

# DEVELOPING COMPETENCIES FOR END OF LIFE CARE IN CARE HOMES WITHIN THE UK



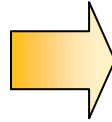
Care  
Compassion  
Understanding

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## Introduction

Suboptimal end-of-life care in care homes may result from inadequate training (DofH, 2008). To measure the end-of-life care provided, core competencies are required which set a minimum standard against which specific roles are defined. To achieve and maintain significant improvements in practice, an in-depth training programme needs to be undertaken and outcomes measured (Sneddon, 2001). However, training is complex as palliative care derived from a cancer care model may not be directly transferrable to those dying in a care home (Froggatt, 2001).



## Aims

- To work in partnership with 4 care homes, to develop a set of core competencies.
- To incorporate the core competencies into a 5 day education package, to be delivered to care home staff.
- To assess the impact of the education package on end-of-life care provided for residents in the care homes



## Methods

This is a collaborative project following the MRC framework (Campbell et al, 2000) in which hospice staff work in partnership with four care homes.

*Stage 1* – development of a competency framework for each care home via focus groups and interviews to elicit experiences and develop statements

*Stage 2* – assessment of current competence against the framework and attendance at a five-day tailored education programme

*Stage 3* – train senior care home staff in the assessment process and reassess competencies in the clinical setting

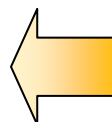
*Stage 4* – assess impact over time and roll out to other care homes



## Progress to date

Key areas of competency development

1. Communication
2. Disease process & diagnosing dying
3. Patient care at the end of life
  - Basic care
  - Symptom management
4. Bereavement support
5. Personal organisation & time management



## Where next?

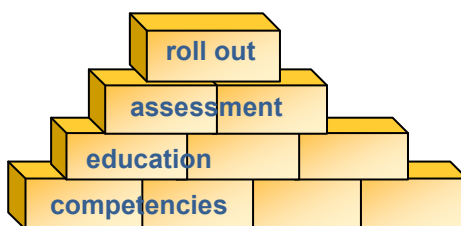
- Confirming competency
  - Statements
  - Descriptors
- Developing a tailored programme of education
- Reviewing the assessment process



## Conclusion

It is anticipated that the active participation by care home staff in partnership with the hospice will result in a unique set of competencies specific to the care home environment

Ultimately, this will improve the end-of-life experience of residents in care homes when supported by a tailored programme of education.



**Building competent practice**

## References

- Campbell et al. 2000. Framework for design and evaluation of complex interventions to improve health. *British Medical Journal*. 321:694-696.  
 Department of Health. 2008. *End of Life Care Strategy*. London: Department of Health.  
 Froggatt KA. 2001. Palliative care and nursing homes: where next? *Palliative Medicine*. 15(1): 42-48.  
 Sneddon M. 2001. More, or more effective, education (Guest Editorial). *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*. 7(7):316.