Your Hospice, Our News November 2023





From family member to Volunteer

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Hospice Care Week at Harlington Hospice

Hospice Care Week this year focused on the theme 'We are hospice care', an opportunity to celebrate the amazing work that is done in hospices across the country. Our teams across Lansdowne House and Michael Sobell House took the time to decorate our Houses in yellow bunting and flowers to mark the week and we had two afternoon tea parties where our patients, visitors, volunteers, and staff could come together to recognise the invaluable care and support our Harlington Hospice Team offers. Everyone was greatly appreciative of Daniel, our hospice cook, and the beautiful cupcakes he baked.

Throughout the week we invited everyone to share examples of great hospice care. One patient offered the following feedback on our Lymphoedema Clinic at Lansdowne House, "My therapist listens and understands the problems this condition causes. We are thankful to have this service within Hillingdon." Another reflected on her time spent with our Psychological & Emotional Support Team, "I came for counselling. Really lovely caring service much needed at the time. Her help was invaluable!"



As the week drew to a close, we welcomed Steve Tuckwell, MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip, to our Inpatient Unit at Michael Sobell House where he shadowed Matron Carol Weston and our Medical Director Dr Ros Taylor MBE. As Mr Tuckwell settled down to coffee and cake with Steve Curry our CEO he commented that, "it's been an absolute pleasure to be shown around the rooms today and listen to the inspirational stories from patients and how well they have been cared for here."

Finally, we encouraged our staff members to consider their own roles and to share what hospice care means to them. Joan, our Complementary Therapy Lead and member of our Wellbeing Team, commented that, "I find it both rewarding and humbling to know I can help make a difference to the quality of life of our patients and carers, by helping them to feel more relaxed and comfortable, even if it is for just that half an hour."

We would love to find out about more experiences of great hospice care, get in touch with our Communications Team by emailing **communications**@ **harlingtonhospice.org**, if you have a story to tell.



Digital Wellbeing Hub

Harlington Hospice and MyWishes launch Wellbeing Hub on Hospice Care Week 2023, to empower Hillingdon residents' overall wellbeing.

Harlington Hospice recently announced a partnership with MyWishes (www. mywishes.co.uk) to launch the Digital Wellbeing Hub, at the start of this year's Hospice Care Week on the 9th of October 2023. This innovative offering provides a unique platform that seeks to empower and improve the overall wellbeing of people living in and around Hillingdon.

Generously funded through a grant programme funded by Middlesex Freemasons through the Masonic Charitable Foundation and managed by Hospice UK, the wellbeing hub stands as a pioneering initiative that empowers people to enhance their wellbeing in a holistic way. It is replete with a rich collection of bespoke videos and resources, meticulously curated to support individuals with their unique wellbeing journeys. To enable this, the platform allows for users to set personal goals and accomplish tasks that align with their individual wellbeing aspirations.

The core aim of this project is not only to attract new people to the wellbeing hub but also to reach those who may be unaware of the extensive services offered by Harlington Hospice. It is important to note that the wellbeing hub is not exclusively focused on Harlington Hospice's services, but rather it serves as a resource. The platform also efficiently signposts residents to a number of other local organisations that can support them with their wellbeing.

Accessibility and user friendliness were key focus areas when developing the hub and accessing the site is very straightforward and only takes users a few minutes to register. When registering, a Hillingdon



postcode needs to be added in order to access Hillingdon specific content. The resident then needs to select the 'My Wellbeing' tab from the menu on the left-hand side, which brings them to the wellbeing hub and its resources.

As this is a newly launched hub, Harlington Hospice and MyWishes are actively seeking individuals to participate in user testing of the site and provide them with specific feedback about the site's content and functionality. Further improvements and development will take place based on feedback and insights provided by the communities they support.

Tanya Willis, Wellbeing Manager at Harlington Hospice, expressed the organisation's commitment to individualised care and wellbeing, "At Harlington Hospice, each individual matters to us, and we work with every person so they are able to shape their own care. This includes their wellbeing. We'd be grateful for your feedback on the wellbeing hub and welcome any ideas for new content. Simply go to our online survey to give us your thoughts. In the meantime, I very much hope you find the wellbeing hub useful."

