

Supporting General Practitioners in NHS South Central to have discussions around end of life care (EoLC) and to raise awareness of dying, death and bereavement

Background

We are inviting 15 General Practitioners (GPs) from 15 practices in your area to join a pilot project to assist your conversations about EoLC. This is phase 2 of a pilot project. 59 GPs participated in phase 1. Pre-pilot, 60% of GPs rated themselves as 'not confident' or 'not very confident' when starting conversations about end of life, this changed to 86% rating themselves as 'confident' or 'very confident' post-pilot. Pre-pilot 33% rated themselves as 'not confident' when having a conversation about end of life, post-pilot, this changed to 90% rating themselves as 'confident' or 'very confident' when having these conversations.

Research evidence suggests that GPs are an important 'port-of-call' for many individuals wanting to discuss end of life and GPs have an integral role in EoLC. However a significant number of GPs require more support in facilitating discussion with their patients about effectively planning for their death. A recent Kings Fund Report suggests that some GPs lack confidence in delivering and organising EoLC and that they feel uncomfortable having these conversations with patients and carers. These conversations are therefore sometimes avoided, although there is strong evidence that patients and carers value such discussions.

Your region is one of five areas chosen from across England in this second phase. The project is being run by Dying Matters, a coalition set up by the National Council for Palliative Care (NCPC) to raise public awareness of dying, death and bereavement in England, supported by the Department of Health's EoLC Strategy.

Support for difficult conversations at the end of life has been widely requested by GPs across South Central. This pilot study will compliment current and planned GP education programmes for EoLC.

Aims

This project aims to support GPs in their consultations with patients where the subjects of death, dying and bereavement arise, particularly with people with long term conditions, frail elderly people, age defined illnesses and people with complex needs.

Requirements

GPs participating in the project are asked to increase the number of conversations on end of life that they have with their patients and record the actions taken as a result of those conversations. In particular GPs will be asked to:

- increase the number of times the surprise question is asked and therefore numbers of patients on EoLC registers
- increase the number of conversations with patients about EoLC
- increase the number of patients being offered advance care plans and discussions regarding DNACPR
- record in patients notes the conversation taking place and action taken
- cascade their knowledge of the toolkit provided to other local GPs

Activities

All participants joining the project will be asked to attend a free one day workshop 11am – 4pm on Tuesday 24th May 2011 at the Regent Park Hotel, Newbury.

This will provide information on the project, regional EoLC work, advice and support on end of life conversations, shared learning and best practice. In particular workshops will focus on advice and support for the Surprise Question - "Would I be surprised if this patient died in the next year?" Emphasis will be placed on the importance of good communication to ensure conversations are a positive experience for both GP and patient.

Resources

GP practices participating in the project will be given a range of material to support conversations on end of life, including posters and leaflets and £250 to support their participation in the project.

Results

The project will be evaluated against key performance indicators and qualitative outcomes and if successful a controlled launch to key selected target audiences will be implemented followed by further roll-out across the GP community.

Register your interest:

If you would like to take part in this 2nd Phase project then please contact Phillipa Casbon to register:

Phillipa Casbon
Project Manager/Administrator
Tel: 01235 512384
Email: p.casbon@ncpc.org.uk

Further information and a pack will be sent to all participants during April.