

The RCGP & Marie Curie Daffodil Standards: UK General Practice Core Standards for Advanced Serious Illness and End of Life Care

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The Standards, developed in conjunction with a wide range of health and care experts and GP practices, are based on proven evidence of what works.

The standards outline eight core domains in which GP practices can look to attain the highest possible standards to ensure compassionate, safe and effective care – with free tools to help achieve step-by-step improvements in each area.

GP practices which voluntarily sign up to the RCGP & Marie Curie Daffodil Standards are making a commitment to undertake a programme of continual improvement. **The Standards do not replace any existing standards, formal accreditations or training programmes.**

What is the RCGP & Marie Curie Daffodil Standards?

The RCGP & Marie Curie Daffodil Standards: UK General Practice Core Standards for Advanced Serious Illness and End of Life Care, provides an evidence-based, structured approach to help GP practices improve care for patients at advanced stage of serious illness or approaching end of life.

The Standards, developed in conjunction with a wide range of health and care experts and GP practices, is based on proven evidence of what works.

It outlines eight core domains in which GP practices can look to attain the highest possible standards to ensure compassionate, safe and effective care. It includes free tools to help GP practices achieve step-by-step improvements in each area, with guidance for both clinical and non-clinical staff.

The eight core domains include:

1. Professional and competent staff
2. Early identification
3. Carer Support - before and after death
4. Seamless, planned, coordinated care
5. Assessment of unique needs of the patient
6. Quality care during the last days of life
7. Care after death
8. General Practice being hubs within Compassionate Communities

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Why is this initiative so important?

Over 500,000 people die in the UK every year; one person every minute. This number is set to grow and, combined with an ageing population living with complex, life-limiting conditions, the number of people who will need palliative and end of life care will continue to increase.

We also know peoples' top priorities at end-of-life are to be free from pain and to be with the people they love. They would also prefer to be cared for and die in familiar surroundings such as their home or care home. People experience better care and death when their needs are identified early and their care is properly co-ordinated - with the involvement of those important to them and regard for personal care preferences.

At present, 25% of NHS healthcare spend is in the last year of life with the majority of people still dying in hospitals. This is putting increasing pressure on our health and care system and is unsustainable in the long-term.

We need to find a way to provide better quality, sustainable care for growing numbers of people as they reach the end of life. The provision of primary care is central to helping address this challenge. In 2015, a UK survey highlighted that 97% of GPs felt that General Practice has a pivotal role to play.

The Standards do not replace any existing standards, formal accreditations or training programmes, e.g. the Gold Standards Framework. Participating in locally commissioned services or training at each level will inevitably help to support achieving one or more of the self-set practice ambitions for the standards.

How do The RCGP & Marie Curie Daffodil Standards work?

GP practices will be given the opportunity to voluntarily sign up to The RCGP & Marie Curie Daffodil Standards. In doing so, they are committing to undertake a programme of continual improvement in care for patients at advanced stage of serious illness or approaching end of life.

Each year, the GP practice will set an ambition to make improvements in at least two of the eight core domains.

Using the tools provided, practices will be able to self-assess their progress as well as set actions to support on-going improvement.

The aim is for GP practices to meet The Standards across each of the eight core domains within a three-year period.

The RCGP & Marie Curie Daffodil Standards encourages a community-based approach to help ensure local communities, patients, carers and health and care stakeholders are involved in setting the ambitions for improvement and monitoring the practice's progress. As such, practices should share their commitment with their patients by discussing it with their Patient Participation Group, displaying information in the waiting room and on the practice website. This should enable active feedback on care provided by the practice from patients and those important to them.

What are the next steps?

The RCGP & Marie Curie Daffodil Standards are piloting with a small number of GP practices from April – July 2018, with support from The RCGP and Marie Curie partnership steering group.

The planned UK wide launch date is November 2018 [correct at time of publication in April 2018]. For further details or to participate in the pilot phase, please contact Catherine Millington-Sanders (Catherine.millington-sanders@rcgp.org.uk) or see the weblinks.