

# Dying Matters Community Grants 2024

## Impact Report - Round 3

### What is the programme?

Hospice UK's Dying Matters campaign is working to create an open culture in which we're comfortable talking about death, dying and grief. Dying Matters' vision is of an open culture that talks about death and where people feel able to listen and support those who are planning for end of life, who are dying, and who have been bereaved.

This grant programme directly supported innovative and creative arts and culture projects, events and activities that focussed on opening up the conversation about death and dying with communities who we knew were traditionally less likely to be reached by hospice care and the Dying Matters campaign.

### Objective of the programme

The grants programme aimed to support a portfolio of arts and culture projects which worked to open up conversations about dying, death and grief in new and creative ways at a grassroots level. In doing this we hoped to support hospices to build new partnerships, particularly with arts and cultural organisations.

In order to reach new and diverse audiences, grant applications needed to:

- Demonstrate that they reach defined groups who are less likely to be reached by hospice care and the Dying Matters campaign, specifically\*:
  - Ethnic minorities
  - People experiencing homelessness
  - Imprisoned people
  - LGBT+ people
  - People living in remote and rural areas

- People living in poverty, deprivation and with lower socioeconomic status
- People living with learning disabilities
- Demonstrate how the proposed project will approach the subject of death in an innovative and culturally relevant way through arts and culture.

**The grant programme was only open to applications from hospices.** However, the principal aim of this programme was to reach new groups in new ways with the expectation that this would impact on wider public attitudes to death. As such, we only considered applications that showed evidence of partnership working with local groups/community organisations who could help the hospice to reach one of the groups above who the hospice traditionally struggled to support.

## Grants

Grants were available to cover the costs of projects using arts and culture that focussed on opening up the conversation about death and dying.

Project grant funding was between £5,000 - £10,000

Examples of what the grant funding could be used to cover included:

- Artist fees
- Exhibition / Installation costs
- Materials
- Facilitator costs
- Translation & Marketing
- Refreshments
- Craft materials
- Sound and Light
- Venue Hire

The budget for the programme in this round was £40,000.

## How the grants were allocated

A total of 47 applications were received, collectively worth more than £343,000 in terms of the total amount requested. Each of the 47 applications was assessed against the programme's criteria by members of the Dying Matters Team and Hospice UK's Grants Team. Applications were then further assessed by the Dying Matters Grants Panel.

The table opposite shows the primary beneficiary categories targeted and the number of applications received. However, many projects were targeting a number of different groups.

| Category                                                                  | Number of Applications |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Ethnic Minorities                                                         | 18                     |
| People Experiencing Homelessness                                          | 8                      |
| Imprisoned People                                                         | 1                      |
| People with Learning Disabilities                                         | 4                      |
| LGBTQ+ People                                                             | 3                      |
| People Living in Poverty, Deprivation and with Lower Socioeconomic Status | 10                     |
| People Living in Remote & Rural Areas                                     | 3                      |
| Total                                                                     | 47                     |

The high volume of applications meant that the Committee had to make some difficult decisions about which projects to support. As a result, it was agreed to concentrate on those which most closely matched the criteria for the programme and evidenced strong links with the local organisations they were proposing to work with.

In addition, the Committee considered:

- The spread of funding across different beneficiary category types rather than fund numerous projects focused on the same type of beneficiary group.
- The geographical spread of projects, so that one area did not dominate.
- Prioritising applications that submitted evidence of partnership working in the form of letters, e-mails from partners.
- Not supporting already well established activities on death and dying, such as Death Cafés or workshops on Advance Care Planning, bereavement

groups (as these activities had already been tried out or were generally widespread).

- Prioritised innovative projects that would most likely contribute to the body of knowledge and the possibility of scaling and replicating the project model in other settings.
- Prioritised projects that were clear in the scope and aims of the creative activities.

| Dying Matters Community Grants - Round 3 Approvals |                 |                                                                                                                                              |                        |               |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Round 3 Awarded January 2024                       |                 |                                                                                                                                              |                        |               |
| Hospice                                            | Region          | Project Title                                                                                                                                | Category               | Grant Amount  |
| Marie Curie                                        | Bradford        | Connecting and Convening through Grass-roots Arts                                                                                            | Pakistani Women        | 8,000         |
| Springhill Hospice                                 | Rochdale        | Dying Matters Islamic Art Project                                                                                                            | Islamic art workshops  | 8,000         |
| St Clare Hospice                                   | Hastingwood     | Harlow Arts Workshops & Exhibit - Life Death and Loss                                                                                        | Exhibition Hindu Women | 7,905         |
| Strathcarron Hospice                               | Denny, Scotland | Planning to Play: Co-designing a Board Game to facilitate conversations about death and dying with older people in Cumbernauld               | Board Game Low SES     | 6,777         |
| Royal Trinity Hospice                              | London          | Collaborative art project exploring thoughts and attitudes towards death, dying and loss for people experiencing homelessness in Westminster | Homelessness           | 8,000         |
| <b>Total 5 Grants</b>                              |                 |                                                                                                                                              |                        | <b>38,682</b> |

