



A REPORT ON HOSPICE UK'S
GRANTS PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE MASONIC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
2018 TO 2023

A Lasting Legacy of Improved Care

www.hospiceuk.org



We are proud to be working in partnership with the **Masonic Charitable Foundation** to support hospice care.

The Foundation's commitment has made a real difference to so many hospices and directly improved the care given to people at the end of their lives across England and Wales.

Through our partnership, the Masonic Charitable Foundation has funded a range of projects in local hospices. By supporting projects in innovative areas like homelessness and learning disabilities, equality and diversity, the MCF has been a vital partner in striving for our vision of all people facing the end of life, no matter who or where they are, receiving the best possible care.

Thank you from everyone at Hospice UK and in hospices across the England and Wales for your support and generosity.



Toby Porter

Chief Executive
of Hospice UK

"The Masonic Charitable Foundation is proud to support hospices across England and Wales through an ongoing partnership with Hospice UK which began five years ago. The projects we have funded concentrate on widening access to hospice services for more people and training staff through bursaries. I'm particularly pleased that new and innovative services have been developed which can benefit many more people over the long-term. All the work highlighted in this report has been funded by the MCF on behalf of Freemasonry".



Les Hutchinson

Chief Executive
of the Masonic Charitable Foundation



Since 2018, Hospice UK and the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) have worked in partnership. Together, we've delivered a range of unique grant programmes across England and Wales to improve the lives of people and communities needing end of life care or support.

Focussing on the projects and initiatives that have been made possible through MCF's generous funding, this report highlights the key successes and lasting impact that our partnership has made.

The partnership's key achievements include support for people experiencing homelessness, individuals with learning disabilities, enhancing equality and diversity, re-imagining hospice day care services, and improving bereavement support. In addition, the MCF-funded Bursaries program has enabled hospice staff to access training and courses, enhancing their knowledge and skills. The programme aims to have a positive impact on the hospice workforce, addressing

recruitment and retention challenges and emphasising the broader goal of providing high-quality care.

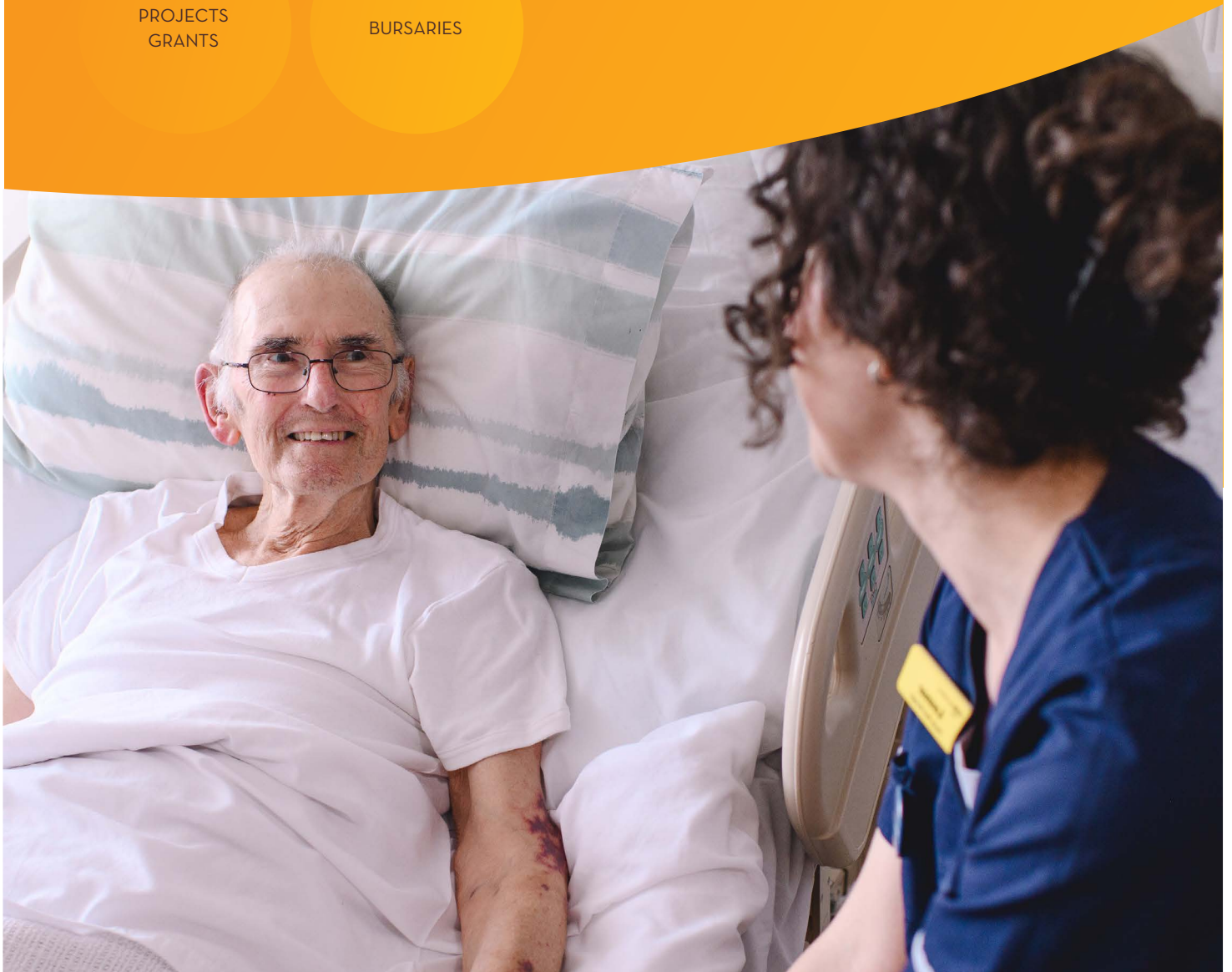
We are delighted that this partnership has brought about significant, positive changes in the field of end-of-life care across England and Wales. While some projects faced challenges, the overwhelming success of these initiatives underscores the profound impact they have had on the lives of patients, families, and carers. We hope this partnership and shared commitment to supporting hospices and improving care will continue to light the way for hospices, patients, families, and communities for years to come.

