



# **St Oswald's Hospice Strategy 2023 - 2027**

# Contents Page

**Foreword - A Message from our Chief Executive, Steph Edusei**

**Section 1: Who We Are**



**Section 2: Our Strategy For The Future**

**Section 3: How We Developed Our Strategy**

**Section 4: Our Strategic Framework**

**Section 5: Our Vision for St Oswald's Hospice**

**Section 6: Our Strategic Aims and How We Will Use Them**



**Section 7: Our 4 Foundations and What They Will Involve**

**Section 8: Monitoring the Work We Do**



# Foreword

I started as Chief Executive at St Oswald's Hospice in May 2020, in the middle of the first Covid lockdown. Back then our aims were very simple: keep people safe; make sure people still had opportunities for quality time at the end of their life; and ensure we had enough income to 'keep the lights on' and stay open.

Since then, the world is a very different place:

- The health and social care environment in which we operate has substantially changed. It is facing greater pressures than ever before and people are waiting longer for care and treatment.
- The cost of living has increased significantly, outstripping increases in salaries, and that is affecting all of us personally as well as impacting on the hospice costs too.
- Our communities have changed along with what they need and want from health and care providers.

This means that it's the right time for us to look at what this means for St Oswald's Hospice; what we should be focusing on and what we need to do to address the needs of our communities. We opened our doors in 1986 and we want to use our expert knowledge and specialist skills that we've developed over that time, to support more people with progressive life-limiting conditions and their loved ones too. But we know that we can't and shouldn't do this alone. Many others have equally important knowledge, skills and access that will help us all to achieve more high quality care and support for our communities.

When we decided to develop a new strategy, we knew that we needed the views of many people to make sure that it truly reflected local need, and the wider health and care system priorities. So, we reached out to many key stakeholders. We have been very fortunate in the number of people who wanted to contribute to our strategy by telling us their stories – and we are extremely grateful for their time and input.

St Oswald's Hospice has incredible people, staff and volunteers – and there is huge commitment and passion to help those who need our care and their families and carers. We heard from many of those staff and volunteers in the development of this Strategy. A key message from them was that we should enable more people to come and spend time offering their unique skills and talents to St Oswald's Hospice, so that we can, ultimately, reach more people in our population who are in need of our services.

This is exciting. It's about bringing everything that is wonderful about St Oswald's Hospice to more people, in different ways. I'm looking forward to seeing how we do this, together.

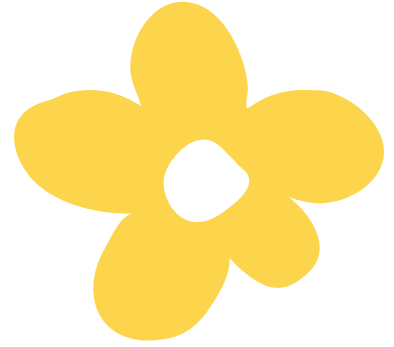
Thank you.



**Steph Edusei**  
Chief Executive

who  
we are

# Our Story



We are St Oswald's and we're a hospice  
We're much more than most people  
think we are.

We are a place for living.  
Our arms are open and inviting.  
We don't focus on being morbid or sad,  
our hope is for everyone to make the most  
of the life they have.

We are the warmest of welcomes,  
a hand to hold when you've lost your way,  
joy and laughter on a good day.  
When hearts are heavy, we're a listening ear,  
practical support when the road ahead isn't clear.

Amazing things happen right here.  
Support and kindness abound,  
nature and peace are all around.

Growing and learning every day.  
Experts in care, working together and  
improving lives for the better.

We believe in quality time for everyone,  
making memories and moments to share.  
If death is to come, we provide dignity in end  
of life care.

We're a home-from-home where families can stay,  
respite for those struggling day-by-day.  
We are a haven in the North East,  
an open-minded community, a comforting space,  
come in to our safe place.



Our Strategy  
for the future

# Our Strategy For The Future

This strategy for **2023 – 2027** outlines Our **Vision**, Our **Strategic Aims**, and Our **Foundations** which support the work that we want to deliver for those in need of our services. This includes patients, their families and carers, and those who have experienced the death of someone they love.

## Who we provide care for



Please note, that throughout this Strategy it is this broad range of people, their families/loved ones, and carers, who we are talking about.

## Explaining our key words

We think it is important to explain some of the key words we use throughout this Strategy. We hope this helps people understand what we mean when we use them:

### Palliative Care

Palliative care is about improving quality of life and reducing suffering and distress as much as possible for people who are living with serious, complex and progressive life-limiting illnesses.