About MyWishes:

Planning for the future and areas relating to future care can be confusing and challenging. MyWishes makes planning personalised and relevant to each person's unique personal circumstance. MyWishes is a free for everyone in the UK.

For more information please visit: www.MyWishes.co.uk

Video of the wellbeing hub https://youtu.be/3OSdCiaWCpU

Interview with our long serving staff member, Carol Weston

Carol, you've been with Harlington Hospice for 24 and a half years now, starting as a volunteer in 1999. What's the secret behind your long and dedicated service?

Carol Weston (CW): The journey began when I worked as a GP surgery receptionist, and there was this lovely patient, Sidney Clark. He used to visit us with treats and just brighten our days. When he became a patient at Michael Sobell House, I visited him, and the care and attention the staff provided left a deep impression. It was a nurse, sadly no longer with us, who offered me a chair and a cup of tea. It was such a simple act of kindness that I knew I wanted to be part of this. Sidney, before he passed away, suggested I should work here. So, I started volunteering and eventually pursued nursing. He was my inspiration - his passing was a turning point and it felt like the right path for me. I've stayed all these years because I love the work, the team and the privilege of helping patients and their families during their most challenging times.

You currently manage multiple areas at Harlington Hospice. Could you tell us about the unique challenges and opportunities that come with managing these different areas?

CW: I manage the Inpatient Unit at Michael Sobell House, and the day to day running, ensuring the right staffing levels are maintained, quality and standards are of the highest quality and direct involvement in patient care. Working clinically one day a week on the ward sets an example for my team. I like to be hands on and approachable, ensuring my staff see me as a visible leader. My door is always open. Additionally, I manage our Hospice

at Home Team where we provide a night sitting service with Nurses and Health Care Assistants (HCAs).Lymphoedema services at both our sites, Lansdowne House and Michael Sobell House, and the Primrose beds (palliative care beds we are the commissioners for at two nursing homes). Challenges vary from managing staff in the varying departments, ensuring all the services align with our person-centred care ethos, to balancing my time spent managing these various amazing services. But challenges aside, we maintain a close relationship with all our care partners, helping us address patient needs efficiently and effectively.

How do you lead and support your team to provide compassionate and holistic care to patients and their families? What's the ethos you follow?

CW: Leading by example is essential. We provide continuous education and development opportunities. Our team attends regular teaching sessions, study days and training to ensure they're confident and competent within their roles. We encourage learning and development, although not everyone might choose the same path. Being compassionate, open, and honest is crucial when selecting new team members. Palliative care can be challenging but it's also incredibly rewarding, and everyone on the team must have a caring nature.

You've mentioned that interdisciplinary collaboration is a significant focus at Harlington Hospice. How do you foster effective communication and cooperation among different healthcare professionals in your team?

CW: We make an effort to bring different teams together, even across our two sites. Organising events, like barbecues and get togethers, helps staff from the different departments get to know each other. My personal involvement at Lansdowne House at least once a week keeps me connected with all my colleagues. We also work closely with the community palliative care team, district nurses, 'Your Life Line' (YLL) Team and Hillingdon Hospital palliative care teams to ensure that we're all on the same page and providing the best care for our patients and their families.

What advice would you give to someone looking to pursue a career in end of life care?

CW: I'd say, "Do it!" If you have a caring nature and compassion, we can teach you the necessary skills. Working in palliative care can be incredibly rewarding, even though it's not the easiest job. It's a privilege to help patients and their families during such critical times. It's about having the right staff in the right roles and working to their strengths and weaknesses.

What's your most cherished moment or event at Harlington Hospice?

CW: Our Light up a Life Ceremony is incredibly important to me. It brings together everything we stand for, and seeing relatives and friends return, sometimes after many years, is heart warming. For me it is paramount that I am there from the Clinical side, it is the most important date in my personal and work calendar. It's about recognising the impact the Hospice and the care given has had on their lives, and honouring their loved ones.



Finally, as a seasoned professional in this field, what keeps you going and inspired every day?

CW: IIt's the patients and their families. Every day, we get to make a difference in their lives, even with small acts of kindness. That's what keeps me inspired, working with a dedicated team and witnessing the impact we have. Harlington Hospice has a unique warmth and friendliness that sets it apart, and I believe it's our collective effort that makes the difference.