Partnership Outline

Our partnership has enabled us to distribute two strands of funding. UK hospices receive funding for directly delivered Projects, and training Bursaries for staff.

PROJECTS
GRANTS

BURSARIES



PROJECTS GRANTS

To date, the MCF has awarded 86 project grants totalling more than £2M. These enable hospices to deliver projects which:

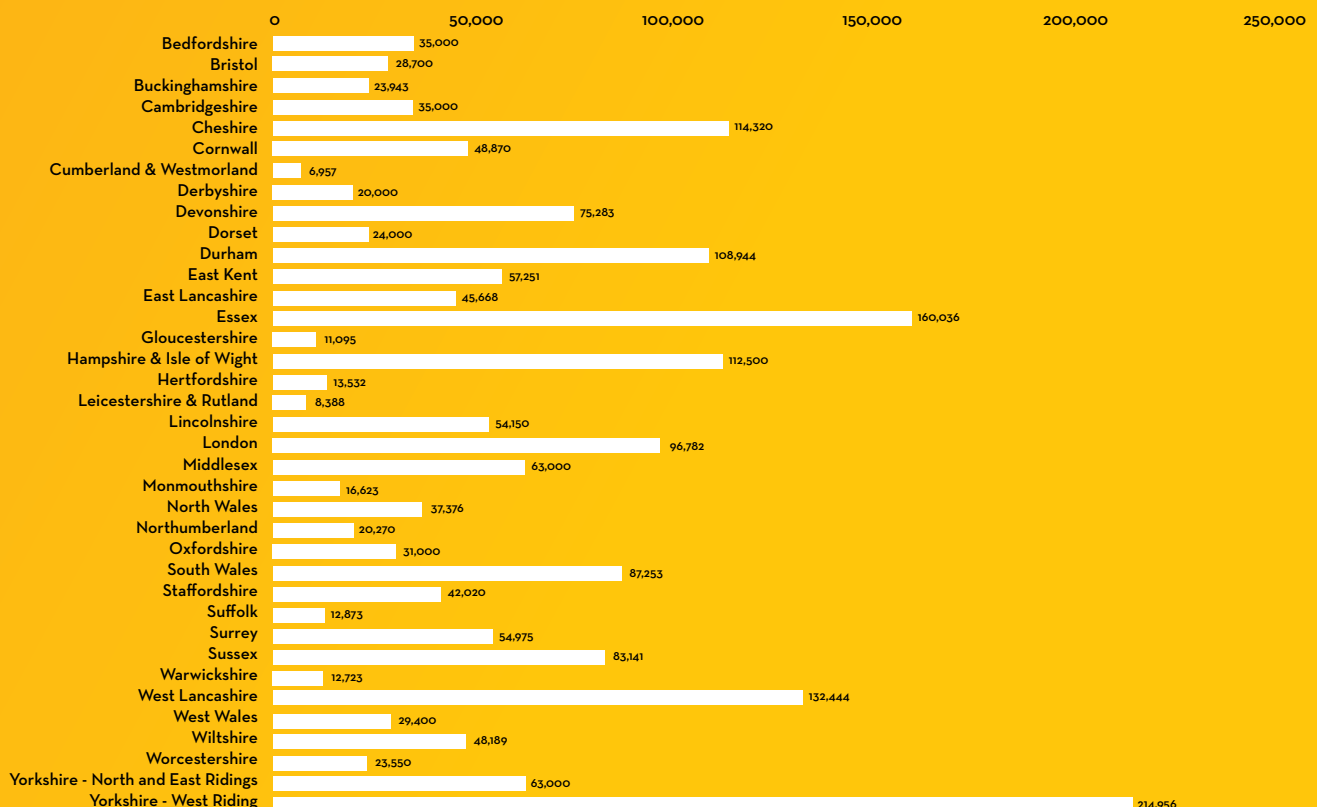
Improve support for people experiencing homelessness	Improve support for people with learning disabilities	Widen access to hospice services by improving equality and diversity	Re-imagine hospice day care services	Improve bereavement support
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Please see our website for a [full list](#) of the project grants issued through this partnership.

