

# Hospice UK Turnaround Toolkit

Supported by Brooks Macdonald  
Big Conversation webinar  
24 June 2026

# Housekeeping



Please keep your mic muted unless you are asking a question



Please note that the presentation (excluding the Q&A) is being recorded



The recording and slides will be on the Hospice UK website after the event



Please use the Chat function to ask any questions as we go along



AI bots are not permitted in these meetings and will be removed

# Agenda

11:00	Welcome & Introductions	<b>Paul Jennings</b> , Chair, Hospice UK <b>Nathan Munt</b> , Brooks Macdonald
11:05	Recap - why we are doing this The toolkit and our approach	<b>Craig Duncan</b> , Chief Operating Officer, Hospice UK <b>Simon Hopkins</b> , charity turnaround specialist <b>David Burland</b> , consultant specialising in the hospice sector
	Case study	<b>Michael Crowther</b> , CEO, The Kirkwood
	Moving forwards – participation and evolution	<b>Craig Duncan</b> , Chief Operating Officer, Hospice UK
11:45	Q&A	All
12:00	Close	<b>Paul Jennings</b> , Chair, Hospice UK

# Why we are doing this - recap

Most severe financial crisis ever to face the sector

- Many have already cut services – many more close to doing so
- No one trains you how to manage a turnaround
- EQ, empathy & open communication just as important as financial skills
- What you do *before* the crisis hits, helps determine how well you get out of it.
- There are lots of lessons from those who have been through the experience

**Hospices need support and advice to prepare for and survive turnarounds**

# The toolkit (1)

A digital resource which is easy to navigate, covering the following broad areas:

- Preventing the need for turnaround
- Preparing for turnaround
- Starting the process
- In-flight governance and management
- Bringing the programme to an end
- Financial considerations
- People, capability & culture

# The toolkit (2)

Approach:

- Launch quickly and iterate
- Easy to navigate with links throughout
- Follow the broad chronology of a turnaround
- Reflect the importance of people and culture as well as numbers, measures and action plans
- Not all elements will be relevant in all cases
- Thematic prompts and food for thought - it's designed to be a catalyst, not a detailed audit programme
- Distilled/curated from experience

# The toolkit (3)

## What it's not:

### **Professional advice, or a substitute therefor**

- Some hospices will need access to regulated specialist support around HR, legal matters and PR, etc.

### **The final version!**

- Evolution will be key, based on sharing thoughts and experiences – this is now open to participation

# Themes from CEOs Feedback

- Discussions held with hospices who have been through turnaround
- Thanks to all for their openness and willingness to share
- Toolkit includes many 'mini-case studies' reflecting on their experiences - some attributed, some anonymised
- Many common themes emerged from the discussions - will share some of those now

# *"It's never too early to start preparing for a turnaround."*

- Have pre-agreed criteria defining clearly at which point you will take action
- Have advance agreement about what action you will take e.g. recruitment freeze, no / limit on salary increases, service reductions
- Avoid the temptation to think '*something will turn up*'
- Formally record the exact detail of the Board's decision. Remind all of collective responsibility.
- Stops ambiguity - and may help further down the line

*"The values-driven culture that makes us so good at what we do, also makes us resistant to change"*

*"Some people can be understandably unkind"*

- What is clear and logical (if deeply regrettable) in a Boardroom, appears very different to others
- Cultures don't flex for circumstance - and those based on care, thanks & praise don't lend themselves to finance & figures
- The passion that drives stakeholders can 'rebound' negatively in times of crisis
- CEOs can be the target of vitriolic abuse - including from staff & vols

## *"Countering a simple lie with the complex truth isn't easy."*

- Examples of local media & other stakeholders manipulating the truth
- Self resilience, a strong support network, a united Exec & Board vital
- Be realistic about need for external support & expertise - despite cost
- Visibility, openness & engagement vital - where & when possible
- Also heard of examples of empathy & understanding for those making decisions
- Consultation can lead to positive breakthroughs

*"If you don't move on, no one else will."*

*"We are in such a different place now"*

- Many CEOs - whilst recognising the challenge and pain, also talked positively of where the hospice is now
- Shown in staff surveys, staff retention rates, increased fundraising, etc
- Several examples of improved commissioner relationships & increased funding
- A time comes *'when you get up looking forward to the future - not going to bed worried about the present'*



# The Stockdale Paradox

*“You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end  
- which you can never afford to lose -  
with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality”*

# Case Study - The Kirkwood Hospice

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# BEYOND TURNAROUND

A large flock of birds is flying in a V-shape across a sunset sky. The birds are silhouetted against the bright orange and yellow light of the setting sun. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The overall mood is one of hope and resilience.