## Key Outcomes and Learning

The programme has been effective, as illustrated by these key outcomes:

- Arts as a bridge: Creative expression proved effective for difficult conversations.
- Community trust: Local partnerships reduced stigma and increased awareness of hospice care.
- Innovation: Projects generated transferable models (e.g. board game, exhibitions, video resources).
- Systemic impact: increased the public dialogue on death and dying, cascading the effect beyond the projects...

## Next Steps / Future

The fourth and final grant round opened in September 2025. The deadline for applications is 5 December 2025. Through this final round we intend to:

- Build on the success of previous grant rounds. Allocating a budget of £80,000.
- Continue to share learning across hospice networks and community partners.
- Continue reaching under-served groups through creative, culturally sensitive approaches.

# Report on Funded Projects

## Marie Curie Bradford

Project Title: Connecting and Convening through Grass-roots Arts

Project Category: Pakistani Women

Grants Amount: £8,000

### Project Summary

In 2022, WomenZone were awarded a Dying Matters Community Grant towards the “Uncovering” project; empowered Pakistani women living with poverty to openly discuss dying/grief. This resulted in WomenZone establishing an internal bereavement group.

However, a major finding was that these women faced multiple social and structural barriers during dying/grief, that needed discussion, listening and action beyond WomenZone.

This Community Grant would, therefore, for the first-time bring diverse organisations across the ‘death system’ in Bradford to the women, to allow direct discussions around their experiences and network/relationship building. A grass-roots artist will facilitate the discussions through accessible, culturally congruent methods that address power-dynamics to allow equitable connecting and convening.

### The Project

The work has supported us to secure some funding from the ICB to develop 3 short videos with the women which will be used as educational/engagement material across the community.

Here is the link to the video from the most recent workshops:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQRjUdpornyU>



The funding has been foundational to a lot of the work we are doing in Bradford in terms of addressing inequalities, including our research.

Having the two projects funded has allowed us to gain momentum and continue to build on our community work - without which it would not have been possible. It's important to see the value of both projects together.

An article was published about the project in **EasternEye** - one of the most widely read papers in the South Asian community, you can [read it here](#):

### EasternEye Article

The project brings together local organisations and healthcare experts to address the long-standing inequalities faced by disadvantaged women from minority backgrounds in accessing hospice and palliative care services, a palliative care doctor and academic who leads the project said.



Dr Jamilla Hussain told Eastern Eye, "As an academic, I dedicate half of my time to research, focusing on inequalities at the end of life, with a special emphasis on ethnic inequalities and racism.

"In 2022, we collaborated with WomenZone and the Leap, a creative people and places programme in Bradford, to apply for a small Dying Matters grant from Hospice UK, a national charity.



"We organised four workshops with women from a particularly deprived area of Bradford. The group consisted of slightly older women, though there was a range of ages, all living in a very deprived area. The women already met every Thursday, so we arranged to join them for four consecutive Thursday mornings, conducting hour-long to an hour-and-a-half workshops."

Sabir Musaji, development manager at the Leap, said, "We know access and quality of care at end of life is not equal and fair. We need to ensure those voices and stories are heard and that services meet communities where they are at.

"In the first set of four workshops, we explored their experiences of death, dying and grief. The women shared numerous stories and discussed issues around accessing healthcare.

“We also talked about how Pakistani women support each other and how the community could better support its members. This was particularly important as it’s a migrant community with different generations, where people are moving away and dynamics are shifting.”

“We began with a priority-setting workshop to identify their learning needs. The women, who were predominantly Muslim, identified four main areas of interest – Islamic teachings about death and dying; how to support bereaved people; available palliative care services in Bradford; and benefits and financial support.

“Through the initial workshops, they realised they had different understandings of religious matters. They wanted to learn more about what Islam says regarding their roles in death, dying and grief, particularly concerning the role and responsibilities of daughters-in-law. We invited specialist chaplains from the hospital to lead this session.



“We also brought in specialist grief counsellors who could speak Punjabi or Urdu. We organised different sessions focusing on various aspects – how to support someone who has lost a child; how to support those who have lost siblings or family members; and the importance of friendship. We also discussed pre-grief – the complex emotional process that begins even before a death occurs.”

