



Embargoed to 24th April 2017

Die Well Essex What does "celebrating life" mean to you?

Visit St Luke's Hospice and NHS Thurrock CCG in Grays Shopping Centre on 10 May from 10am - 4pm

People across Essex are being asked to celebrate life by sharing their favourite images of friends, family or pets that have died in a bid to start conversation about why dying matters. *In Thurrock, St Luke's Hospice and NHS Thurrock CCG have teamed up to provide an opportunity for people to talk about what matters to them, how to plan if someone they love is nearing the end of their life, as well as celebrating the life they have or had.*

The online campaign, called Die Well Essex, is being supported by health, social care, charities and voluntary groups across the county in the lead up to a national awareness week called Dying Matters during 8-14 May.

Using Instagram, people are being encouraged to share their favourite images of people, places or things that celebrate life as well as acknowledging the reality of death.

It's also hoped that the social media campaign will start a conversation about why dying matters and help to signpost people to support and services available locally.

Louise Banks, Head of Communications and Engagement at NHS Thurrock CCG said:

"We support this campaign and it's great to be working with St Luke's Hospice to promote dying matters week. Some people still find it impossible to talk about dying and death, it's one of society's last taboos. But we support the way of thinking that sharing experiences, making plans and doing things to improve quality of life before dying can turn a sad time into a time of making positive memories.

"We hope you will come and share your experiences and pictures with us at Grays Shopping Centre on 10 May."

Dr Elizabeth Towers, a Macmillan GP working in Chelmsford, explains: "We're looking for photos of places where people have felt happiest before dying or images of people and things that celebrate life in the face of death. It doesn't have to be gloomy, although for some people the right image will contain sadness.

“At the same time as sharing a picture, we’re looking to start a conversation about what people in the community can do to plan for dying and how people can support others in times of grief and bereavement.

“Caring for people at the end of life is often the most difficult and overwhelming but talking about it and planning for dying can take a lot of the anxiety away.

“As part of wide network of health and care services supporting people to live and die well, it’s important to raise the profile of dying and to share experiences.”

The online campaign will support the key theme of this year’s national Dying Matters awareness week – What Can You Do? – see <http://www.dyingmatters.org/> for more information.

People can share images via their own Instagram account – all that is needed is a sentence on what the picture represents along with #DieWellEssex or tagging @DieWellEssex.

Join in with the conversation in the lead up to, and during Dying Matters Week 8-14 May, on Twitter @DieWellEssex or searching Die Well Essex on Facebook.

We are also asking people to support the campaign by joining our Thunderclap using the following link <http://midessexccg.nhs.uk/livewell/diewell/join-the-thunderclap>.

ENDS

Notes to Editor

What is Thunderclap?

Thunderclap is a tool that enables organisations and members of the public to support our campaign by pledging a tweet or Facebook post at the same time that everyone else that pledges one – to ensure maximum impact.

When somebody joins the Thunderclap a tweet or Facebook post, will be sent automatically from their account on 1st May to coincide the start of our campaign and to begin the conversation in advance of Dying Matters week.

About Thurrock CCG

We are driven by clinicians, the CCG is supported by a wide range of professionals and strategic partners, to commission and deliver joined up seamless quality services to the public, patients and carers of Thurrock.

Our vision is that the health and care experience for the people of Thurrock will be improved as a result of our working together. Find out more about our work at:

www.thurrockccg.nhs.net

About St Luke’s Hospice

Helping people, their families and carers live with and beyond life challenging illnesses, from diagnosis onwards. St. Luke’s Hospice provides specialist palliative care for people living in the Basildon and Thurrock districts with any life threatening, life limiting disease. This often means cancer but also includes other illnesses that are no longer curative, such as Heart Failure, Multiple Sclerosis, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease or Motor Neurone Disease for example. Care and support is offered through a wide range of services that are tailor made to meet the needs of individuals. This care is extended to carers, families and friends. For more information visit: www.stlukeshospice.com