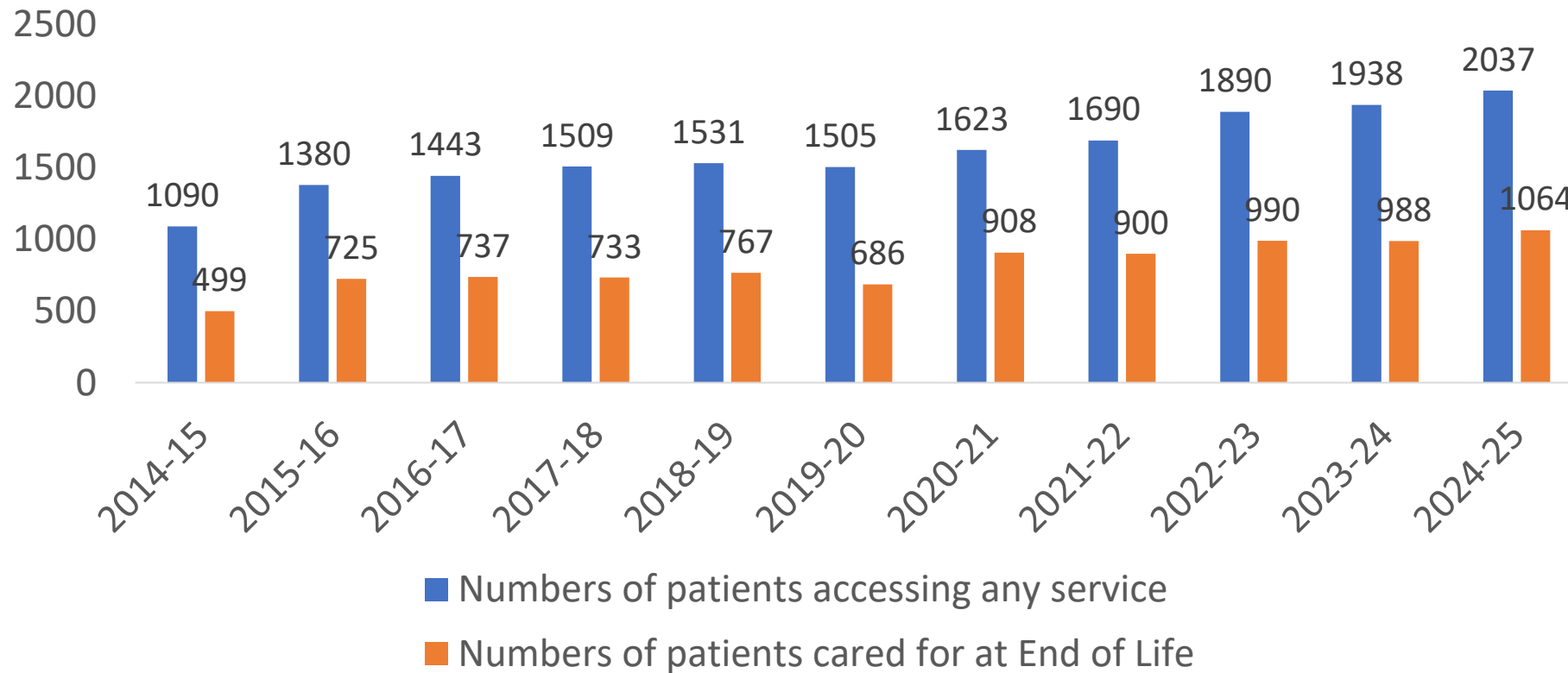
How The Kirkwood responded when the world changed faster than the funding model supporting our care

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# GROWTH WITH PURPOSE

For more than a decade, The Kirkwood pursued an ambitious strategy to reach more people and improve end-of-life care across Kirklees.

## The Kirkwood's Patient Numbers



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# WHEN THE WORLD CHANGED...