We would like to thank Carol for her dedication over her long and impressive career at Harlington Hospice and for sharing her insights.

From family member to Volunteer – a rewarding experience for Suraj Cheema

Suraj has been a volunteer at Michael Sobell House since his mother was supported by our team three years ago. After working across our Fundraising and Inpatient Unit Teams in various volunteering capacities, Suraj shared his experience with us. Read his story below.

"My mum stayed at the Inpatient Unit (IPU), about three years ago now, and I saw the work they (the Inpatient Unit Team) were doing for our family and knew that being a part of that was something I wanted to do. The first thing I did was volunteering in the Fundraising department. I supported the team with finding contacts for fundraising, inputting data about people who were regular donors and fundraisers, as well as doing inventory management at the Warehouse.

I moved from the Fundraising Team to volunteering in the Inpatient Unit because I wanted to work with the doctors who had helped us a lot when my mum was staying there. I wanted to give back and so I started volunteering on the Saturday shift. Usually, I would be serving lunches to patients and cleaning and clearing away the dishes and any jobs that needed to be done really. Working in both the Fundraising and Inpatient Unit Teams was really good for getting a deeper insight into the entire charity because I saw how the two sides of the Hospice work together.

When my mum was staying in the House, I didn't know much about hospice care. If you're visiting, you see the surface level of how it works but everything is, of course, very focused on your own family and situation. But when you are part of the team you naturally learn more. Since you are seeing all the doctors and nurses interacting

equally with every single person, it made me appreciate even more, all the work that goes into it.
Seeing both sides really broadened



my perspective on everything and reinforced that understanding of how important the IPU is for people.

I have just started studying Medicine at University and my volunteer work at Michael Sobell House has given me much more insight into medical communication. When I was with the doctors and nurses, I came to understand how palliative care specifically, is often just about treating people's needs and making people as comfortable as possible. There is always a focus on modulating communication, depending on the patient. If they are more responsive or less, there are different ways you can communicate with them. For example, speaking to their family and asking them to explain things because the patient might be more likely to respond and be comfortable when talking to someone they are familiar with.

I think that is a really valuable thing I have learnt through working with the team.

It was a really rewarding experience. If you have the time and are able to do some volunteering at Harlington Hospice, I would definitely say everyone should take up the opportunity. I know I have definitely benefitted from it. It just feels good to give back and be a part of it."

Leave a gift in your will.



If you share our vision where everyone living with serious or terminal illness in our vibrant community, is treated as an individual and supported to live with their illness in a positive way, join us in shaping this future by leaving a gift in your will to Harlington Hospice.



The Harlington Hospice Team has been supporting local people with serious or terminal illnesses in their own homes, in the community, and in our Inpatient Unit at Michael Sobell House since 1977. Help us make our vision a reality.

Email: fundraising@harlingtonhospice.org

Visit: harlingtonhospice.org/leave-a-gift-in-your-will

Please quote 'Hillingdon' when leaving your legacy.



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Neurodiversity and Grief Groups: An Update from PES and CABS



Supporting Parents & Carers of Neurodiverse Children

Child and Adolescent Bereavement Service at



It's been a whole year since the exceptional achievements of our Psychological & Emotional Support (PES) Team and the Child & Adolescent Bereavement Services (CABS) Team therapists, who clinched the prestigious award for their research poster at the Hospice UK annual conference 2022.

In the wake of that success, our teams have been diligently conducting a series of parents and caregivers' support groups, aimed at helping families better comprehend and navigate the challenges of change and loss. The results have been remarkable, as these groups have successfully brought parents together to talk about their shared experiences of caring for children who are both neurodiverse and grappling with grief.

In the most recent October session, one parent opened up and shared their own lived experience, with a specific focus on managing challenging behaviours in their

child. The impact was profound; it allowed other parents to recognise that they are not alone in their struggles and underscored the vital importance of feeling connected to others. Several other parents revealed that the group had enlightened them about the significance of neuroaffirmative language, and they found it highly motivating to view their children through a positive lens, rather than dwelling on their experiences as mere deficits and disorders.

