

Comms pack for the build-up to the elections

What's included

- Template press release for MSP/candidate visits
- Pitching tips
- Social media support
 - Content ideas
 - Suggested copy
 - Video guide
 - Social Assets
- Key messages

1. Press release template

[Candidate/MSP name] visits [Hospice name] to discuss vital role of hospices in Scotland

[Hospice name] in [location] recently welcomed [candidate/MSP name], the [party] [candidate/MSP] for [constituency], for a visit focused on the vital role hospices play in Scotland's health and social care system.

The visit forms part of Hospice UK and Scottish hospices work to raise awareness of hospice and palliative care ahead of the Scottish Parliament elections, highlighting both the impact of local hospices and the urgent need for a long-term, sustainable funding model for hospice care.

During the visit, [candidate/MSP name] met with [hospice name] staff and volunteers, and heard about the care and support provided to people living with a life-limiting illness and their families. Each year, [hospice name] supports over [X] people through inpatient, community and family support services.

They support people like [insert name and story - an opportunity to demonstrate the powerful impact of hospice services].

Hospices across Scotland are under increasing pressure from rising costs, workforce challenges and growing demand for palliative care. A recent survey by Hospice UK found that two thirds of Scottish hospices either have already made cuts or are planning to make cuts within the next year.

In addition, to a sustainable funding model for hospice care, Hospice UK and the Scottish Hospice Leaders Group are calling on the next Government to conduct an independent review of palliative care and legislate to introduce a new right to palliative care, so that everyone receives the care they need at the end of life.

[Name], Chief Executive of [Hospice name], said:

“[Quote from CEO - focusing on funding pressures and importance of sustainable funding]”

[Candidate/MSP name] said:

“[Quote from MSP/candidate - reflecting on visit and importance of hospice care]”

Helen Malo, Senior Policy and Public Affairs Manager for Scotland at Hospice UK said: “Hospices are an essential part of Scotland’s health and care system, easing pressure on the NHS by helping people stay out of hospital and providing expert care, but many are under increasing pressure.

“Now more than ever it’s important for all candidates to champion their local hospice and for the next government to deliver a long-term, sustainable funding model for hospice care, so these services have the stability they need to continue providing expert care and compassion for everyone who needs it.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

About **[Hospice Name]**

[Short description of the hospice, services provided, area covered etc]

Media contact - **[Name, job title, hospice name, email, phone number]**

To contact Hospice UK, please email media@hospiceuk.org

2. Social media

Hospices can create powerful social media content at many moments - not just during MSP or candidate visits. The aim is to show the human impact of hospice care, explain the funding pressures facing services, and clearly set out what needs to change.

Please note that all social media posts should be impartial. You can refer to our guidance on this [here](#).

Content ideas

1. MSP or candidate visits

Use visits as a timely hook to highlight the importance of hospice care and the need for sustainable funding.

2. Funding and awareness posts

Use the social media graphics provided to explain the funding pressures facing hospices, rising demand for palliative care, and why action is needed now.

3. Voices from the hospice

You can create short videos or posts featuring:

- Hospice nurses, doctors or healthcare assistants
- Volunteers or fundraisers
- Senior leaders explaining local pressures

These first-hand perspectives help bring the issue to life and build public understanding.

4. Patient or family stories

If you have consent, short videos from patients or families can be incredibly powerful in showing what hospice care means and what would be lost if services are reduced.

What to share:

- A short video clip or photo (from a visit or everyday hospice activity)
- A short video from a hospice spokesperson explaining current pressures and calling for change (see key messages above)
- A quote from an MSP/candidate, staff member, volunteer or family member
- A clear message about why hospice care matters and what needs to change

Suggested post copy

Visit-focused

Today we welcomed [MSP/candidate name] to [Hospice name]. It was a valuable opportunity to show the impact hospice care has for people and families, and to discuss the urgent need for sustainable funding in Scotland.

Funding-focused

Demand for hospice and palliative care is rising, but services are under growing financial pressure. Hospice care is vital – and Scotland needs a sustainable funding model to protect it.

People-focused

Hospice care is about dignity, compassion and choice at the end of life. Our staff and volunteers see every day why sustainable funding matters for patients and families.

Suggested post copy (MSPs/candidates)

Today I visited [Hospice name] to meet the incredible staff and volunteers who support people and families at the end of life. Hospices are vital to our health and care system and must be properly supported.

Social media graphics can be downloaded on the same webpage that this PDF was in.

How to make simple, effective videos for social media

- You don't need professional equipment - a phone filmed horizontally or vertically is fine
- Keep clips short (20-60 seconds works best)
- Film in a quiet, well-lit space
- Avoid filming patients unless explicit consent has been given
- Ask speakers to look at the camera and speak naturally

Helpful video prompts:

- "Why is hospice care important in your community?"
- "What pressures is your hospice facing right now?"
- "Why does Scotland need sustainable hospice funding?"

3. Pitching to media

Local media are often most interested in people, not policy alone. You will all know the power and impact of sharing emotive stories of hospice care, and why it matters to local communities.

In the build-up to the Holyrood elections hospices can play an important role in keeping momentum behind our cause by placing powerful human stories of hospice care with your local media.

Hospice UK will also be placing national media stories in Scotland, if your hospice would be happy to host journalists or speak to the media, email us at media@hospiceuk.org.

What makes a strong story?

- A real person or frontline perspective
- A clear local angle (your hospice/area/community)
- A wider message about why hospice care needs protecting
- Story ideas to pitch to local media

MSP or candidate visit

Use visits as a hook to talk about the value of hospice care and the need for sustainable funding. Local papers are often keen to cover representatives visiting important community services.

Patient or family case study

With consent, share a story that shows the difference hospice care makes - e.g. dignity, comfort, support at home, care for the whole family. These stories help readers understand what is at stake if services are reduced.

Staff or spokesperson interview

First-hand accounts can be very powerful - e.g. staff such as nurses, Medical Directors etc can speak about rising demand, workforce pressures, and the importance of being able to provide the best care they can.

Community impact story

Focus on volunteers, fundraisers, or community-led support and explain why charitable income alone is no longer enough to sustain essential care.

Practical pitching tips

- Keep pitches short and clear (2 - 3 paragraphs is enough)
- Lead with the human story
- Explain why the story matters now
- Offer interviews, photos or short videos where possible
- Contact Hospice UK if you want additional data or stats about hospice care in Scotland, or a quote or spokesperson for interview. We will do our best to help.

4. Key messages to weave through media coverage and social media content

You might want to reference the following key messages from our [manifesto priorities for Scotland](#) in media or social posts:

- Palliative care can't wait. The next Scottish Government must make palliative care a national priority.
- Scotland needs a long-term, sustainable funding model for hospice care, including pay parity with NHS staff and an independent review of palliative care.
- Everyone should have a right to palliative care, ensuring dignity, compassion and choice at the end of life.
- As Scotland's population ages, demand for palliative care is rising fast. Hospice care eases pressure on hospitals, supports people to stay at home, and saves money, yet services are shrinking due to insufficient funding.
- Hospice care is vital. Scotland cannot afford to let it fail.