Demand increasing



Greater clinical complexity



Inflation



Workforce cost pressures



Funding model under strain

The cost and complexity of care began to grow faster than the funding model supporting it

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# EARLY ACTION WAS NOT

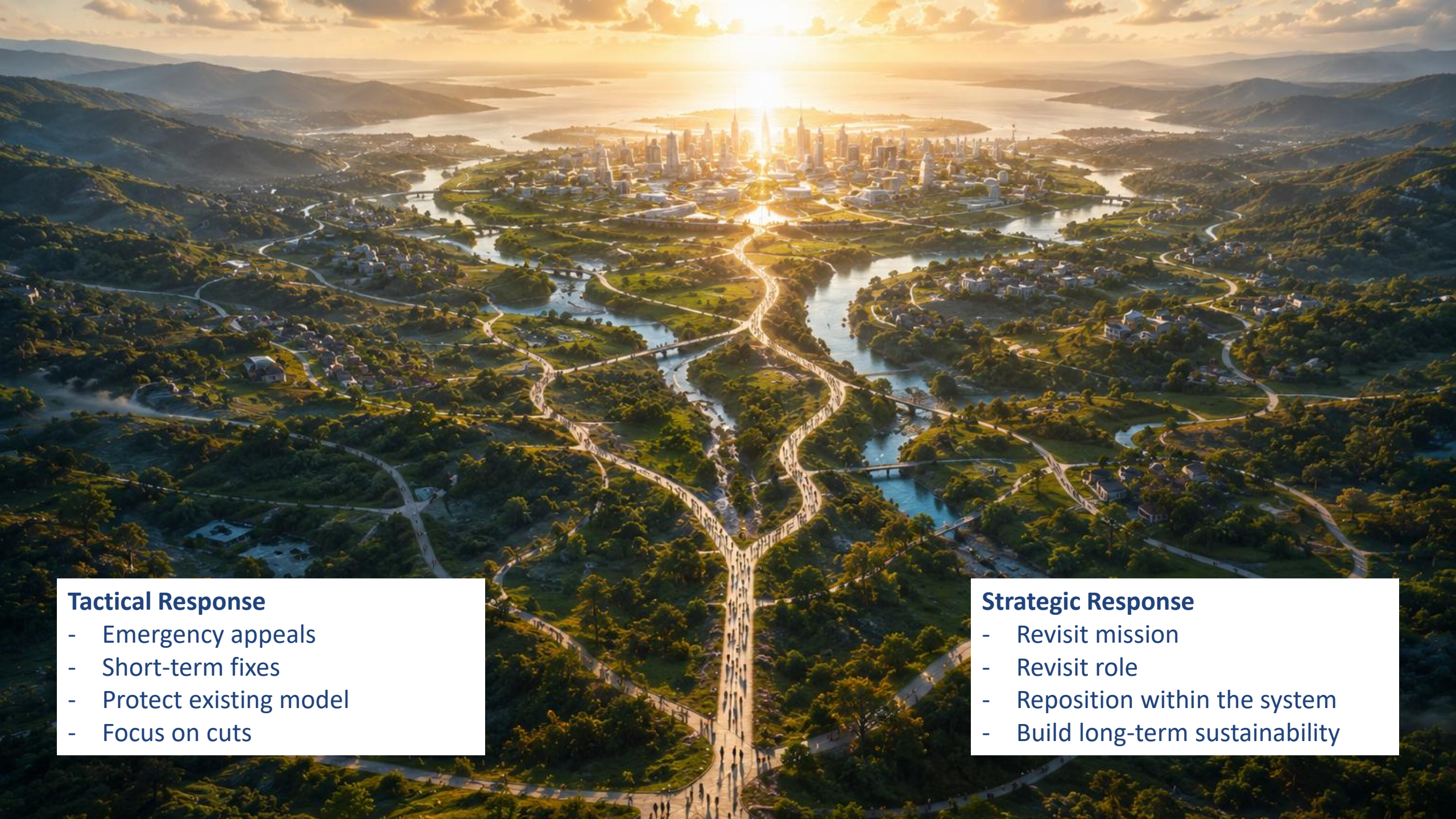
# ENOUGH!

Growth & Investment ▶ Financial Forecasting ▶ Early  
Corrective Action ▶ Funding & Income Growth ▶ Cost  
Controls ▶ Still not enough ▶ STRATEGIC CHOICE HAD TO  
BE MADE

- ◆ Upper reserves threshold within 12 months
- Going concern risk within 3–4 years

The question was no longer whether action was required. The question was what kind of action would best serve our mission in the years ahead.

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### **Tactical Response**

- Emergency appeals
- Short-term fixes
- Protect existing model
- Focus on cuts

### **Strategic Response**

- Revisit mission
- Revisit role
- Reposition within the system
- Build long-term sustainability



# THE QUESTION THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

What role can only The  
Kirkwood play for  
patients and families?

