and provoked some excellent discussion.

Events were well attended and encouraged discussions, with a wide range of positive feedback shared. We plan to build on these initial events for Dying Matters Awareness Week 2020.