Hospices could apply for grants from £4,000 to £35,000 to support projects focused on the above themes.

Chart 1 below illustrates the distribution of funding across the provinces. There are still some Provinces yet to receive funding, but the spread across England and Wales is encouraging. To date, Yorkshire - West Riding has received the most funding, with Essex Province following closely.

Chart 1: MCF Hospice Project Grants - Amount Awarded (£'s) by Province



BURSARIES

The recruitment and retention of the end of life care workforce are significant challenges. Health professionals need to keep up-to-date with their knowledge, skills and attitudes, across clinical, managerial and professional disciplines. Education and training play a vital part in coping with change and are one of the key factors in delivering high quality care. The ultimate aim of engaging in it is to change clinical practice (Schostak 2009).

Hospice workforce is an area of urgent need: 33% of the hospice clinical workforce is over the age of 55. This compares with 17% for the NHS – a challenge with retirement and replacement.

To help address this issue, the MCF has recently begun to fund a programme of Bursaries for hospice staff. From October 2022 until July 2023, it has funded 135 **bursaries for hospice staff** totalling more than £103,000.

MCF Bursaries are open to all hospice staff – both clinical and non-clinical – in England and Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. These include nurses, doctors, healthcare assistants, Allied Health

Professionals and social workers. Bereavement counsellors, administration staff (HR, Finance, IT, Fundraising), spiritual care workers, pharmacists, complementary therapists are also eligible.

