



Basildon and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group  
Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group

## Media release

For immediate release: 16 June 2014

### Local people share their stories to help improve end of life care

A survey designed to capture local people's views on end of life care has attracted more than 400 responses, with many people sharing personal stories that demonstrate how crucial high quality end of life services are for both patients and their families and carers.

Confident and competent staff and effective pain control topped the list of priorities among survey respondents. Being involved in planning your own care, being able to choose where to die and access to support for patients and carers were also considered to be very important.

The personal stories shared by survey respondents reinforce the crucial importance that high quality end of life care has both at the time of need and for the patient's family in the days, weeks and months that follow – as expressed by one respondent, "End of life care is very underrated by people who have not had the need to use it for themselves or others. It is extremely important and can make such a difference to not only the patient, but also their family."

NHS Basildon and Brentwood CCG and NHS Thurrock CCG are working closely with the two main community service providers in the area, Saint Francis Hospice and St Luke's Hospice to make sure the services on offer meet the needs and expectations expressed in the survey and through the experiences that people are continuing to share with us.

Tom Abell, Chief Officer, Basildon and Brentwood CCG said, "Many people have told us that community end of life services such as those provided by our two local hospices Saint Francis and St Luke's made an enormous difference at a most difficult time - providing high quality clinical care but also the emotional support that is so desperately needed. Others have shared less positive stories where the care and support they needed wasn't there for them and which clearly highlight where we need to make changes.

"The CCGs and the local hospices together with other end of life care providers are working closely to make sure that excellent end of life care is available to all at the time of need and that everyone living in south west Essex can expect to receive the same high quality service."

A new model for end of life care ensuring consistently high standards for patients in south west Essex from 2015 is currently being developed by both CCGs in partnership with St Luke's Hospice and Saint Francis Hospice.

Ends

## Notes to editors

Some examples of the stories shared anonymously in the survey, which closed on 2 June:

“It is important that people at end of life have a quick and easy contact with people who are able to respond and are truly experts in their field our experience was that only a few professionals were confident in terms of palliative and end of life care and these were largely hospice staff. Also one contact 24/7 makes (could make) a big difference.”

“My personal experience is that however good end of life care intentions are, you are very unlucky if diagnosis happens during a major holiday like Easter. My relative was diagnosed with advance terminal cancer 3 days before Good Friday and died just 12 days later at home with us. During this very difficult time, there was no end of life care support for her or us, only phone calls to start to arrange things. We were never able to get any understanding that we only had days and sadly she died with us at home without receiving professional care. These holiday periods like Easter and Christmas should not be the black holes they appear to be.”

“Looking after the person you love at home can be an ordeal if you are alone just watching them slowly die is so distressing having access to Hospice at Home made a huge difference to me and we need to support carers keep loved ones at home if that is their choice.”

“This is a terrifying part of someone's life. Anything to reduce the fear for them and their family members will help their end of life wishes to be granted, avoiding unnecessary admission to hospital.”

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