Being offered palliative care does not always mean that someone is going to die soon – often, palliative care is given over a long period of time, sometimes several years.

It's about ensuring people get the right support or treatment they need, at the right time to make the most of their life.

### End of Life Care

End of Life care is about helping people to make the most of the time they have left, no matter how long that is (months, weeks, days).

It's about understanding their needs (physical, emotional, spiritual and practical) and listening to their wishes to ensure patients (and their loved ones), get the right treatment and support during this time.

Importantly, it's about making them as comfortable as possible as they approach the end of of their life and ensuring a compassionate and dignified death.

### Lymphoedema

Lymphoedema is a chronic (long-lasting) condition that produces swelling in the body's tissues. This is most commonly seen in the arms, legs, hands and feet.

It develops when our lymphatic system (the system which helps us to fight infections and drain fluids from the body) doesn't work properly. The swelling is a build-up of fluid and it can cause pain, discomfort and difficulty with movement.

Some people's lymphoedema is genetic (meaning people are born with it), but most people get it when their lymphatic system is damaged by cancer treatment, injury or infection.

## Meeting the needs of our community

One of the key elements of this Strategy is our commitment to reshaping our services so that we can meet the needs of as many people, of all ages, in our community as possible.


We know we need to do this by delivering more and new services out in our communities, and by working with more and new partner organisations, rather than mainly from our Hospice based in Gosforth.

Now, more than ever, feels like the right time to explore wider partnerships with:

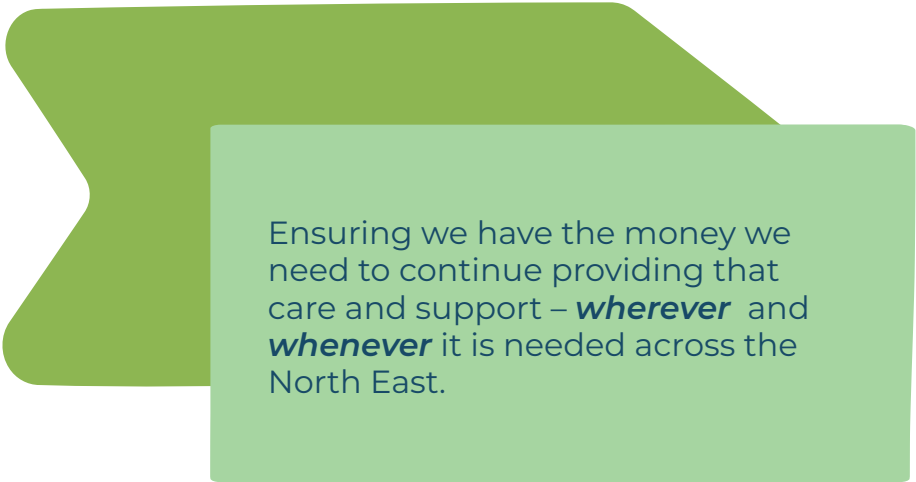


Talking to people in our wider communities and these partner organisations will help us to ensure that we understand the ever-changing needs of our communities and how we can work together to meet their needs.

We know that many of those who need care rely on us for support, as do their families and carers. That's why we're committed to:



Changing and adapting how we work so that we become even more **efficient** and **effective** in what we do.



Ensuring we have the money we need to continue providing that care and support – **wherever** and **whenever** it is needed across the North East.



