

NCPC's National Funding Survey reveals big pressures on Specialist Palliative Care Services in the NHS and the Voluntary Sector

NCPC undertook a survey in August of NHS funding of specialist palliative care services in the current year as compared with the year to 31 March 2006. By 6th October, 107 responses had been received from voluntary hospices and 91 from NHS services and the findings are enclosed.

Peter Tebbit, NCPC Policy Advisor and Vicki Morrey, Trustee of NCPC and Chair of the Committee representing Independent Hospices presented the findings and their concerns to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Hospice and Palliative Care at the House of Commons this week.

The survey reveals that the funding gap is widening and that most services are experiencing some erosion of NHS funding that is necessary to support current levels of service, or are likely to do so as and when final agreements are concluded.

- For NHS managed services this translates into real cuts in services, in respect of specialist staff in particular and therefore patient care is being affected.
- For voluntary hospices around 60% are experiencing decrease in the value of the funding contribution from the NHS and the gap is getting wider between the NHS contribution and the full costs incurred by the hospices in terms of the services they provide to NHS patients.

The MPs and Members of the Lords present were angry and dismayed and the Chairman of the group Fabian Hamilton MP said, " We feel let down by the Government who have not kept their election commitment to increase spending on palliative care. And to learn of these cuts and of the erosion of the hard fought additional £50 million revenue funding is of great concern and action is required." He proposed to lead a delegation to meet the Secretary of State as a matter of urgency, which was unanimously supported.

Eve Richardson Chief Executive said "It is clear from this survey that, in competition with other health care activity, palliative care is slipping down the priorities for PCT commissioners. It is therefore of vital importance that the development of a new End of Life Care Strategy includes directives and local incentives to reverse that trend. "

Ends

Notes to Editors:

- 1. For further information and press and media enquiries please contact Nick Hayes on 020 7697 1520, or n.hayes@ncpc.org.uk*
- 2. The National Council for Palliative Care (formerly The National Council for Hospice and Specialist Palliative Care Services) is the umbrella organisation for all those who are involved in providing, commissioning and using hospice and palliative care services in England, Wales & Northern Ireland. It promotes the extension and improvement of palliative care services regardless of diagnosis in all health and social care settings and across all sectors to government, national and local policy makers. To read more about the National Council for Palliative Care log on to our website: www.ncpc.org.uk*
- 3. The National Council for Palliative Care is a registered charity in the UK. Registered as charity no: Number: 1005671.*
- 4. For more information, or to buy, The NCPC's Funding Survey, Briefing Bulletin 15, please call Nick Hayes on 020 7697 1520, or email n.hayes@ncpc.org.uk*

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