

An Introduction

to St Helena
and our key services



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What does St Helena do?

We help local people face incurable illness and bereavement, supporting them, their families, friends and carers in north east Essex and the Colne Valley area of mid Essex.

We also help local adults and children who have been bereaved, regardless of how or where their loved one died.

We support members of our community, helping them make their own choices and live with dignity. By focusing on their physical, emotional and spiritual needs, we aim to bring comfort and relief to all those who need it, offering local people individual care and total support, regardless of their diagnosis or personal circumstances.

St Helena is an independent charity, providing our services free of charge. We rely heavily on the help and generosity of our fundraisers, donors and volunteers to provide our care and support. Without them we wouldn't be here.

We all share a common goal: to be here for everyone who needs us, when they need us, helping life to go on in the face of dying, death and bereavement.



Hospice in the Home

Our Hospice in the Home team cares for patients and families out in the community, with more than 90% being supported in their usual place of residence, such as in their home, a care home or nursing home.

The team is made up of a number of different services, offering individual care and total support tailored to each individual's needs and is provided by a number of different healthcare professionals. To help people to stay at home, every member of the wider community team will play an important role.

These services exist to complement, not replace, other local health and social care providers such as GPs, community nurses and social services – and we work very closely with our colleagues at these providers to ensure the best possible care is provided to local people facing incurable illness and bereavement.

I was nervous about Hospice in the Home at the beginning. Soon I realised from the excellent care provided by St Helena that I needn't worry at all as they took care of everything.



SinglePoint

SinglePoint is our 24/7 telephone advice line available for people facing incurable illness, and for their families, friends and carers.

You can call SinglePoint on **01206 890 360** to refer into any St Helena service or to call for help, information or for support to coordinate other health and social care services.

Our SinglePoint team can make an assessment over the phone and help people access the support they need when they need it. They work closely with the GPs, community nurses and out of hours doctors as needed to manage the situation. In a crisis our expert nurses or other professionals may visit at home in response.

“SinglePoint was there at the right time; that's most important. It felt like they were always here, always in touch, and they insisted I rang up any time I had any little problems night or day, 24 hours. I always knew that was there. It gave me a lot of strength that did, I couldn't have managed without it.”



Virtual Ward

The SinglePoint Virtual Ward provides personal care and support to people thought to be in the last 12 weeks of life, helping with all hygiene needs such as washing and mouth care, as well as providing support to the family, in the comfort of their own homes.

The aim of the Virtual Ward is to help patients remain at home if that is their preferred place of care, and to prevent unwanted or inappropriate admission to hospital or the Hospice. The team can also support patients to be discharged from hospital, if home is the preferred place of care at the end of life.

Care is provided twice a day by the team of healthcare assistants who are experienced in end of life care; this is overseen by our expert nurses. Patients and their families are further supported by our SinglePoint service, providing advice and support over the phone 24/7; and if needed, our team of doctors, occupational therapists and physiotherapists, complementary therapists, counsellors, family support workers, and spiritual care team.

We are currently working with external care provider, Bluebird Care, to provide this service and to support more people in need across north east Essex.

“ Having Virtual Ward there to do the morning care and the evening care, and actually just there for support if I had any questions or anything like that, was invaluable, it really was. ”

Community clinical nurse specialists

Our St Helena community clinical nurses specialists (known as CNS) will visit when pain or symptoms are proving difficult to control or if there are complex emotional, social or spiritual needs.

We help people plan for what sort of care they might like and where they may like to be cared for. Being able to be open and share these views with family and friends and with the professionals involved in an individual's care, can make staying at home more possible. We use the My Care Choices Register to achieve this.

Our CNS was brilliant.
He really was our one in a million.
He was honest and supportive, especially in guiding us when things deteriorated quickly, and ensuring mum's plan was implemented. She could talk to him and tell him everything.

Through our Safe Harbour project, we also reach out to people who traditionally have had difficulty accessing hospice services, such as people who are homeless, have a history of drug and alcohol addiction, people with a mental health illness, Black, Asian and minority ethnic group communities, LGBTQ+, refugees or those living in areas of deprivation.

Our teams are dedicated to supporting patients and families through Safe Harbour, helping ensure vulnerable local people are able to live well with an incurable illness and die with dignity in a place of their choice.

My Care Choices

We work with other local health and social care partners to promote the My Care Choices Record, a document that allows people to record and share their choices for care, including for their end of life care. Once completed, consent can be given for the person's GP to record their choices on the My Care Choices Register.

My Care Choices Register is a record of a person's decisions about the kind of care they wish to receive in the future if they were to become more unwell, and their preference for the place of care.

It is held online and can be accessed securely only by staff responsible for their care, such as the GP, community nurses, hospital staff, ambulance services, and St Helena, which hosts the register. It can be accessed any hour of the day or night, so people can be confident that everyone looking after them knows the care they want.

