

# CaseStudy

## Hospice-led programme paves way for quality end of life care

*"Each year around 500,000 people die in England. We know that although some people receive excellent care at the end of life, many do not. Over the past 40 years hospices and specialist palliative care services have demonstrated what can be done to provide physical, psychological, social and spiritual care for people and their families."*

*The Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP Secretary of State for Health, Foreward, End of Life Care Strategy, July 2008*

### Education to support the End of Life Care Strategy

The Leicestershire & Rutland Hospice (LOROS) is at the vanguard of enhancing the skills of those providing end of life care. Supported by **fdf** (Foundation Degree Forward) and Help the Hospices, it has developed a new Foundation degree (Fd) in Palliative and Supportive Care with the University of Northampton.

The programme ensures the workforce has the relevant skills to support the **End of Life Care Strategy**:

- **Delivery of high quality services** – learning in the workplace that really enhances care practice
- **Supporting the co-ordination of care** - bringing together those working in hospices, hospitals, care homes and the community
- **A focus on care that assesses needs and considers people's care preferences** - understanding the physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of patients and their care preferences, looking at theory, research evidence and application to practice
- **Support for carers** – empowering support workers to work more effectively with families and carers
- **Management of the last days of life** - the programme builds the knowledge, skills and confidence enabling support workers to provide palliative care in accordance with the patient's wishes

### Why invest in a Foundation degree?

LOROS has a dual role and insight – it knows the requirements of employers and is able to deliver as an established education provider.

*"Supporting patients and their families at the end of life requires a dedicated workforce with the right level of skills. Our support workers provide an excellent service but there is no development opportunity for them. Moving into professional training is often not the answer and it may mean the hospice losing valuable staff"*

*Wendy Taylor, Senior Practice Development Nurse at LOROS.*

The roles of staff are changing with nurses taking on extended roles. Face-to-face care, where patients are more likely to share their feelings and concerns, is increasingly being provided by healthcare assistants. Support staff working in social care settings, in the community and residential care are being asked to care for people at the end of their life. So, providing opportunities for staff to develop the necessary knowledge and skills is an imperative for the quality of care.



*"We must ensure that our healthcare assistants are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to provide choice and quality for our patients and families. This will involve the ability to counsel and to support patients who open up about their conditions and their personal feelings. Compared to other qualifications in the sector, the Fd was identified as fitting better with the emerging role of the support worker. It offers the flexibility and work based focus required to provide the knowledge and skills underpinned by a sound structure" argues Philippa. "Reflecting on the student feedback received so far, the Fd is starting to meet this ambition."*

### The Foundation degree Model:

- Working in partnership with the University of Northampton; based on a shared vision leading to a truly integrated approach - LOROS developed and deliver the four specialist modules within the frame of the University's Health and Social Care Fd
- Aimed at those working in public, private and voluntary health and social care sectors who have direct contact with people with palliative and supportive care needs and their carers
- Students learn with those working across a range of health and social care contexts informing their wider understanding of health and care
- Learning in the hospice context through work-based learning and structured learning experiences e.g. seminars where patients discuss and share their experiences
- Developing the expertise of LOROS education and professional staff, working alongside the University in authoring modules, teaching, mentoring, supervising and assessing students, course leadership and quality assurance monitoring

### Making the Difference within LOROS

Personal development is a central characteristic of the Foundation degree for healthcare assistants. A second year student from LOROS explains:

*"I find that I am spending more of my time working with patients directly while the nursing staff are busy with drug administration and paperwork. I find that the more involved I become with patient care, the more questions I have – it is like a process of natural enquiry; I want to know why we do what we do."*

Another student, working within an acute hospital setting, adds:

*"I now have a much better understanding of the importance of holistic assessment and feel more confident and knowledgeable to care for palliative care patients. Before starting the course, I was scared of opening the door to allow patients to talk openly. I was scared that I wouldn't know how to respond. But, now I feel I can open that door – my confidence has increased."*



The Admin Team

For further information please visit the **fdf** website at

**[www.fdf.ac.uk](http://www.fdf.ac.uk)**

or contact the **fdf** Press Office at [enquiries@fdf.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@fdf.ac.uk)