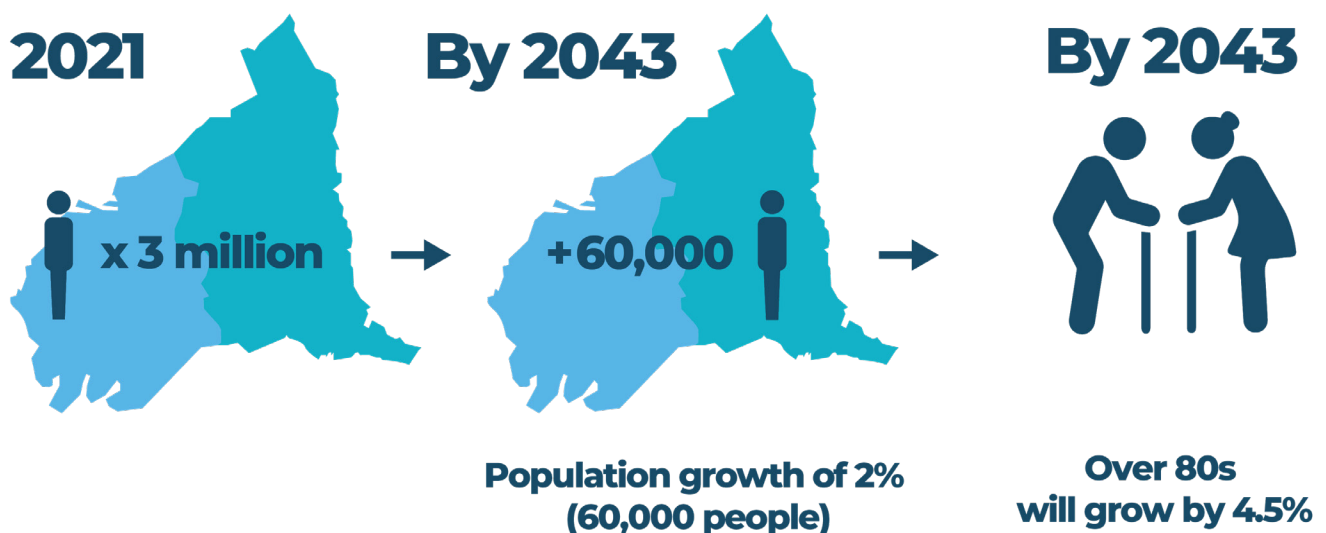
## What we know right now about the health of our North East community

St Oswald's Hospice provides care and support for those in need from across the wider North East region, which includes the local authority areas shown on the map below:

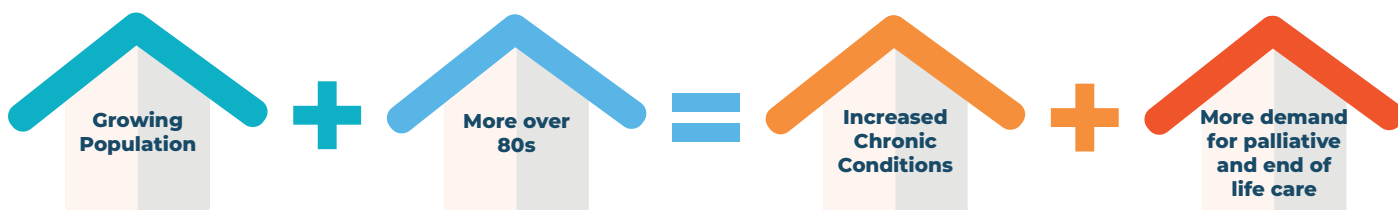


**We have considered the inequalities and wider underlying health information in these areas when we developed this Strategy. We want to make sure that everything we do contributes to caring for the population of the North East.**

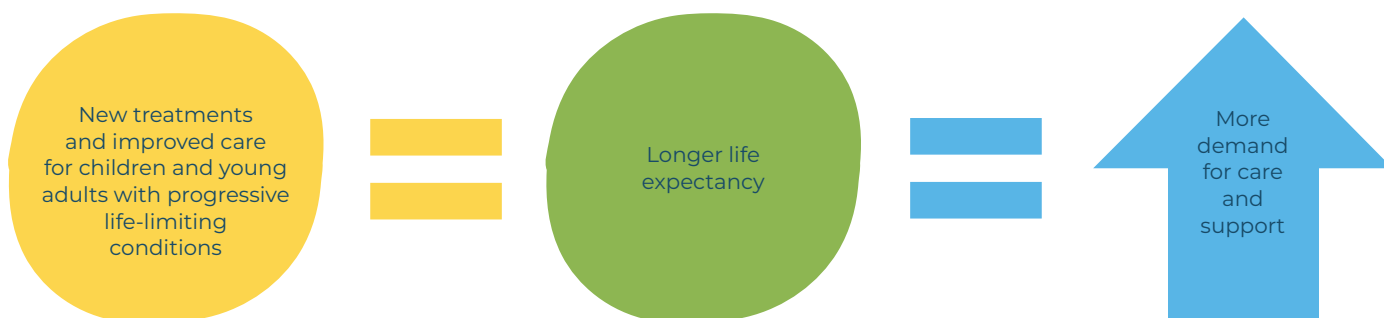
### Our Growing and Changing Population



While it is positive that people are living longer, the evidence shows us that many people will live longer with a number of **long-lasting (chronic) conditions** and the demand for end of life and palliative care services will increase.

