

Recommendations for the palliative care and hospice response to COVID-19¹

SYSTEMS

Policies

- **Maintain flexibility** and the ability to **rapidly modify or implement new policies**, such as changes to admission criteria.
- If visiting hours are limited, **consider** providing **daily telephone support to families**.

Training and protocols

- **Provide protocols for non-specialists** on symptom management and provide basic palliative care training including communication
- **Consider** separate guidelines for **specific populations** such as those in care homes

Communication and coordination

- **Identify** a **key decision maker** to improve communication, particularly if multiple professionals are involved outside of their usual practice
- **Involvement** in **triage systems** to assess likelihood of response to treatment and risk of dying
- **Share** protocols and advice within organisations

Data

- **Standardise information collection & monitoring** to inform operational changes (for example number of patients seen, main symptoms and concerns, treatments, effectiveness of treatment, and outcomes)

SPACE

Maintain ability to move resources between settings

- **Consider moving resources** from inpatient to community setting according to need
- **Ensure** palliative care services are integrated into new systems for care, including community care centres and temporary hospitals

Technology

- **Use virtual technology** to **enable communication** when visiting is restricted

STAFF

Deployment

- **Deploy staff flexibly** between palliative care settings according to need
- **Prioritise** sufficient **staff numbers**
- If patient contact with volunteer services needs to be restricted, **consider alternative roles** for example psychological support, bereavement support

Skill mix

- **Involve chaplains and psychologists** with specialist palliative care expertise

Resilience

- **Facilitate** camaraderie, **promote connectedness**, develop systems for reducing stress, and **support non-specialist staff**
- **Provide training in communication** and bereavement

STUFF

Medicines and equipment

- **Include** relevant **symptom medications in formularies** (to treat breathlessness, cough, fever, delirium, anxiety, agitation and pain)
- **Ensure** supplies of medications, **IV and subcutaneous** delivery systems and lines

Personal protective equipment

- **Ensure** sufficient **supplies of PPE**

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