He'd spoken to our
CNS about the My Care Choices
Register. It made it a bit easier because
those difficult conversations had already
been had when he was well
enough to talk about it.



It was a nice environment to be in because we had a lot of support and there are nice memories there. Having St Helena's support meant we didn't have to worry about all the other stuff; being able to just focus on spending time together was the nicest thing.

The Hospice

The Hospice provides 24 hour specialist care from an experienced team of staff and volunteers for local people who have complex care needs that cannot be managed at home. We provide individual care and total support within our beds for people aged 16 or over with complex needs due to advanced, progressive or incurable illness.

Set in beautiful grounds in Highwoods, Colchester, the Hospice provides homely, quality accommodation in a mix of en suite single rooms, shared rooms and bays. We have limited facilities for families to stay, although we make every effort to accommodate visitors comfortably. Meals are prepared on site, fresh every day, and we aim to cater for all dietary requirements.

Admissions to the Hospice are usually for a short period of time for symptom control or to address a specific problem. Problems may be physical, such as pain or nausea, or people may need complex emotional or spiritual support.

Our clinical support workers, physiotherapist and occupational therapist work with patients to help them achieve their goals, supporting them with exercises and fatigue management. Our aim is to assist people to return home as soon as possible with support from our Hospice in the Home teams, and other health and social care services.

Where appropriate and possible, we also provide expert end of life care for those in the last days or weeks of their life. The Hospice supports the families, friends and carers of those admitted to our beds. The help we offer includes counselling, family support and social work.



One thing that has meant so much to me is that the Hospice rehabilitation team sorted me out with handrails at home to help me step into the garden I so love. Last year I thought, will I see it again? Now I am seeing it again and I love it.


Wellbeing

Counsellors, family support, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, therapy assistants, complementary therapists and our chaplains provide additional emotional, practical and spiritual support to help people to stay as independent as possible and to improve quality of life – this can be at home or at the Hospice.

This includes advice on getting around and managing day to day activities, as well as assessing any equipment needed to assist with independence.

Spiritual care is offered to all people under the care of St Helena. This can include matters such as hope, peace, sense of meaning and purpose, faith, belief, relationships, values, cultures, forgiveness and religion. It is available to all regardless of their faith or no faith.

“Mum really connected with the chaplain who interlinked three wooden hearts and left them for us next to mum's bed to have one each. Mum took her heart with her, holding the heart on her journey, and we still have our hearts.”

A photograph showing three children sitting on a wooden deck, painting on large sheets of paper. They are using various colors of paint and brushes. One child is wearing a white shirt, another a black shirt with a white pattern, and a third a white shirt with a pink headband. A speech bubble is overlaid on the top left of the image.

I feel like sometimes kids go forgotten in this whole thing because the focus is on the parent but here they don't. You become important to the people here and you do become a part of the Hospice.

Support for families

St Helena supports the families, friends and carers of local people who face incurable illness. The help we offer includes counselling, family support and social work.

We can give advice and assistance in discussing illness and treatments, and in helping prepare family members for the death of a loved one. Our emotional support for adults and children who have a link with someone receiving care from St Helena, can include one to one, couples, children and family sessions, and peer groups.

We aim to:

- Provide practical advice and information
- Provide a safe environment to explore thoughts and feelings
- Help families adjust to changes they are experiencing
- Help families learn new coping strategies
- Help people realise they are not alone
- Promote choice and build confidence and self-esteem

We can act as an advocate and liaise with employers and schools if needed. We can support children over five years of age and young people either individually or in a family group. Children under five will be supported via their parent/guardian or within their family unit and not individually.



Bereavement support

We offer support to adults and children who have been bereaved, regardless of the cause of death or where they have died - no prior connection to the Hospice is needed. As grief is a very personal experience, we offer a range of support tailored to an individual's needs.

For adults

We offer informal groups designed to provide support, information and coping strategies for people who are adjusting to living with grief. We also offer therapeutic counsellor-led groups for support after bereavement by suicide, stillbirth and neo-natal death, or death of a child. Our groups are welcoming and run by experienced staff and volunteers.

Our bereavement support may also include one to one counselling and support, based on an assessment of your needs. We have an experienced team of specialist bereavement volunteers and counsellors who provide this support.

For children

Support can either be individual or as a family group, depending on the age of the child/young person. However, children under five will be supported via their parent/guardian or within their family unit and not individually. We also offer creative and play therapies along with talking therapies.

“ It's always there but the bereavement support really helped kick start my life around the grief. I take it with me rather than it being my entire world, with me just trying to follow on behind it. ”



Compassionate communities

We always try to make sure that people living with incurable illness, and their families, can live as independently as possible. This includes signposting people to other support available in their local community as well as considering what St Helena can do to help.