According to Hussain, the workshops were successful, and the women enjoyed them. After the first set of meetings, the women established their own monthly bereavement support group. “They realised they had never discussed these important topics before and wanted to continue having a space for such conversations,” she said.

The project has also influenced national policy. Hussain presented evidence to parliament regarding the assisted dying bill, sharing feedback from these community groups. This led to a proposed amendment based on their input.

Asked about the role of arts in the project, the doctor said, “The arts-based approach has been particularly effective. In the first set of workshops, we worked with a poet who initially used familiar craft materials before gradually introducing poetry writing.

There are plans to expand the project to other Pakistani women’s groups and Bangladeshi women’s groups, as they likely share similar learning needs.

The Leap has also expressed interest in developing similar programmes for Pakistani men, recognising that their experiences around death and grief differ from that of women.

# Springhill Hospice, Rochdale

Project Title: Islamic Art Project

Project Category: Islamic Art Workshops

Grant Amount: £8,000

## Project Summary

The 2021 census informs us that the ethnicity of residents in the borough of Rochdale is 74 per cent white, 19 per cent Asian, 4 per cent black, 2 per cent mixed and 2 per cent other ethnicities. The percentage of Asian people accessing our services does not reflect our population. On average 3-4% South Asian people access our Inpatient Unit services and approx. 9% access our community services. We wanted to look at ways we could positively engage with this community in an attempt to understand why they are not, routinely, accessing our services and what we might do to address this.

## The Project

Arabic calligraphy is a form of art used within Muslim communities and links with Islamic religious texts. The Quran and Islamic prayers contain religious text related to death, dying and grief.

We wanted to work with an artist from the Muslim community to deliver Islamic art and Arabic calligraphy workshops on these topics.

Studies show that art can be used as a way of communication to cross cultural and linguistic barriers. Our hope was that the workshops would enable participants to take comfort from their religion, produce art, build trust and increase understanding between members of the Muslim community and Hospice staff.



For the purposes of this project we worked in partnership with 2 community groups: Rochdale Women's Welfare Association (RWWA) to engage with their BAME women's group and Kashmiri Youth Project (KYP) to engage with their BAME elder men's group, and their women's group.

Each group participated in 4 Islamic art and Arabic calligraphy workshops according to their preference and abilities. The themes of the workshops were around death and grief using art to explore cultural and religious practices and beliefs on the subject.

The aim of the art sessions was to bridge language and cultural barriers and build trust between participants and Hospice staff. Hospice staff took the opportunity to inform participants about the work of the Hospice and the participants to share their needs, cultural and religious practices in relation to death and grief with Hospice staff so we can share these learnings hospice wide.

### Desired outcomes

- To provide the participants from the community groups with information on the ways in which Springhill Hospice can support them and their community.
- Increase their awareness of services provided by the Hospice so that they, their family members and their wider community can benefit from the free services on offer.
- Hospice staff to learn from the participants about their cultural and religious beliefs and practices with regards to death.
- Hospice staff who attended the workshops to share learning with all other Hospice staff.
- Islamic artwork to be produced by participants around the theme of death.



# St Clare Hospice, Hastingwood, Harlow

Project Title: Arts Workshops & Exhibit - Life Death and Loss Exhibition

Project Category: Hindu Women

Grant Amount: £7,905

## Project Summary

The aim of our project was to directly engage with ethnic community and migrant groups, who do not typically access hospice services, via a series of arts workshops run by and at Parndon Mill, a local arts centre. We wanted to encourage participants to explore personal and cultural responses to death, dying and bereavement through the creation of both individual and a collaborative artwork

## The Project

We did exactly what we set out to. Through a series of workshop, the project engaged ethnically diverse communities in Harlow in thoughtful and creative discussions about death, dying, and bereavement. Participants were encouraged to explore personal and cultural responses to these subjects, using various artistic mediums to express their feelings and experiences. The project helped break down cultural barriers with a view to increasing community engagement with hospice services and foster deeper conversations about death and loss. The resulting artworks were showcased in an exhibition to broaden community dialogue and raise awareness of hospice care.

The project created and posted a video taken at the exhibition on social media which also provides a good insight into the work that was produced through this project. You can watch it - [here](#).