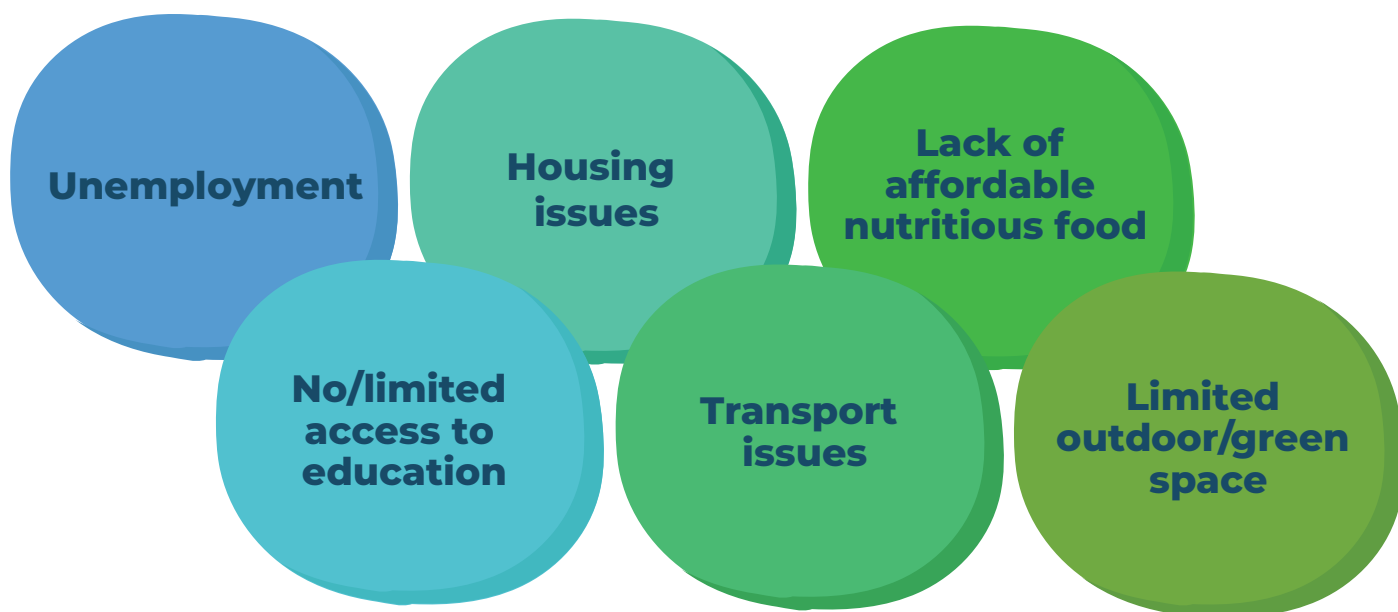


New treatments and care have enabled many children and young people to live much longer with progressive life-limiting conditions than in years gone by. This means that we need to provide greater care and support for these children and young adults, their families and carers.



## Inequalities of Care

What does Inequalities of Care mean? It means that we know not everyone can easily access the health and social care that they need. This can be caused by a combination of **social inequalities**:



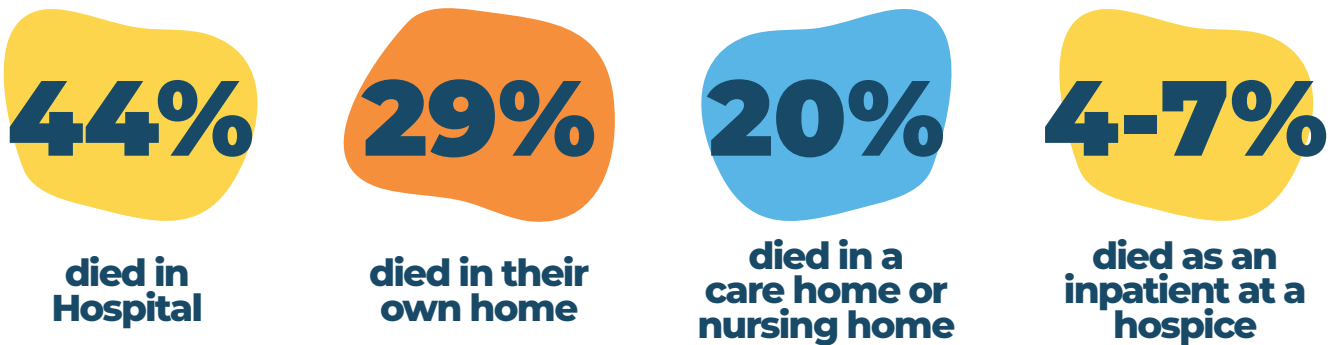
For some people, these issues may shape their lives and lead to health inequalities. These inequalities can change their health as well as their health outcomes. It can lead to increased risk of preventable illness and premature death.