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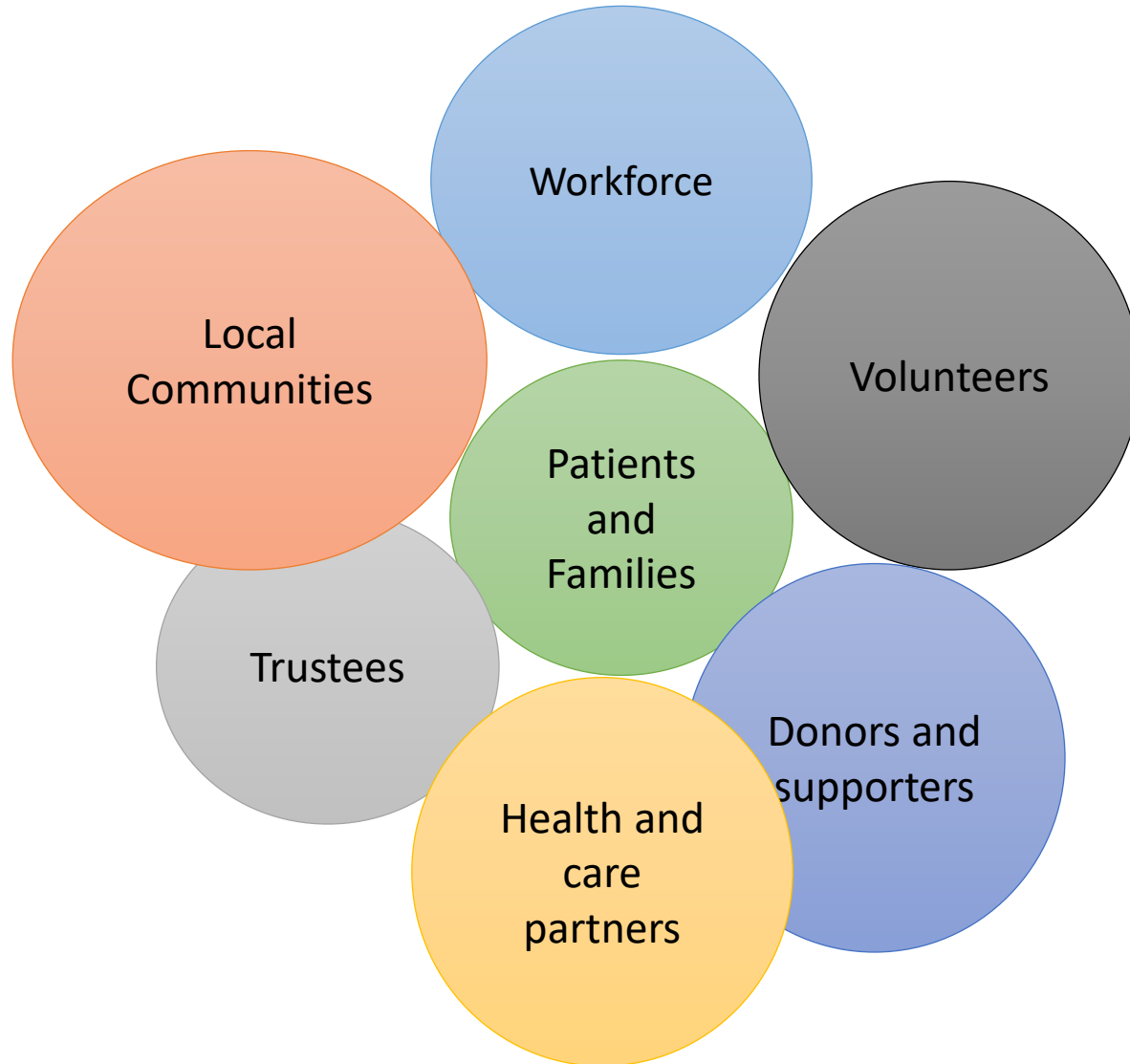
# SECURING OUR FUTURE

We reduced	We protected	We strengthened
Inpatient beds (16 → 12)	Specialist palliative care expertise	Integrated community model
Wellbeing and support provision	Community reach	System leadership
Care coordination	24/7 advice and support	Future sustainability
Organisational cost base (15%)	Strategic influence and partnership	

**We reduced expenditure by £1.7m on a cost base of £11m**

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# KEEPING PEOPLE WITH US..