Our next group sessions are scheduled for the last Thursday of both November and December 2023. These gatherings are facilitated by CABS therapists and a dedicated trainee Art psychotherapist. Meanwhile, the PES team is actively working on establishing the Harlington Hospice Research Policy and Ethics Committee, which will play a crucial role in supporting our upcoming 'Neurodiversity and Grief' research project.

Interview with our CEO Steve Curry on his 10 year Harlington Hospice Anniversary

Congratulations on 10 years with Harlington Hospice! Can you describe your 10 year journey as CEO and how it's evolved?

Steve Curry (SC): It's been challenging and rewarding in equal measure and it's changed significantly. When I started, the organisation was much smaller. While we're not huge now, we've grown substantially. I'm particularly proud of the shift towards supporting more people and making the organisation more professional, person centred and competent.

What's Harlington Hospice's mission and vision from your perspective as CEO?

SC: Our vision is to reposition ourselves to expand our reach and provide end of life support to anyone who needs it, not just the current 20 percent of the borough that we service. We aim to continue our work in partnership with various organisations, including the NHS, GPs, social services, and community based groups, to create a comprehensive support network. Our focus is on being alongside individuals, empowering them, and responding to their unique needs.

How does Harlington Hospice engage with the community to sustain its operations and deliver services?

SC: Our support often comes from those we've assisted before, who are part of a support network. People who benefit from our services tend to be integral to our community, whether as supporters or volunteers. We're obviously doing something right with people that we support and the people who are important to them, for them to want to help us in return. That's a really positive message for us. Our shops, on the other hand, attract local community members looking to get involved and give back as volunteers. We're shifting towards more proactive community engagement and

developing partnerships to better cater to diverse needs.

Could you share your personal values and how they align with Harlington Hospice's mission?

SC: My core values revolve around person centered care and empowerment. It's vital to provide care, guidance, and medical treatment in partnership with the individual and their family. We prioritise quality of life, especially in end of life care, where quality trumps quantity. What's important is that we do that in partnership with the person and their family. Our approach involves supporting and empowering individuals, working with them to achieve their unique goals.

How does Harlington Hospice collaborate with other healthcare providers for holistic end of life care?

SC: We have formal partnerships with organisations like the NHS and social services through Hillingdon Health and Care Partners. These partnerships help us ensure a collaborative approach. I play a pivotal role at board level in the partnership, working on strategy and operational aspects. We also collaborate with third sector partners through our H4ALL partnership, promoting effective and flexible partnerships.

What sets Harlington Hospice apart within the hospice sector?

SC: Harlington Hospice is distinctive for its outward facing approach - I've had that feedback from Hospice UK and other lead players in the sector. Unlike many hospices that maintain stability, we've embraced creativity and major service development to enhance our scope, whilst remaining sustainable. We're known for our dynamic growth in the sector, being one of the few hospices that reopened after briefly closing in 2018, which makes us unique.

A Big 'Thank You' to our Fundraisers and Volunteers!

We want to extend a huge **Thanks** to all the people who fundraised for us in in the lead up to the Royal Parks Half Marathon 2023. We had 14 incredible fundraisers, out of which nine ran the race on 8th October 2023. We'd also like to thank our 'spectathletes', the wonderful cheer point volunteers who kept the momentum going and kept our runners motivated on the hot and sunny day.

"The staff at Bishops Wood Hospital were keen to support a charity within the community. They chose Michael Sobell House as their charity of the year as it is close to them in distance, as well as to their hearts. At our own cancer centre, we see the effect the illness has on our patients and their families. Unfortunately, some patients are not able to fight the disease, even with treatment. Michael Sobell House has been a sanctuary to several of our patients, making their last days as comfortable and as dignified as possible." – Berangere, Executive Assistant.

We would also like to give a special 'Thank you' mention to the incredible father-daughter duo Mark and Laura, who hiked and swam respectively, to raise a whopping £8325 for Michael Sobell House. Starting on 9th May, Mark solo hiked the Shakespeare Way from The Globe Theatre in London to the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, some 128 miles, in six days. At

the same time, Laura swam the equivalent of the English Channel, covering 35km from 9th May to 11th June. To match Laura's finish date, Mark walked Hadrian's Wall over four days, covering another 84 miles.