Healthcare inequalities happen when access to information about healthcare, the treatment or support that is available for people, is different for different communities. This can happen because of the way some services are planned and delivered. How easy it is to navigate and access services will be different depending on people's social characteristics and their health.

## Where people die

In 2021 (the last year this data was available), out of the people across the North East of all ages who died:



While there is no firm data, it is generally believed that many people would prefer to die in their own homes, with the right support and care available around them – this is likely to need some palliative and end of life expertise.

## Most common causes of death in the North East...

### Top 4 causes of death in adults (both male and female)

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease (heart / artery related)
- Chronic respiratory disease (long lasting and affecting the airways and lungs)
- Neurological disorders (affects the nervous system – the brain, spinal cord, nerves)

### Top 4 causes of death in children (age 5 - 14 years old)

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease (heart / artery related)
- Transport injuries
- Unintentional injuries

### Top 3 causes of death in under 5s

- Maternal and Neonatal (when a baby dies before, during or shortly after birth)
- Cardiovascular disease (heart / artery related)
- Cancer

How we developed  
our Strategy

## How we developed our Strategy

To help us develop our Strategy, it was very important to listen to as many voices as possible. This included our staff, volunteers and people who we work with in other organisations.

We promoted a survey on our website and our social media channels, and asked partner organisations to do the same. We were pleased to receive **more than 80** completed surveys, which showed a good interest in St Oswald's Hospice and our future plans.

Interviews were also carried out with **more than 75** people by some external specialists in palliative and end of life care. We wanted to ensure that these conversations were held with someone from outside St Oswald's Hospice, so our interviewees could tell their stories, and where relevant, share their experience of St Oswald's Hospice, in an open and honest way.

In both the interviews and the survey, we asked a number of questions. We then went through the answers and developed themes from the areas interviewees felt most strongly about.

### The 4 questions we asked were:

**How well are we meeting service users' needs now?**

**What can we do to improve the care we offer?**

**What changes does St Oswald's Hospice need to make now, to better position itself for the next 10 years?**

**What else would you like to share with us about your experience of services for people approaching the end of their lives in the North East or elsewhere?**

## The themes that stood out from the interviews and surveys were:

### Unmet need

We need to understand more about the people and communities who don't usually access hospice care, so we can design services that meet their needs.

### Access

Ensure that we make it as easy as possible for people who need our services – as an inpatient or outpatient - to be able to **access our services** in a timely way and that we streamline our processes.

### Volunteers

There are many more people who have time, skills and expertise who would like to get involved in what we do in some way. We need to create more opportunities for people to come and volunteer with us.

### Partnership

To reach as many people as we can, we should explore working in partnership with other organisations (this may be NHS, social care, private and voluntary sector and community groups).

### Community

We should look at solutions for more people wanting to be able to receive services closer to home, in community settings.

### Education

We can help more people understand death, dying and bereavement and how to cope with them, by providing more education for schools, hospitals, private companies, and community groups.

### Message

Whilst many people have heard about us, we need to broaden our St Oswald's Hospice message to reach more people with better, clearer information about the range of services we offer, and how we can help.

Using these themes, we have created our Strategic Framework.

This includes our *4 strategic aims* and our *4 foundations*.

Together these will support our future strategy of providing more and better palliative and end of life care for as many people, of all ages, in our community as possible.

# Our Strategic Framework

# OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## Rainbow

Our overarching **Vision**, **Mission** and **Values** are reflected in our rainbow...

## Flowers and Heart

These represent the heart of our Strategy...

The heart-shaped flower is the **people we care for** and our wider **community**.

The flowers are our **clinical and support services**, which we aim to grow to meet the needs of our community over the next 4 years.

## Leaves

Our leaves represent our **4 strategic aims** which will provide focus for the way we will work over the next 4 years...

- **Partnerships**
- **Community**
- **Sustainable Funding**
- **Education and Research**

## Roots, Trunk and Branches

These represent our **4 foundations** which support and strengthen everything we do.

The roots and trunk are:

- **Our People** (staff, volunteers, donors and supporters)

The branches represent:

- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**
- **Effective, Efficient, Sustainable**
- **Identity, Presence and Message**


These foundations underpin our aims.

**There is always space for new leaves to grow and flowers to bloom...**




# Our Vision for St Oswald's Hospice

# Our Vision Statement



**Together,** with others, we will make the most of time and improve quality of life for everyone, of all ages, in the North East who are living with a progressive life-limiting condition, and for their families and carers too.