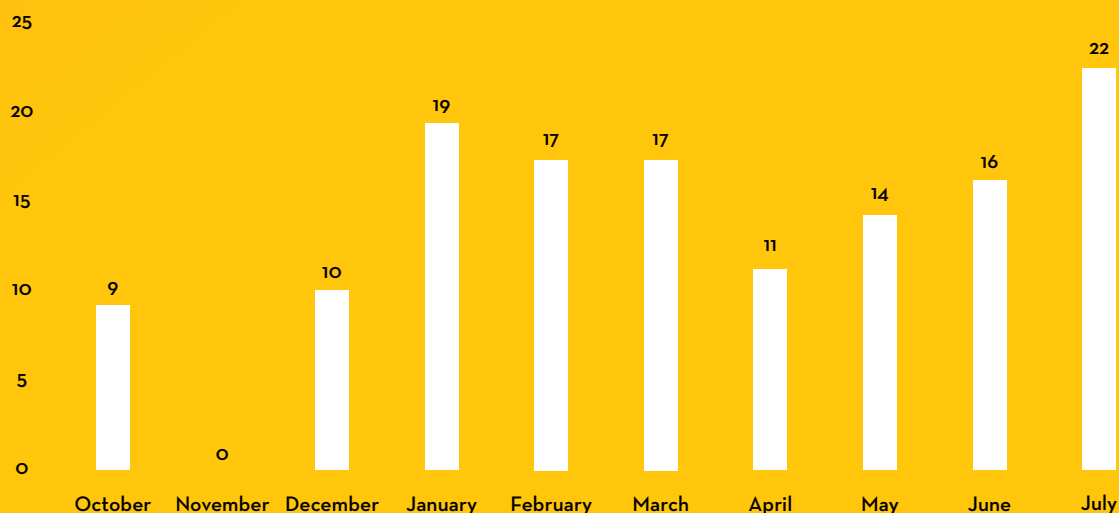
MCF Bursaries can be used to attend a wide range of courses. These must be aimed at improving quality of care for people receiving palliative care and their families. Applicants need to demonstrate how the course will improve patient outcomes.

Since the programme opened in October 2022, the number of applications received each month has fluctuated as staff find out about the programme – as illustrated in Chart 2 below.

Bursary programme to hospices in England and Wales. The programme has been slow to start, in part due to hospices having to budget for staff training in advance. We expect the numbers to increase with the continuation of our communications plan.

The promotion plan includes regular articles in our weekly media to hospices, as well as promoting the programme at conferences, showcasing case studies on our website and social media.

Chart 2: Number of MCF Bursaries Awarded - October 2022 to July 2023





One community nurse received an MCF Bursary on returning to work after long-term sickness. It helped her regain confidence to have open conversations with patients and families.

Alison Kempthorne

Head of Community Services at
St. Clare Hospice in Essex.



“After returning to work I lacked confidence in those difficult conversations. It all felt very personal. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to feel confident. I’ve re-engaged in my career and moved forward.”

Alison’s story is one of several case studies now on our website. We will soon review the Bursary programme, and report on the funding’s progress and impact.

The rest of this report focuses on the Project Grants programme.

Achievements

We sent an anonymous survey to all the hospices that received Project Grants from the MCF since 2018. Out of 33 responses, 27 said their project had achieved most or all of its aims - over 80% of projects.

In some cases, hospices said their project had achieved more than they originally planned:

“The project has achieved most of what we set out to achieve and more. The feedback from our patients and carers has been universally positive.”

Others had not achieved all their aims. Many of these hospices encountered problems that were beyond their control due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

“Covid affected us just as we were starting to gain traction with face to face meetings, so these had to stop. We adapted what we had learned through the project and transferred to the phone, which still had a far reaching benefit.”

“The pandemic reduced the scope of our project; project aims were only partly achieved. Due to its lasting impact and sustainability, we anticipate that all of our project aims will be achieved beyond the project period.”

Some hospices made adjustments to their projects to overcome obstacles. Although their projects didn't follow the original plan, they were still able to meet all their objectives:

“We achieved all [of our objectives] even if our journey to achieve them took a slightly different path.”

For the hospices that were unable to meet all their aims, there was still a positive impact:

“We have achieved all that we could with our own resources. Although we generated meaningful and impactful partnerships through this project, we were not able to engage with every possible stakeholder.”



Scan here to view previous MCF grants
hospiceuk.org/MCF

Success stories

Read examples of innovation, showcasing some of the stand-out projects that have been funded by the MCF. Examples of standout projects from the programme themes funded so far include:

Theme - Bereavement

MARTLETS, BRIGHTON

Earthworks Bereavement for Men

The Earthworks Allotment Bereavement Project for Men provides social and therapeutic support through working on an allotment to improve the wellbeing of bereaved men, a traditionally hard to reach group. The project established a space for them to meet, talk, seek support and grow.

The project supported a group of men, helping them move away from feeling stuck and overwhelmed in their grief and look forward to a more positive future.

The feedback from the group has been very positive. They commented on how they have benefited from having a regular space to be each week, the companionship of the group, and the usefulness of the work and sense of meaning that it gave to them. They also commented on how, being in a safe space with others who had an understanding of how they were feeling, the project had improved their confidence and ability to talk about difficult feelings. The gentle supporting environment of the space, where they could find quiet times to reflect without having to feel the need to speak or engage with others, also helped.

