

Hospiscare means  
reassuring care.

*Esme, a day patient*

## Frequently asked questions

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[How much of a £1 donation is spent on patient care?](#)

Currently 90 pence in the pound is spent directly on patient care. See [how we raise and spend money](#).

[Are you the same as Macmillan?](#)

There are no Macmillan nurses working in palliative care in the area covered by Hospiscare. Macmillan did assist us at the very beginning, but we soon took over the work. They do make grants for specific purposes to local cancer patients.

[Are you part of the NHS?](#)

We are a charity. The NHS provides about 25% of our running costs. We work very closely with colleagues in the NHS to ensure patients receive the best possible care.

[How do patients get referred to Hospiscare?](#)

Most often by their GPs. See [getting referred](#).

[Do you look after children, and are all your patients old?](#)

We are an adult hospice, although we do look after the children and grandchildren of patients. Although we have looked after younger people, most of our patients are somewhat older. Most sick children are looked after by the Children's Hospice South West.

[Do you only look after cancer patients?](#)

Statistically most of our patients have cancer, but we also care for people with other life-threatening illnesses such as motor neurone disease and multiple sclerosis.

[Are you part of a national organisation?](#)

Hospiscare is a local charity covering an area of about 390,000 people. See a [map of our area](#). We are an independent charity, however we do liaise with other independent hospices through a number of umbrella bodies.

[Why do you have paid staff?](#)

As a large service, many people depend on Hospiscare. We employ over 200 staff and have a turnover of more than £4m. We strive to provide the highest quality care. In order to do this, and to meet all the legislative requirements, we need to employ professionals who are specialists in their fields.

[Can such a small building really serve such a large area?](#)

The majority of our patients remain in their own homes supported by our community nurses. The hospice building contains the in-patient unit of 12 beds, and the daycare centre, which can take up to 60 patients each week. Together with our hospital support team, we are often looking after about 650 patients at any one time.

[What is meant by palliative care?](#)

Palliative care is the care of patients with a life-threatening illness. It aims to control pain, alleviate symptoms and enable the patient to have the best possible quality of life.

[What is different about hospices from hospitals?](#)

We are able to offer a high quality of care to patients, their families and carers. We have the time to give attention to individual needs and the expertise to

offer specialist services.

We help patients and their families to make the most of living in the time that is left. We bring an open, honest and sensitive approach to death and dying. We work as part of a team with GPs, district nurses and hospital staff and educate others to give high standards of care throughout the health service. We offer emotional and spiritual support to families and carers before and after bereavement.

#### How much does Hospiscare charge for its services?

All our services are provided free of charge. See [how we raise and spend money](#).

#### What types of illness does Hospiscare provide care for?

We provide care for patients with any condition which is life-threatening. Over 90% of our patients have cancer, but we also help patients with motor neurone disease and other neurological conditions, heart and lung disease and HIV/AIDS.

#### Does Hospiscare only help people who are dying?

We can provide care and advice from diagnosis to the final stages of a life-threatening illness.

#### Are there doctors at Hospiscare?

We have three consultant physicians, who work in the hospice, with community hospitals and nursing homes. They work closely with the primary health care team and may conduct home visits where appropriate.

#### How can I get referred to Hospiscare?

Patients can be referred to Hospiscare either by their GP, community/district nurse or by hospital staff. It is important that whoever makes the referral has the GP's agreement. See [getting referred](#).

#### How long do patients stay in the Hospiscare in-patient unit?

Each patient's needs are assessed on an individual basis, the average length of stay is 10 days and the majority of patients return home to continue living as normal a life as possible.

#### How can Hospiscare help patients who are being cared for at home?

For many of our patients it is really important to them to stay in their own home wherever possible, so the majority of our services are carried out in the community, supporting patients, their carers and families. See [support at home](#).

#### What help can Hospiscare offer to families, friends and carers?

Coping with a life-threatening illness can be a deeply stressful experience for the whole family. We offer emotional and spiritual support to patients, their families and carers, both during the illness and following bereavement. See [services for carers](#).

Further to this, our [day centres](#) offer an opportunity for carers to take a much-needed break, and our [bereavement service](#) offers ongoing support where needed.

#### What is the difference between a Marie Curie Nurse and a Macmillan Nurse?

Marie Curie nurses are nurses who provide practical nursing care at night to patients with cancer, generally in the later stages of illness, to enable them to stay at home where possible. Macmillan nurses are registered nurses with specialist training and knowledge of palliative care. They offer specialist advice and support to patients and their families and are able to help with adjustment to the changes which illness can bring.

#### What is the difference between a Hospiscare specialist nurse and a Macmillan nurse?

They have a very similar role. There are no Macmillan nurses operating in the community within the area that Hospiscare serves.

#### What financial help is available to people with life-threatening illness?

There are a number of welfare benefits to which people with a life threatening illness may be entitled. Hospiscare has [Care Managers](#) who can help and advise patients and their families.

#### Is Hospiscare a sad place to work?

Naturally Hospiscare staff feel sad when patients die, are actively encouraged to talk about the experience, and have a solid network of support. There is however, a relaxed and cheerful atmosphere and humour is often in evidence to alleviate stressful times.