

16th November 2020

Dear Colleagues,

An update from Saint Francis Hospice on our palliative care services into Redbridge.

COVID-19 has impacted on all of our services. We are busy and stretched, but also desperate to keep support strong for people struggling with complex palliative and end of life challenges and for GP, DN and other front line colleagues. We felt an update about our services would be useful. We want to be sure that referrers have the confidence to continue to refer people with advanced, life limiting conditions who need palliative support, and enough knowledge about our services to be able to share what we do with patients and families.

Wherever we are delivering care we do so with highest COVID-19 safe practice standards, using appropriate PPE, and following Government guidelines. We are happy to support, whatever the COVID-19 status.

As always, the team providing specialist palliative care support in daytime hours to people of Redbridge is

The Redbridge Macmillan Community Palliative Care Team.

The team is operational **Monday to Sunday, 9-5.**

The team has been hugely busy, managing an upsurge in referrals. The team has been visiting throughout, both to people at home with palliative care need and (with care home permission) to care home residents in need.

At present the team is working with reduced staff (a combination of shielding, redeployment, retirement) but is committed to continuing to do all it can to help those with advanced life limiting illness with complex palliative care need, with support, advance care planning, symptom control, and end of life care.

Prioritising of referrals is hugely helped by referrers giving detail of the life limiting illness, the palliative care challenge (the reason you are referring) and up to date clinical information and medication. If information is poor it is much harder for the team to triage/to make a meaningful early intervention.

Referrals are all received electronically, via Nem-tr.redbridgespecialistpalliativecareteam@nhs.net

The team also welcomes calls for advice and support, whether or not we know the patient, on phone number 0300 300 1901.

The Saint Francis Hospice Advice Line is there for palliative care telephone support out of hours

Operational Monday to Sunday 5pm-9am.

The evening/night District Nurse Services will usually be already involved with the person concerned, and thus are likely to be the first port of call, but if the district nurse team, or attending paramedic or GP need additional advice and support out of hours do call the Advice Line on 01708 758643.

Hospice at Home (Saint Francis Hospice)

This is the hospice team that provide hands on support and care for people at home within the last 2-3 weeks of life, who want to stay at home to die or who are waiting for a hospice bed, and who need that extra support. The Redbridge Macmillan Team CNSs are our usual referrers; we also receive referrals from BHRUT (to facilitate a discharge home to die), and from the Redbridge District Nurse teams. Referral is via the Saint Francis Hospice referral form: NELCSU.saintfrancishospicereferrals@nhs.net

Our two criteria are: 1. This person is likely to die within 2-3 weeks and 2. This person is already known to the District Nursing service.

The team works closely with Marie Curie to spread the support available. For urgent/same day support for someone actively dying ring the team direct, on **01708 758603.**

Saint Francis Hospice Inpatient Unit

The hospice has been able to keep 16 beds safe and fully operational. The unit is being heavily used so that there can be a wait; always hard – but the hospice referrals team reviews the waiting list every day in all effort to identify the person in most need and to ensure help for those who have to wait. The hospice inpatient unit does allow visitors, though visiting is limited and careful.

Average length of an inpatient stay is around 12 days.

The hospice has seen many more people needing short interventions for procedures (e.g. paracentesis) as well as to support rapid deterioration, symptom control challenge, carer exhaustion and end of life care.

There are also some palliative care beds at Whipps Cross Hospital for Redbridge residents, and the Redbridge Macmillan Team will explore both as an option for people needing a specialist palliative care inpatient bed. Unfortunately, due to pressure on the beds/much need, neither Saint Francis Hospice nor Whipps Cross are an option for a simple respite stay, and we are not an option for long term care.

Hospice Day Services

Sadly COVID-19 has hit Saint Francis Hospice Pemberton Place Day Therapy services and social groups hugely. The hospice MDT can still see outpatients at the hospice by appointment if they are COVID-19 symptom free and can get to the hospice by their own transport, and everyone in the MDT is happy to see people with a family/friend accompanying.

We are beginning to host very small (max 4, but lockdown/tier rules dependent) social, creative and physical therapy groups, but find that most are nervous to come, despite rigorous site safety measures. We are keeping connected with everyone who would normally be attending, including linking people virtually through use of conference calls, which people love. The hospice therapies service has created exercise videos (see our website.

www.sfh.org.uk/terminal-illness-covid-19 and are also running virtual 1:1 and group breathing and movement assessments and classes.

Saint Francis Hospice OrangeLine

Is a specific Helpline we have developed for people who are stable but poorly (i.e. they do not need symptom control etc. but they are life limited, and struggling), also the bereaved. The focus is particularly on those who are isolated. The OrangeLine team provide contact, time to chat, listening and sharing, linking with others if wanted, and signposting to useful local practical support services. Anyone can phone direct on **01708 758649** to discuss or make a referral, or use the hospice referral form.

Saint Francis Hospice Bereavement Support

Our bereavement support have found much need, and continue to support though currently by phone or virtual platforms. If their loved one was not under SFH care they will signpost to other bereavement services, also OrangeLine. No need for a referral form; anyone can ring in to ask for support, or signposting via the hospice reception on 01708 753319 (ask for the family support team or bereavement team).

Saint Francis Hospice Education Team

Offers bespoke training in palliative and end of life care, including short sessions, half and whole days, as a series or a one off. All sessions are virtual, and can be tailored to your learning needs. We offer Communication Skills Training and we are planning an Ethics conference for 4th March 2021. Contact bridgetmoss@sfh.org.uk for any education ask.

Fundraising

The coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on hospice funding, with fundraising events and activities cancelled and the hospice charity shops currently closed. Saint Francis Hospice would be hugely grateful for any fundraising you can do as individuals or teams. We want to continue what we do through the pandemic and beyond, but we need to enhance our fundraising efforts to be confident of our ability to do so. To get involved visit our website at www.sfh.org.uk or contact a member of our fundraising team on **01708 753319 ext. 2192** or email fundraising@sfh.org.uk.

Thank you all for your continuing support and for all your work through this challenging time.

Yours sincerely,



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