The men felt supported individually and as a group. As they developed relationships with other group members and the wider allotment community, their sense of isolation lessened.

All those who joined the allotment group continued to attend each week unless they had planned breaks. The wellbeing of the men improved. They felt supported and found that the time with the group reduced their levels of stress. They looked forward to the weekly sessions; both to the work and to the socialising.



Some of the men were asked to reflect on what the most helpful aspects of being in the group:

“There is a great sense of being on a team, of having a challenge each week and a feeling of achievement, of doing something worthwhile.”

“It’s something to look forward to. I can forget my thoughts and get stuck in.”

The men felt able to reflect on their losses and share their feelings and thoughts with each other, especially with those who could relate to their experiences. They also felt better able to plan and talk about ideas in the future. The success of this project has opened up an exciting new chapter for Martlets.

“Physical work is helping me not think about difficult things, a distraction, but it’s also helpful to hear what others are doing, thinking, what happens at funerals, and how they were, we do lots of the same things.”

The hospice now has its own allotment, where it can grow and expand the Earthworks group and develop many more projects for those connected to the hospice and the wider community.



“It gives me a space to get away from all the difficulties at home, this is a space for me.”

Theme - Homeless and Learning Disabilities

MARY STEVENS HOSPICE,
STOURBRIDGE

No Barriers Here



[\(link or scan to view case study on our website\)](#)

The No Barriers Here' project is a collaborative approach to advance care planning. It uses arts-based methods to build relationships and deepen conversations with people who experience inequity in accessing palliative care. It began as a small MCF-funded grant project and has grown into an award-winning programme that is used across the UK.

ST GEMMA'S HOSPICE,
LEEDS

Widening Access to the Homeless and Vulnerably Housed



[\(link or scan to view case study on our website\)](#)

This was a widening access project to improve palliative and end of life care for people who are homeless and vulnerably housed in Leeds, which began during the coronavirus pandemic.



Theme - Equality and Diversity

ST LUKE'S HOSPICE
CHESHIRE

Breaking Barriers



[\(link or scan to view case study on our website\)](#)

The Breaking Barriers project was an equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) programme intended to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion for staff and people receiving care across three hospices in Cheshire.



Beneficiaries of the partnership

Our partnership with the MCF has made a significant and lasting difference to the lives of many groups of people. These include the following:

Hospices

All 33 hospices said their project had made a positive impact on their organisation.

“The flexibility of use and the accessibility of our own hospice services has improved. Team members’ time is used more effectively by reducing admin time and creating more ‘patients’ time.”

Hospice funding is limited, so MCF support was crucial. Several hospices began projects that had been on hold for some time:

“This funding catalysed work on a project that we had long been unable to progress due to financial limitations. It has enabled us to be innovative, creative, and forward-thinking in developing our services for patients in our Day Hospice and in their own home.”



Patients

85% of respondents felt their project had a positive impact on patients. Some showed an immediate improvement in wellbeing:

“This grant enabled us to purchase Virtual Reality technology. Our patients have enjoyed using it, and we have seen a positive impact on their anxiety and pain levels after use. One patient was wholly engaged in the virtual reality experience. We could see him visibly relax - his shoulders dropped, he was smiling, and his breathing was calm. He reported feeling so relaxed afterwards, which was a wonderful result. The immediate impact of this form of therapy has been clear.”

Hospices have been able to give patients person-centred, specialised care that other health services cannot provide:

“[One patient] says she feels like she’s treated more as a person here. In the hospital, she finds it so busy and impersonal. At the hospice her needs are taken into account and she’s listened to, which reduces her anxiety. Here, she can have the procedure as an outpatient, which means a lot to her. Being away from home [as a hospital inpatient] makes her more stressed and upset.”



Team members' time is used more effectively by reducing admin time and creating more **'patients' time.'**

Bereaved people

UK hospices are one of the largest providers of bereavement support to families and carers. Collectively our 200+ hospice members provide this to over 70,000 people annually. This support has been a lifeline for bereaved families during the pandemic.

Over 90% of respondents said their project had a positive impact on families and carers. The MCF-funded bereavement services have provided connection, friendship and a feeling of belonging.

