



# **END OF LIFE CARE POLICY**

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## INTRODUCTION

According to the Department of Health's 2008 *End of Life Care Strategy*, high quality end of life care "should be available wherever the person may be: at home, in a care home, in hospital, a hospice or elsewhere. Implementation of this strategy should enhance choice, quality, equality and value for money."

Traditionally, end of life care has been viewed as a specialist area of work, beyond the scope of most workers. For a relatively small number of workers that is indeed the case. However, end of life care is in reality far more than specialist care. It incorporates all elements of the daily lives of those people nearing the end of their lives - whether from disease progression or old age and that means a far wider group of workers is involved.

All care and support should centre around the needs, wishes and priorities of the individual receiving the service. As people approach the end of their lives these may change, or take on a different perspective. When this occurs workers need to be able to adapt their current practice to take account of this. Patterns of care should alter to accommodate a shift from cure, increasing independence and future planning to managing symptoms and concerns and ensuring that the individual and their family and friends are able to spend time in a way that is meaningful to them, and is as positive as possible.

This policy applies to all staff who are involved in the support of people who have been identified as requiring end of life care and support.

## CORE PRINCIPLES

### **1. The choices and priorities of the individual are at the centre of planning and delivery.**

JRH Support staff must ensure the individual is at the centre of all assessment, care planning and delivery; and their wishes, beliefs and priorities are paramount in all decision making. Our practice needs to be based upon a person-centred, social model of health and disability, and be informed by the principles of respect, dignity, choice and independence. These values mean JRH Support staff will be support and empower people to be in control of their needs and wishes, including the right to change their mind about what they want.

The significance of cultural diversity, including the impact of faith, beliefs, religion and lifestyle, acknowledging the individual's right to make their own decisions, must be recognised. JRH Support staff must ensure that people are encouraged and supported to make decisions based on their experience of their needs, and enhanced by appropriate professional support and guidance. People should be supported in identifying and managing risk proportionately and realistically, and have an understanding of the notion of Informed Consent, best interest and Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment.

### **2. Effective, straightforward, sensitive and open communication between individuals, families, friends and workers underpins all planning and**

**activity. Communication reflects an understanding of the significance of each individual's beliefs and needs.**

Good communication and relationship skills must be used by all JRH Support staff to ensure that end of life care plans are clearly understood and shared by everyone involved in their planning and delivery.

Communication and relationship skills are used to encourage and support individuals to work with professionals and those providing their support, and to articulate their needs and wishes for their end of life care. This includes identifying strengths, abilities, concerns and priorities. Communication is used to work towards developing plans and, where possible, achieving solutions in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

JRH Support staff should recognise the changing ability and desire of the individual, their family and friends to communicate, and adapt their own communication style accordingly. This includes recognising the impact of impairments, and of anxiety and loss upon the person. Where children and young people are among the family and friends, workers need to be aware of the significance of child development to communication and to ways of coping with loss and bereavement.

Effective communication recognises and takes account of the impact of culture, faith and life choices upon what constitutes appropriate communication. It is:

- Non-judgmental
- Empathic
- Genuine
- Collaborative
- Supportive

And is based on:

- Active listening
- Reflection
- Legitimation of people's views, valuing the knowledge and experience of their needs
- Partnership
- Respect

**3. High quality end of life care is delivered through close multi-disciplinary and inter-agency working. Through partnership working, the needs of the individual are articulated, shared, understood and reviewed. By developing and utilising networks the right resources and support are identified and utilised.**

All JRH Support staff must have a good understanding of, and respect for, the services provided by their colleagues in other disciplines, and work in partnership with them to meet the needs of the individual, their family and friends.

Care and support should be delivered in a co-ordinated way, and information shared in a timely and appropriate manner, recognising the range of communication needs and requirements of individuals, their families and friends, including children and young people.

Networks and partnerships should be used to identify resources, information, and support systems that will be of benefit to individuals, their families and friends.

**4. Individuals, their families and friends are well informed about the range of options and resources available to them to enable them to be involved in the planning, developing and evaluating of end of life care plans and services.**

JRH Support staff should ensure that Individuals, their families and friends are supported in their involvement in the development and delivery of care to support their chosen end of life care pathway, and in developing, where appropriate, Advance Care Plans. JRH Support staff should have awareness and understanding of the significance of legal frameworks around end of life care and advance care planning, and are able to share this information as appropriate to their role.

JRH Support staff must promote and encourage the involvement of individuals, their families and friends in the planning, development and evaluation of services they receive, as appropriate to their circumstances; recognising the different ways that people, including children, will choose to be involved.

Evidence-based information is provided in an appropriate manner and format, to ensure sufficient knowledge or information is available for the individual, their families and friends to make well-informed choices.

**5. Care and support is delivered in a sensitive, person-centred way that takes account of the circumstances, wishes and priorities of the individual, their family and friends.**

JRH Support staff must ensure that care and support is organised around the needs and circumstances of the individual, and is delivered in a co-ordinated manner across services. Care and support must be delivered in a way that demonstrates respect for the individual, their family and friends, maintaining their dignity at all times. JRH Support staff must be sensitive to circumstances, and their changing nature, and ensure care is delivered accordingly.

JRH Support staff should support families and friends to take on caring responsibilities where that is desired, but recognise and accept that they may choose not to undertake this role.

Where conflict arises between the individual, their family and friends about the chosen end of life care pathway, or Advance Care Plan, JRH Support staff must be able to work sensitively, and as appropriate to their role, with all parties, to work towards a resolution. This may involve contacting mediation or advocacy services in highly complex situations.

JRH Support staff must recognise and respond to the concerns, fear and anxieties of individuals, their families and friends. JRH Support staff should be aware of the impact that age, culture, religion, ability and other factors may have on an individual's

response to grief, loss and bereavement, and recognise the importance of spiritual support will vary from person to person, and may differ between the individual and their family or friends.

**6. Care and support are available to, and continue for, anyone affected by the end of life, and death, of the individual.**

JRH Support staff should have an understanding of the impact the individual's death and dying will have on those closest to them, and be able to offer appropriate advice, information and support. JRH Support staff should be able to make referrals to other networks or organisations to ensure that those affected receive the information, care and support they need, when they need it; including after the death of the individual.

JRH Staff should ensure they give support to, and receive support from, colleagues; and are able to make links to more structured support where needed.

JRH Support recognise the potential emotional impact of dying and death upon workers, and have appropriate systems and resources in place to provide support.

**7. JRH Support staff are supported to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to initiate and deliver high quality end of life care, or where appropriate, to seek advice and guidance from other colleagues. Staff recognise the importance of their continuing professional development, and take responsibility for it.**

JRH Support are aware of the ways in which adults learn, and the cultures in which they learn best, and ensure that staff are supported in their development. We recognise the link between a well-trained workforce, an open approach to organisational learning, and excellence in service delivery.

All support staff will receive end of life care training from our internal Training and Development Department. The training will cover the following:

- Choices and controversies relating to End of Life
- Advanced statements, advanced decisions and lasting Power of Attorney
- Fears of the dying person
- Stages a dying person may go through
- Recognising the dying process
- Responses of the dying persons family
- What to say and what not to say to the family
- Supporting someone who is dying
- Different ways of coping
- Stages of grief and bereavement
- Different cultural beliefs regarding death

Staff must recognise that effective work with people depends upon well-developed knowledge and skills and appropriate attitudes. Good use should be made of supervision and other learning and development opportunities to reflect on practice, and identify learning needs. It is also important that staff recognise the limitations of their own practice, and seek support when appropriate.