# Our Mission Statement



**Together,** with the vital support of our staff, volunteers, donors, customers and supporters, we will continue to develop and grow our services so that everyone in our region gets expert, dignified and compassionate care when and where they need it.

# Our Values

Our Values are our core beliefs. They explain who we are, how we work, what we believe in and stand for. They reflect our culture at St Oswald's Hospice.



Our Values set out how we will work together to deliver care for those in need and their families and carers – as well as how we will care for each other. We will always seek to make **SPACE** for everyone, whatever their needs.

Our Strategic  
Aims and how we  
will use them

## The Heart of Our Strategy

Our Strategy 2023 – 2027 has at its heart our aim to continue to grow and develop high quality clinical and support services for those people in our community with progressive life-limiting conditions, and those caring for them.

The 3 care service areas of focus are: **Frailty, Bereavement and Transition.**

Our **4 Strategic Aims** will provide the focus for the way we work in the coming years. Our **4 Foundations** are the important work that supports everything we do.

We will develop a plan with actions, targets and measures that will detail the steps we will take each year to deliver this Strategy.

## Our 4 Strategic Aims and how we will use them

# Partnerships

### We will:

- Find new and collaborative partnerships that will help create opportunities to make our services better, engage and involve our communities, educate people, carry out relevant research, and generate income.
- Work with existing partners and new ones to learn from them and share what we know and do. By working together, we can reach more people who need support from palliative and end-of-life care services.
- Make sure our services, wherever possible and appropriate, fit well with the wider healthcare and social care system. This way, we can provide smoother and more effective care for the people who need it.
- Work with colleagues across the Integrated Care System (ICS) to make sure we provide well-organised, accessible and effective palliative and end of life care that is value for money.
- Look to build long-term partnerships with organisations who share our Values, to create long-term mutual benefit.

### Benefits and impact of our efforts:

- **More and better services for everyone:** Continually improve the quality of our services so that more people in our community can benefit.
- **Health equality for all:** Make sure everyone has the same access to our care, no matter who they are.
- **Smoother care experience:** Provide care that's easy to access and use for those who need our services.
- **Financial security and strength:** Be better prepared and financially secure, so we can adapt if we need to and keep providing quality services for people who need them.



### Partnership provides personalised care when it's needed most... (Frailty Service)

**Our Combined Supportive Care Service launched in 2022 and was granted permanent funding in January 2023 via NuTH Cancer Growth Path.**

Based in our Focus on Living Centre and led by Dr Felicity Dewhurst and Jenny Welford (an Occupational Therapist from Newcastle Hospitals), we provide this weekly service in collaboration with Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NuTH).

Patients with lung cancer or mesothelioma with a high frailty score are referred by their hospital care team to get any additional care, support and treatment needs met by our multi-disciplinary team, all in one place – when they need it most.

Patients have given excellent feedback, with 100% rating their experience as 'very good' and beneficial.

The service has been proven to;

- reduce hospital admissions
- reduce time spent in hospital when patients are nearing end of life
- increase future planning conversations, helping 82% of patients to achieve preferred place of death.

# Community



## We will:

- Focus on delivering current services as well as develop new services which can be delivered out in the community. We want to make sure that our services are available in different community locations so the people who need them can get the care they need.
- Wherever possible, find accessible places for services. We will look for easy-to-reach places where we can provide our services, making it simple for people to get the care and information they need.
- Build trust and relationships with community organisations and leaders, and work with them to help reach more people who need our services.
- Talk about death and dying openly. We will work with local groups and organisations so we can start early conversations about death, dying and bereavement. We want to help remove the stigma and taboo that is often attached to these topics of conversation. We want to make it easier for communities to support their members.

## Benefits and impact of our efforts:

- **More accessible services:** Make it possible for more people to use our services in the places they prefer.
- **Health opportunities for everyone:** Ensure that everyone in the community has the same chances to access and receive our quality palliative and end of life care services.
- **Increased support for more people:** Help more people to get the support they need.

# Sustainable Funding



## We will:

- Be open to creative and new ways of generating income.
- Create more and better opportunities for long-term and positive connections with all the people who support us.
- Make smart investments which make more money for the charity.
- Make sure that opportunities to generate income with partners benefit all involved.
- Make sure our income generation activities (fundraising, donations, lottery, communications, marketing, retail) give back in line with agreed return on investment (ROI).
- Ensure we look at the possible risks that may arise from our income generation activities, and manage these appropriately.