The challenge wasn't simply making difficult decisions. It was maintaining confidence while making them.

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# Trust Is Built Before You Need It.

Working in partnership to make a lasting difference.

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2014 2025



System leadership



Community engagement



Trustee relationships



Partnership working

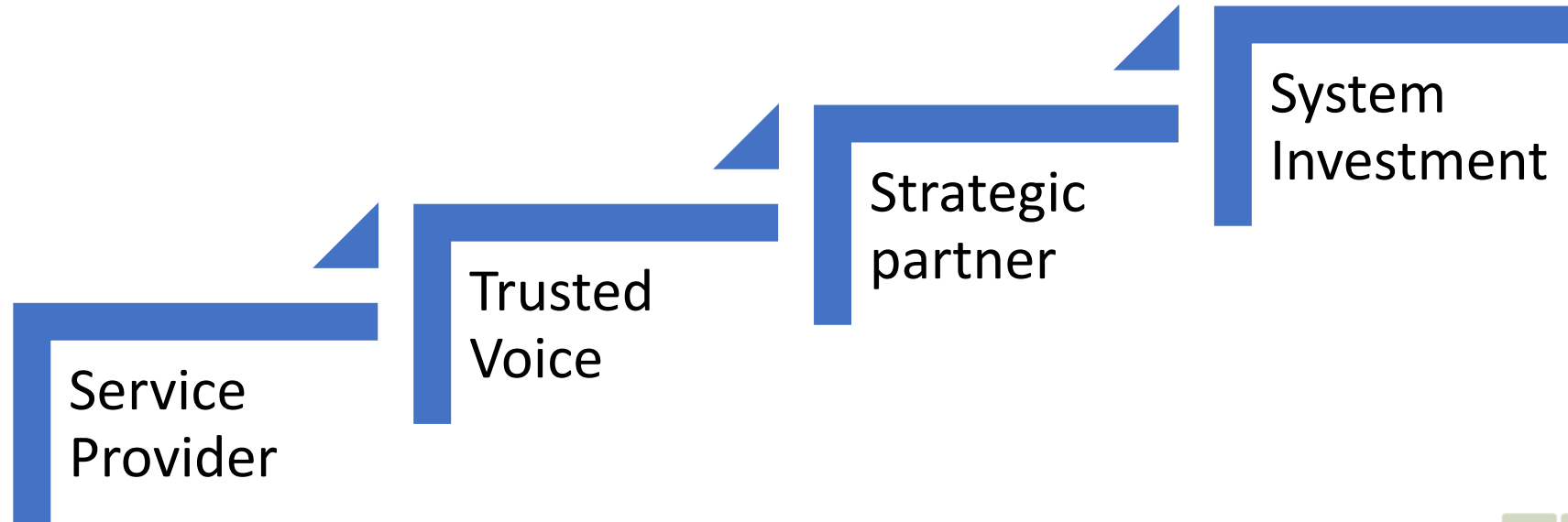


Consistent leadership voice



Financial Reset

# WHAT HAPPENED NEXT..



The conversation shifted from organisational sustainability to system value

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# REPOSITIONING IN PRACTICE

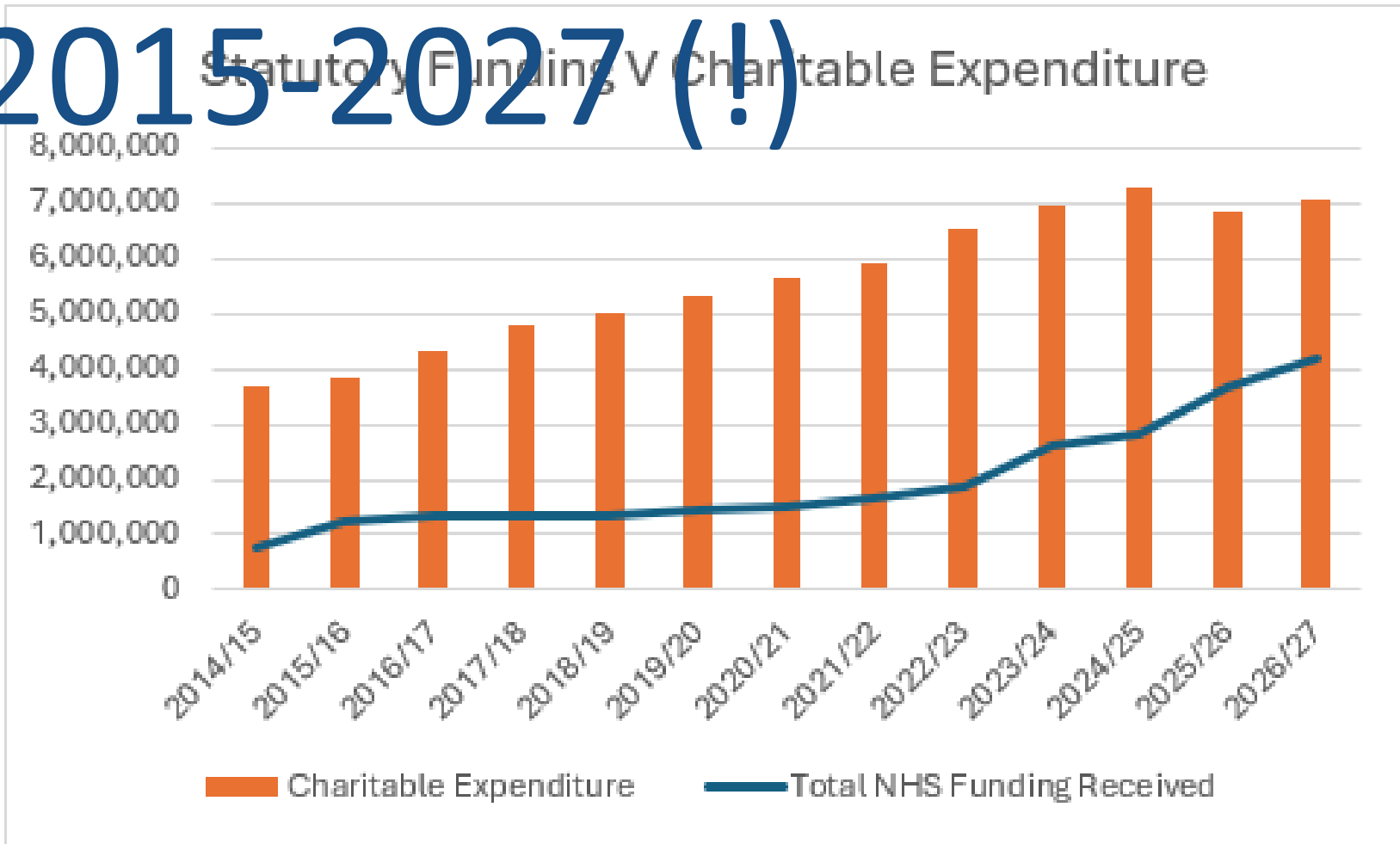
Better for Patients & Families	Better for Sustainability	Better for the System
16 inpatient beds restored	Additional recurrent NHS investment	Integrated community model
Community nursing expanded	More balanced funding model	Strategic commissioning partnership
Virtual hospice developed	NHS funding approaching 60%	West Yorkshire collaboration
More people reached	Stronger long-term position	Trusted voice in end-of-life care

The outcome wasn't simply financial recovery. It was a stronger and more sustainable role for The Kirkwood

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# NHS FUNDING JOURNEY