With the aim of helping everyone in our local communities to access the support they need before and after end of life, we are bringing together local residents, schools, businesses, organisations, groups and healthcare services as compassionate communities networks across the areas we deliver our care.

A compassionate community is one in which everyone recognises that as individuals we all have a role in supporting each other, particularly during periods of health crisis or loss. To do this, the compassionate community networks will help give everyone the tools, confidence and resilience they need to provide support, empathy and a listening ear for those affected by dying, death and bereavement.



Our model of care

When a person's needs are increasing or becoming more complex, we offer a comprehensive assessment to decide how best to support their needs and goals. This may include several sessions of support from one of our teams. Depending on what is best for the person, this may be one of our doctors, our nurses or another health or social care professional from St Helena. The exact number of sessions and frequency of visits, will depend on need.

Once an individual's needs or goals have been met, or have reduced, we provide further advice on helping them to live as independently as possible.

If needs increase again or circumstances change, we provide guidance on how to quickly contact us, so we can arrange for a review and further support as required. When someone has urgent needs, we will consider a face to face crisis response from our SinglePoint team or admission to our beds at the Hospice.

How to refer to us

Anyone aged 16 or over with a life-limiting, incurable illness can be referred to St Helena. Our primary goal is to optimise quality of life for all through the provision of physical, practical, emotional and spiritual support.

GPs or other health or social care professionals can, with consent, refer patients to us online. Individuals can also refer themselves or a family member online at [**www.sthelena.org.uk/refer**](http://www.sthelena.org.uk/refer)

Alternatively, patients, families, friends, carers and healthcare professionals can phone SinglePoint and ask to speak to a member of our referrals team at any time. Please be aware that family members or carers must obtain the consent of the individual being referred. Once the referral is received and all relevant information is gathered, the referrals team will then contact the individual.

A decision will then be made as to what support from us is required, including signposting to other local services where appropriate.

For urgent referrals or advice please phone SinglePoint on 01206 890 360 at any time day or night.

Referrals for bereavement support can also be made online at [**www.sthelena.org.uk/refer**](http://www.sthelena.org.uk/refer)

When I got diagnosed again last year, I thought right, I'm going to phone up St Helena and see what that's like. So I picked up the phone. No one told me to do it... I don't think enough people know that St Helena is not just where people come to die.



How you can help us

The equivalent of 7 out of 10 of the patients and families we care for and support are funded by people in our local community giving donations, buying from our shops, playing our lottery, and leaving gifts in Wills.

We rely on the help and generosity of our fundraisers, donors and volunteers to continue to provide our services. Without them we wouldn't be here.

Volunteer

Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do at St Helena. With a variety of roles available across our organisation, there's bound to be something to suit your interests and personality. Whether you can spare two hours or ten hours a week or month, we'd love to hear from you. Visit www.sthelena.org.uk/volunteer to view our volunteer vacancies and find out more about joining our team.

Make a donation

You can donate online at www.sthelena.org.uk/donate or over the phone by contacting our fundraising team on 01206 931 468. Every donation helps support local people facing incurable illness and bereavement. A regular donation would help us plan for the future with confidence.

Leave a gift in your Will

Every gift in every Will, however large or small, enables St Helena to care for and support future generations. For information please email giftsinwills@sthelena.org.uk or call our fundraising team on 01206 931 468.

Play our lottery

Playing our lottery is a fun and easy way to support St Helena on a regular basis; sign up online at www.yourhospicelottery.org.uk or call the team on 0800 285 1390.

Fundraise

For inspiration on how to fundraise for us or take part in an event or challenge, please visit www.sthelena.org.uk/fundraise

Support our shops

From vintage to music, furniture to coffee and cake, our St Helena shops sell a variety of items - visit one of our many stores to see for yourself.

Our shops also rely on the local community donating good quality, preloved items for resale in our shops and online. Find out what you can and can't donate to our shops, browse our online shops, and find your nearest St Helena store at www.sthelena.org.uk/shop



Contact us:

Referrals: 01206 890 360

The Hospice: 01206 845 566

Bereavement: 01206 984 274

Fundraising: 01206 931 468

Comments, complaints and concerns

We are always looking to improve our services and we welcome your feedback. Comments, complaints or concerns can be raised confidentially with any member of staff, or the director of care, and as part of the process, we will agree with you how you would like your concern managed. Comments, complaints or concerns can be made in the following ways:

By phone: Call 01206 845 566

By letter: Please write to Director of Care, St Helena, Myland Hall, Barncroft Close, Colchester, CO4 9JU

By email: to enquiries@sthelena.org.uk

'IWantGreatCare': You can fill in an online form at their website www.iwantgreatcare.org



www.sthelena.org.uk



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