"We all would want dignity and care at the end of our lives, and Laura's Uncle (Mark's brother-in-law), Volker Thatcher, found his in the last week of his life when he moved to Michael Sobell House in 2017. It's not just care of the individual that's important, but the time and respect afforded to the family, to be with their loved one at this most difficult of times. Raising funds by exerting ourselves in some way seemed the very least we could do to say thank you – and hopefully allow other families the same care and attention that ours experienced." – Mark.

We are in absolute awe of the two of them and are so grateful for their effort and dedication to raise such a significant amount of money for our Inpatient Unit. You can see more snippets of their journey on their dedicated Instagram page @mark. laurascharity.

If you would like to fundraise for Harlington, please visit: www.harlingtonhospice. org/get-involved/ or join our Facebook Volunteering and Events page here: www.facebook.com/groups/747106670510293/











Help our patients be warm and cosy this winter

We are excited to announce that Michael Sobell House is participating in the Big Give #ChristmasChallenge.

Between 28th November and 5th December, your donation will be **doubled** at no extra cost to you!

Save the date!

£5 doubles to £10, to keep our patients warm and comfortable, when you donate via The Big Give.



Thank you

To find out more about the Big Give Christmas Challenge Visit: harlingtonhospice.org/BigGiveChristmasChallenge Call: 020 8906 9222

Email: fundraising@harlingtonhospice.org

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An Interview with Carol Coventry, Harlington Hospice's Chair of Trustees

How has the merger benefited Michael Sobell House, Harlington Hospice, and the charity's future?

Carol Coventry (CC): The merger has streamlined our operations, but more crucially, it has clarified our mission of delivering exceptional end of life care for our local community. It's clearer for our staff and volunteers and I hope for our patients and their families, about who we are and what we are doing. It has also brought us in line with what most other hospices do. Michael Sobell House and Harlington Hospice are strong brands, and our merger empowers us to provide even more comprehensive, personalised services. The focus should always be on the best service for our patients, funding, and securing the future.

What do you envision for the charity's future in the next five years?

CC: I think we have enormous opportunities to shape end of life care. And we do that by being there, being at the table, being big enough to be listened to and having the right people. Like our CEO Steve, who is able to take that argument and run with it; he's absolutely excellent at that and his ability to be able to get himself in place at the top table and influence how care is delivered is so important to us. Having done that sort of work in the past, I really admire that. A lot can change in five years but I think it's very much being at the forefront of delivering and shaping care and we just need to get better and better.

How would you describe what sets us apart?

CC: We are patient led, brave and thoughtful in our decisions. We have the right people – we are very picky about our people and we support them. People like Dr Ros (Medical

Director) and Carol (Matron of the Inpatient Unit), I think they just have a way of thinking that is a little different. It goes beyond compassion even. We don't give people what we think they ought to have. You will see all the stories, of us fulfilling wishes for people to go to concerts but it might just be, on a Sunday morning, that someone wants to go home and die in their place of choice. And we make this possible. Our Hospice at Home Service and the doctors and nurses who understand that we don't often have to say no to people - I think that's what makes us a bit different. Having experienced both my parents dying in NHS hospitals and my husband, who was able to die and be looked after at home. I can fully appreciate that a hospice is a very different end of life experience. I think that the flexibility in offering people a whole range of what they want to do, makes all the difference. You get more choice, autonomy and privacy and people who understand. Palliative care is about giving people a good death. Isn't it the case that we always say that it's a real privilege to be there, at the end of life? I think that's what our clinical staff embody. In the last few nights of my husband's illness, we had an overnight Hospice at Home nurse come to our home and the absolute relief of knowing there was somebody there was amazing. I think we are the whole package at Harlington; I think that's what we do so much better.

You have been with us for 15 years. What do you think has kept you here this long?

It's a real belief that what we're doing is the right thing to do. By having the Michael Sobell House Inpatient Unit (IPU) alongside the Harlington Hospice community and home based services, we are able to offer truly integrated care. They're all part of the same journey. The first 12 years of my time here, I had much less understanding of the personal implications of palliative care. But then, having dealt with a lot of loss in a short period of time, and seeing the difference proper end of life care makes, I think it made me an even more passionate advocate for our work.