## 2015-2027 (!)



Source graph: Statutory Funding v Charitable Expenditure 2014/15–2026/27.

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# THREE THINGS I'D DO AGAIN

1. Focus on mission before finance
2. Invest in stakeholder relationships before you need them
3. Protect leadership resilience

Financial pressure tests more than finances. It tests leadership, relationships and purpose.

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# Moving forward

Please feed back with enhancements – we have built this to be an ever-evolving resource by emailing [finance@hospiceuk.org](mailto:finance@hospiceuk.org)

Complementary resources – what would be useful?

- Workshops?
- Mentoring?
- Community of practice/special interest group?
- Others?

# Q&A/initial thoughts

# Contact details

Feedback on the toolkit & what next: [finance@hospiceuk.org](mailto:finance@hospiceuk.org)

To contact any of us directly

[c.duncan@hospiceuk.org](mailto:c.duncan@hospiceuk.org)

[dburland@dburlandassociates.co.uk](mailto:dburland@dburlandassociates.co.uk)

[Michael.Crowther@thekirkwood.org.uk](mailto:Michael.Crowther@thekirkwood.org.uk)

[shfreelance@yahoo.com](mailto:shfreelance@yahoo.com)

# Feedback Survey

Please consider sparing a few minutes to answer this survey, so that we can continue to improve future Big Conversation events:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BTB3GYJ>



Thank you