“One client said that before they attended the service they had thought they were the only person in the world feeling as they did. The project enabled them to realise that they were not the only one. They were given time and space to talk without being judged. This was a major factor in getting their ‘old self’ back.”

“An attendee had been feeling low and isolated since the death of his wife. He did not know how to move his life forward and had considered suicide. After a couple of sessions in the group he began to form relationships with other group members. He and another bereaved man became good friends. After the programme they went on holiday together and reported back that they had a very good time.”



The funding enabled some hospices to reach out to people who were previously unable to access support:

“We ran some groups in local shops to ensure greater access to support. This is vital, as we live in a rural area with an elderly population. Several people attended a local group who otherwise would not have travelled to the hospice. One had mobility issues and financial constraints – he benefited from bereavement support and the company of others. He also visited the shop outside of group times to enjoy the company of staff and volunteers.”

“A community walk attendee said that she takes great comfort from meeting other like-minded bereaved people. She has felt the benefit of being part of a regular support group. And she has made connections with others, meeting up with them outside the group.”



The funding to support people experiencing homelessness had a significant impact on one bereaved person:

“A client using the service had suffered multiple bereavements. Family relationships had broken down, and they were estranged from their parents and two children. Living in hostel accommodation, they were frequently arrested for shoplifting and drug-related crime. Working closely with the client over 20+ sessions, the therapist helped the client process strong and distressing traumatic memory and develop new coping strategies. The person was then able to start rebuilding their family relationships. An increase in self-worth helped them access volunteering opportunities to build life skills and find a job. The client then moved into their own flat, where, with support, they are able to live in recovery with a plan and hope for the future.”

Carers

Caring for a loved one with a terminal diagnosis can be extremely challenging. Many people don't know where to turn for advice or respite support. Hospices offer practical, emotional and social support for them.

When a person dies, their carers (both adults and children) face a range of secondary losses. Many have made great personal sacrifices to care for the person. The ending of this responsibility often brings powerful emotions as well as challenges and questions about the future. People may feel abandoned. They may also face changes to their financial situation, and practical responsibilities like arranging the funeral.

The Buddies Carers Support Programme at Saint Francis Hospice in Romford, Essex, offered face-to-face help and tailored support to carers. They did not want to become a 'crutch' and so offered the scheme as a short-term resource. Carers could call upon this service if they needed to.

As a result, they were able to respond instantly to requests for carer intervention. The In-Patient Unit found this particularly helpful when approaching a carer who was not coping well before and after bereavement.

Buddies Carers Support Programme at Saint Francis Hospice in Romford, Essex.



For carers, support from their local hospice is invaluable:

"I feel so lucky that we have the hospice in our corner! As well as a physical, hospitable place to meet or just visit, they also offer other joined up services. This is so important for carers, who haven't the time or energy to chase help".



“The journey ahead for M and me is still a tough one. **I feel so much more confident and supported** knowing the hospice team is with us”.

Communities

73% of respondents thought their project had a positive impact on their community:

“The funding enabled us to prioritise a vulnerable community who can be hard to reach with stretched resources.”

One hospice explained how their bereavement project helped reduce the load for NHS services:

“There are increased wait times for NHS-funded bereavement services. So, our help points enable anyone affected by bereavement to meet others in similar situations and chat to hospice volunteers. Some attendees have found the help so valuable they have no longer felt the need for the counselling service.”

Another hospice told us about its work building successful relationships:

“Our work with the local Sikh community stands out for us and our relationship with them continues to grow. We now have an outreach plan for this community and offer various services and support tailored to their needs. This focuses on accessibility, i.e. translation, Sikh specific volunteering opportunities, and podcast episodes with messaging in Punjab.

Our partners at the Gurdwara said, ‘We would very much like to continue our relationship with the hospice and support the excellent work you do, as well as see how we can continue to raise awareness amongst our community. Well done’.”



Hospice sector

The hospices who receive MCF grant funding are keen to share project outcomes with others. This helps unsuccessful applicants to learn from the programme and replicate good practice.

“Great opportunities to share the work of the project and the benefit and impact of the grant on supporting our patients and community.”