## Benefits and impact of our efforts:

**Be financially fit for our longer term future:** Manage our finances well so that St Oswald's Hospice is adaptable and resilient to future changes.

### Enhancing Our Young Adults Provision (Transition)

**2024 will see the exciting development of our young adults accommodation, addressing a crucial gap in young adult care.**

Two additional bedrooms, living spaces and a carers' bedroom will provide a space specifically designed for young adults with complex health needs, allowing us to develop how we work with them and support them into the future.

This enhancement will provide an environment in which they can grow and become more independent, enabling our young adults to transition to adult care in a more seamless way.

#### Why is this crucial?

##### 1. Meeting needs in an age-appropriate space:

Originally designed for children aged 3-18, we're adapting to the changing healthcare landscape, where medical advances mean that more children with progressive life-limiting conditions are living into their 20s and beyond. We need to ensure tailored, age-appropriate care for a seamless transition into adulthood.

##### 2. Fostering independence:

Our enhanced facility will support young adults to explore independent living, easing concerns for both them and their parents.

##### 3. Expand capacity:

More beds means more children and families can access the vital support they need.

# Education and Research



## Extending our reach with Bereavement Training

Since 2020, we've been widening the impact of our bereavement support by forming new partnerships to extend the reach of our bereavement expertise.

Laura Barrett, Bereavement Support Worker – Digital Developments, has worked on a number of income-generating projects since taking the role in 2020:

1. Partnering with Hospice UK to deliver the 'Compassionate Employer Training Programmes' on their behalf.
2. Delivering Corporate Grief, Loss and Bereavement training to North East businesses.
3. Partnering with the Local Authority and the North Tyneside Mental Health Alliance to train their staff.
4. Delivering a project to HMP Northumberland to train 75 prison staff on how to offer bereavement support to prisoners. This project was funded by the Linder Foundation and brokered by Hospice UK.

## We will:

- Support people caring for loved ones with a progressive life-limiting condition by providing education and raising awareness.
- Support people to help them cope after the death of a loved one.
- Develop a programme of information and education for our health and social care colleagues, helping to increase their skills, confidence and knowledge so they are able to better support their patients, offering them more choice and information at the right time.
- Create educational resources for local employers, groups and organisations to use with their staff / members to help understanding about death and dying, and managing a progressive life-limiting illness.
- Build on our existing research to establish ourselves as leaders in specialist palliative and end of life care.
- Work with partners on research that adds to the national / international knowledge about how hospice care impacts those who need it, their families, caregivers, and society as a whole.
- Create a culture where we keep learning and stay curious, even if our plans don't give the results we expected.

## Benefits and impact of our efforts:

- **Confident caregivers:** More people will feel more confident about their ability to provide support and care for their loved ones.
- **More well-trained health and care staff:** More staff in health and care services will have access to quality training and education in palliative and end of life care, and they'll feel confident and be skilled in helping those who need it.
- **Community support:** More companies, schools, and community groups and organisations will have access to support if / when they need it.
- **Sharing learning and improving care:** Evaluation of the care we have provided to enable us to develop, adapt, improve and share what we learn.

Our 4 Foundations  
and what they will  
involve



## Our 4 Foundations and what they will involve

Our strategic aims are supported by other key areas of work which we call our 'foundations' as they underpin everything that we do.

## Our People

Delivering high quality, specialist palliative and end of life care for babies, children, young adults and adults, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is only possible with a committed, highly skilled team of staff and willing, flexible, experienced volunteers with a wide range of talents.

We also rely heavily on our supporters and donors who are so generous in their financial contribution to St Oswald's Hospice.

### We will strengthen Our People through:

- Training and developing our staff and volunteers so our team is motivated and confident to provide the best care possible to people in need of our support, as well as their families, and carers.
- Investing in our people through a range of learning and leadership initiatives and programmes, which will help to identify and grow the hospice team of the future.
- Offer new and creative ways for people to volunteer their time and skills at St Oswald's Hospice.
- Encourage learning across teams by motivating staff and volunteers to find out more about other areas of our hospice work, to build a wider understanding of the contributions all our teams make in delivering care for people in need.
- Make sure we appreciate and take care of the people who support us, letting them know they are valued and their contributions are truly making a difference to local families.

## Effective, Efficient, Sustainable

We will ensure that all our services are well managed to be as efficient and effective as possible, to protect St Oswald's Hospice's long-term future and reduce our carbon footprint.