# Strathcarron Hospice, Denny, Scotland

Project Title: Planning to Play: Co-designing a Board Game to facilitate conversations about death and dying with older people in Cumbernauld

Project Category: Board Game, Low EES

Grant Amount: £6,777

## Project Summary

Working alongside older residents of Cumbernauld, we will co-design a board game that facilitates conversations about dying and death. The project, in partnership with CACE (Cumbernauld Action on Care of the Elderly), addresses a need identified by people supported by this charity; who have observed “we are not very good at talking about things like dying.”

This project has development and testing phases, resulting in a prototype that would be produced with further funding. The game will be an accessible and fun way to encourage conversations around: future care planning, legal and financial, relationships, mind and body, legacy, and other topics as agreed.



## The Project

Over the past 12 months, Strathcarron’s Compassionate Communities team has been working in partnership with CACE to develop a board game that provides people the opportunity to discuss planning for end of life in an engaging and safe way. The game encourages conversations with loved ones and families about the people’s wishes about their plans for end of life. The co-designed game has been developed for maximum accessibility; using several sensory elements to overcome communication challenges faced by some people with cognitive decline.

We have completed the first phase and started the second phase of this project:

**Phase 1:** CACE recruited 6 members of a focus group who met regularly to develop the concept of the board game. The focus group met 2x month for the first 3 months, tapering to 1x for the final 9 months (15 sessions total).

Participants had a range of conditions including: dementia, traumatic brain injury, learning difficulties and mental health conditions.

**Phase 2:** The game is being tested with families from the local area, feedback is being collected from multiple generations about the topics and conversations.

### **How the game works:**

1. The game takes the form of a railway track where participants take turns travelling around the track one at a time
2. Once the participant throws the dice they move around the track either landing on a sleeper track or a gap between the sleeper.
3. Each sleeper has a specific coloured dot relating to the four categories of Heart, Head, Body and Community (ie Red for Heart, Blue for Head, Green for Body and Purple for Community).
4. The participant chooses the corresponding colour and then chooses a card which they read out and discuss with the group (participants can pass on any question if they wish to)
5. Between every 10th track there is a gap where participants can choose to take part in a light hearted activity to lighten the conversation
6. At the end of the game there is time for a debrief with the group and follow-up by the facilitator if desired

### **Examples of Questions:**

- Heart: What message would you like to leave for a loved one?
- Head: People have many choices over their funeral arrangements, have you communicated these to your loved ones?
- Body: Do you think/feel you know enough about your health diagnosis?
- Community: How would you like your community to remember you?

### **Feedback**

The game has initiated several conversations that folk felt they would not have had without the prompt. Some of the topics covered: religion, care plans and mental health. The conversations were surprisingly upbeat and not “doom and gloom” including a lively chat about headstones!

### **Next Steps**

We are going to continue to test the game and are seeking additional external funding to replicate the Game so that we can use it in other communities across Forth Valley.



# Royal Trinity Hospice, London

Project Title: Collaborative art project exploring thoughts and attitudes towards death, dying and loss for people experiencing homelessness in Westminster

Project Category: Homelessness

Grant Amount: £8,000

## Project Summary

People experiencing homelessness face many barriers to care and often die without palliative care provision. We saw this grant as an opportunity to continue the vital work we have been doing with King George's and as a valuable supplement to the clinical links we have already been building with them. Our aim was to involve residents and hostel staff in the formation of the project and shaping of the final piece to explore their opinions, concerns and wishes when it came to end of life care and death, dying and loss. We would then share this piece to spark conversation. By co-producing a project with creative elements which residents will influence, our hope was that our links with them would grow stronger so that if they go on to need palliative care, they will know us and trust us to support them.

## The Project

Our desired outcomes were:

- Improved confidence on the part of the residents of KGH/ London's homeless population to talk about death and dying
- Increase in trust on part of the residents of KGH/ London's homeless population in providers of EOL care
- Improved understanding amongst residents of KGH/ London's homeless population of the EOL support services available to them

We feel satisfied that this project has achieved its aims and desired outcomes and even provided some unexpected positive outcomes which I will go on to explain in a later section. With regards to the initial aims, this project has certainly helped us to build stronger links with the hostel, having allowed us to engage with a range of staff and residents across the project period. Using art as our tool to build these links, we were able to have multiple insightful, personal and inspirational conversations with residents who appreciated the opportunity to discuss this topic. We were also able to share information with residents and staff about end-of-life care services, improving awareness of the services that are available to them. We have also created a collaborative art piece and an accompanying film which can act as a tool for us to continue to engage with palliative care staff, other hostels

and the general public to bring further awareness to this topic, specifically the challenges that people experiencing homelessness can face when accessing care.

See the [film here](#) produced as part of our Dying Matters project.



Royal Trinity Hospice and King Georges Hostel Dying Matters | Sizzle

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