Hospice UK provides opportunities for hospices to showcase their work through our:

- **Conferences and learning events** - We showcase best practice examples of this work at our National Conference that attracts over 1,000 attendees annually from across the hospice sector.
- **Networks and Communities**
- **Examples of Innovation directory** - the innovation directory showcases brilliant examples of innovation and improvement and includes tips and advice to help healthcare professionals implement new ways of working.

Hospices have also shared learning through training sessions, journal articles, speaking at conferences, contributing to books and using social media.

Long term impact

MCF-funded grants projects have shown long-term impact that continues well beyond the five year funding period:

Nearly **70%** expect their project to benefit their **hospice**

Around **70%** expect their project to benefit **patients**

Over **75%** expect their project to benefit **families and carers**

Nearly **67%** expect their project to benefit the **wider community**.

Only one hospice was unable to continue their project beyond the life of the grant programme. However, they noted that “the legacy of the project remains, through improved relationships with local stakeholders”.

Several of the projects funded by the MCF have had unexpected long term benefits for individuals:

“One beneficiary with a Learning Disability was supported following the death of their mother. The family were supported with resources and active listening, and were invited to a Learning Disabilities and End of Life Care event. The beneficiary has since become a volunteer at the Hospice, forming working relationships and building confidence.”

The vast majority of hospices have been able to carry on the work of the project after the funding period had finished.

For some, the grant enabled them to pilot a project and gain proof of concept. Many learned from and adapted their project to better meet the needs of the hospices and beneficiaries.

“The funding makes a significant impact to service delivery and enables us to trial new pieces of work.”

Some projects became self-sustaining,

“Our first group (opened July 2018) still has the original attendees. They now provide support to those who are newly bereaved. In general we find that coming to the sessions provides a strong sense of community and identity. Each help point has a WhatsApp group so they can stay in touch and arrange to meet outside of the sessions.”

The grant experience

When asked what was special about a Hospice UK grant from the MCF, hospices said they would recommend one to a colleague.

“The process was simple, the monitoring and feedback requirements...[did not create] extra pressure on the team. The resulting work has been extremely impactful, leaving a lasting legacy of improved care.”

Hospices see the MCF as a specialist funder, without whom some projects would never be realised:

“The themed funding provides the opportunity to develop projects that may be challenging to fund through a non-specialist grant giver.”

“Fantastic support of Hospices as an enabler to pull local projects together for the benefit of the Community.”

Several respondents highlighted that the MCF have an excellent understanding of the hospice sector, and that they champion the work of local hospices around the country:

“[They are] helpful funders interested in the work of hospices and supportive of hospice care. [There are] clear grant guidelines, application processes and helpful staff.”

“Both the MCF and Hospice UK have shared our enthusiasm for this project throughout.”

“It is extremely beneficial, and a delight, to work with such like-minded grant givers who understand our vision.”



Conclusion

Hospice UK's partnership with the MCF is absolutely crucial in supporting hospices. The programme of grants offers hospices a mechanism to increase their reach and still maintain their provision of quality of care.

This unique partnership has fostered innovation and collaboration in the hospice sector whilst addressing crucial challenges and fostering positive change.

The project grants distributed as part of this partnership have enabled hospices across England and Wales to initiate creative projects that extend support to vulnerable groups, including people experiencing homelessness, those with learning disabilities, diverse communities, and individuals seeking bereavement assistance. While some projects faced challenges, the overwhelming success of these initiatives underscores the profound impact they have had on the lives of patients, families, and carers. Moreover, the partnership's commitment to enhancing the hospice workforce through bursaries has addressed critical gaps and ensured that the quality of care remains paramount. For a list of hospice project grants awarded by the Masonic Charitable Foundation, please visit our website: www.hospiceuk.org/MCF

The stories of success that have emerged from this partnership echo the dedication and compassion of those involved. The tangible benefits to hospices, patients, bereaved individuals, carers, and communities attest to the power of this partnership and targeted funding.

We hope you agree that the stories of the individuals touched by the project grants and bursaries speak to the transformative nature of the partnership between Hospice UK and the Masonic Charitable Foundation.

We sincerely thank the Masonic Charitable Foundation for their significant support in enabling this grants programme over the past five years. We hope this report demonstrates the strength and impact of our partnership. Together we can continue to improve the lives of so many people needing end of life care, now and in the future. Thank you.



www.hospiceuk.org 020 7520 8200

 @hospiceuk  /hospiceuk

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