### We will do this through:

- Using health data and local information to plan and improve our existing and new services, so we can better target and talk to people in need of our support.
- Making sure that we continue to spend money wisely, controlling costs so we can continue operating well into the future.
- Continuing to invest in business intelligence and data functions so we can better understand, monitor and manage what we do, supporting smart decision making.
- Maintaining our investment in IT and digital services to support all our functions, improving our efficiency and communication across all our services.
- Improving the use of digital technology to streamline our income generating functions.
- Reviewing our governance structures to enable clearer, simpler decision-making.
- Adopting best practices used nationally so that we are seen as a reliable partner for the NHS and other organisations to work with in the future.



- Finding a way to measure the social impact of our actions and how these contribute to positive social change.
- Contributing positively to climate sustainability by getting involved in green energy, recycling, and upcycling initiatives.



## Equity, Inclusion and Diversity

### **We will show our commitment to Equity, Inclusion and Diversity through:**

- Working with partners to understand communities in the North East that typically don't seek hospice support. This will help us understand how to meet their needs better.
- Using our Values to create a positive culture, where everyone involved with St Oswald's Hospice feels welcomed and respected, including those who need our care, their families and carers, as well as staff and volunteers, supporters and others.
- Making sure that our printed materials, website and social media channels are easy to access and represent the diverse communities in the North East, making St Oswald's Hospice welcoming to all.
- Connecting with community and faith groups to listen to all parts of our community, building better understanding for strong, positive, long term relationships.

## Identity, Presence and Message

### **We will improve our Identity, Presence and Message through:**

- Creating new ways to share our message, aims and objectives with our community, and new ways to connect with our supporters and donors.
- Ensuring that we reflect the different cultures and communities in all our communications, so more people know more about what we do and feel that our services are designed with them in mind.
- Using clear and easy to understand language to get our message out about the range of services that we offer.
- Working with other organisations and people to reach new audiences with our messages.
- Continuing to develop measures to help assess the success of our marketing and communication campaigns in terms of reach and impact.

Monitoring the  
work we do

## Monitoring the work we do

We rely heavily on the generosity of individuals, groups and organisations who give their time freely, and are hugely generous financially. It is important that we monitor everything we do so we can provide feedback and information to our staff, volunteers, commissioners, supporters, and donors.

We will use appropriate reporting systems to monitor our performance. These include recruitment and retention, data around who uses our services, and financial information. We will continue to develop a comprehensive 'balanced scorecard' approach to share our performance with staff, volunteers, supporters and donors and other stakeholders.

We will draw on recognised approaches to monitor the impact and outcomes of our services on those who need our care, their families and carers, and we will invite feedback from all service users on a regular basis.

We will develop a plan with actions, targets and measures that will detail the steps we will take each year to deliver this Strategy. We will share progress on delivering this Strategy with our staff and volunteers, and will make sure that those who need our care, their families and carers, our supporters and stakeholders and the wider community can see our progress.

We will continue to use our Values and Strategic Aims as part of our staff appraisal process to ensure that our Strategy is embedded in all the work that we do.

We will use our Values and Strategic Aims as a key part of our recruitment process, as well as ongoing supervision and support sessions.

## Documents we have referred to:

**This list provides details of the documents to which we have referred in developing this strategy:**

- Hospice UK Future Vision Programme 2020
- Hospice UK 'popnat' dashboard
- Specialist Palliative and End of Life services Adult specification 2023
- Specialist Palliative and End of Life care services Children and Young People specification 2023
- Dying Well at home; Commissioning quality End of Life care, Kings Fund 2023
- Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care; A national framework for local action 2021-2026, NHS England 2021
- Palliative and End of Life Care Statutory Guidance for Integrated Care Boards 2022
- Making every moment count together for short lives 2015
- NENC ICS Strategic Five Year Plan

# Thank you...

Thank you to all our staff and volunteers who gave their time to contribute to the development of this Strategy either by completing the survey, being interviewed, or by coming to meetings where we have discussed our future strategy.

And thank you to the many friends and stakeholders from a wide range of partner organisations, supporters and customers, who shared their thoughts about what we do well, and what needs to change, to ensure that St Oswald's Hospice has a long-term future.

Thank you to Claire Henry MBE and her team at Claire Henry Associates Ltd for their help and support in developing this Strategy.

This document can be available in a range of formats including different languages, large print and easier to read. Please contact the Communications and Marketing team if you need a different format. They can be contacted on **[enquiries@stoswaldsuk.org](mailto:enquiries@stoswaldsuk.org)**. Thank you.

Published in Dec 2023

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**St Oswald's  
Hospice**