

Palliative Care & Clinical Trials and Pharmacovigilance

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The changing face of children and young people's palliative care: Safe staffing the missing link

The numbers of children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions is rising. Palliative Care for these children is complex, it begins with diagnosis and continues through a child's life. At one end of the spectrum palliative care has extended into antenatal, new-born and perinatal care, whilst at the same time we are seeing the life expectancy of our young people increase with many livings into adulthood and transitioning into adult palliative care services.

We have seen a four-fold increase in the number of children dying in the hospice, alongside an increasing acuity, complexity and case mix. In addition, we are experiencing an increased demand for outreach and community services, alongside a reduction in community pediatric teams.

Our workforce comes from a range of disciplines including health visiting, pediatrics and learning disabilities. Whilst this diversity has been invaluable in bringing together a range of skills, many of our staff's core skills are rooted in the traditional

short break/respite model of care. Using a validated tool, we have interrogated our activity, reviewed our dependency tool and looked at the impact of professional judgement on keeping our staffing levels safe while we develop the workforce's skills and competencies in response to a changing model of care.

Speaker Biography

Dee Sissons joined Rainbows Hospice as CEO in June 2018, after working as Director of nursing for Marie Curie Cancer Care for five years. Her career that spans commissioning acute services and the independent sector and she has represented nursing and end-of-life care at the board and national levels across the UK. She continues to play a key role in nursing leadership and is an active council member at the Royal College of Nursing. She is passionate about developing others and brings a wealth of knowledge about practice development and professional standards. Unafraid of a challenge, she has recently embarked on a professional doctorate bringing the nursing voice to the debate on excellence and nursing care in the palliative care sector. She is also a Florence Nightingale leadership scholar.

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