With my husband, we had wonderful care at home with an incredibly dedicated palliative care nurse who told my sons and me when it was time to say goodbye. We sat on the bed with him, drank wine and played music. And I know that we can do that for people here at Harlington Hospice. My personal experience has shown me how important high quality flexible care is for families dealing with such huge emotional and practical issues. I think Ros [Dr Ros Taylor MBE] will put this better, but you can find a way of leading people through it in a kinder way, of accepting what is going to happen. I think the IPU plays a huge role. The ability to offer care at home plays a huge role. I think that's the message, that we're here to do whatever suits you best. Even if you don't know what's going to suit you until you get there, we can help.

Could you expand on the importance of the people aspect of the organisation?

Ros was brilliant during COVID, she would arrange for people to go home so they could have their families around them. We never closed completely, we never closed to families. I was so proud of that and so pleased that we could show that level of compassion and courage. The staff were amazing during all of that. It makes you very humble about being able to be part of it and contributing to it in any way. I'm incredibly proud of the staff - the choices we make and the people we employ because that's such an important role of being a Trustee. Yes, a lot of a Trustee's role is "have we got enough money and have we got the right policies in place to ensure a high quality of care "and things like that. But for me it's the human aspect of it that's the crucial



part of it. Picking the right people. It's a people driven organisation and to go back to the merger, I hope that what we've done has helped the staff on the fundraising side feel much more part of the whole clinical side of the organisation.

You've got to be quite emotionally resilient in this field. I also think services in the community have such a role to play in how we organise end of life care. Our CABS (Child & Adolescent Bereavement Services) and our bereavement service are so important too. The fact that we are able to offer people those services in the way that we do, is just another example of thinking slightly outside the box.

Our merger has shown that we haven't compromised on care or on compassion. We have our principles, and we try to stick to them. I'm so proud of what the team has done over the past few years, it's extraordinary. So yes, I've been very proud to be a part of this organisation.

Carol Coventry has dedicated over 15 years as a Trustee of Harlington Hospice. Carol is now stepping down from her role as Chair of Trustees, but will remain a Trustee for the time being. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for her contribution.

Our Winter Market is back!



Date: Saturday 2nd December.

Time: 10am to 3pm!

Venue: Michael Sobell Centre (on the grounds of Mount Vernon Hospital,

HA6 2RN).

There will be a variety of stalls from local businesses and crafters as well as Santa's Grotto, raffle, and tombola.

For more information, to book your place at our Santa's Grotto, or to donate a prize, please get in touch with our Fundraising Team.

Visit: harlingtonhospice.org/join-anevent/winter-market
Email: fundraising@harlingtonhospice.org.

Phone: 020 8106 9222

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Can you face the heat?

Join us in braving a walk over hot coals, to support people living with serious or terminal illness to shape their own care.

Spectators welcome!

Date: Saturday 9th March 2024

Time: 7pm to 9.30pm

Venue: Michael Sobell Centre (on the grounds of Mount Vernon Hospital, HA6

2RN).

For more information contact Richard Green by calling 07535551615 or email rgreen@harlingtonhospice.org.

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List of Vacancies

Psychological & Emotional Support (PES) Team:

Patient and Family Hospice Palliative Social Worker

Inpatient Unit:

Registered Nurse

Harlington Care

- Senior Care Practitioner
- Care Support Worker
- Care Assistant



For detailed job descriptions and how to apply, please visit: https://www.harlingtonhospice.org/work-with-us/or contact our Human Resources team on hr@harlingtonhospice.org

It's good to share!



Refer a friend or family member

Did you know you can refer a friend or family member to come work for us, to receive a £200* 'thank you' reward? Come and work for us and you will receive a welcome bonus of £200 once they have completed a minimum period with us. There is no limit to the number of referrals you can make!



Before providing the details of the person you are referring, you must get their permission. We will then inform them that the recommendation came from you, when we contact them. *Rewards subject to internal checks and will be paid through your salary, which will be subject to the usual income tax and NI deductions. The employee must be employed for a minimum term of 6 weeks upon referral.





