



**Press Release**  
**27 March 2015**

## **Hospitals in Exeter and Lancaster achieve end of life care first**

### **CQC Chief Inspector praises hospitals for improving end of life care for patients using Gold Standards Framework Programme and presents them with the first GSF BGS Quality Hallmark Awards**

Wards in two acute hospitals have become the first in the UK to be recognised for their care for patients nearing the end of their lives.

Two wards at Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and one at Royal Lancaster, part of University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, are the first to be accredited by the National Gold Standards Framework Centre (GSF), the UK's leading provider of training for generalist health and social care professionals working in end of life care.

All three wards at the two hospitals demonstrated key improvements to the quality of care for all patients in the final year, months, weeks and days of life, the coordination of their care as well as, crucially, enabling more people to live and die at home if that is their choice.

Staff from the two hospitals were in London today (27 March) to receive their awards from Professor Sir Mike Richards, Chief Inspector of Hospitals at the Care Quality Commission.

Sir Mike congratulated the two hospitals for leading the way in the care of patients approaching the end of life and urged other hospitals to follow their example. He said: "End of Life Care is a central focus in our inspection process of all hospitals. We know that many hospitals struggle to identify patients in the last year of life and consequently find it difficult to coordinate their care adequately.

He said: "By delivering earlier recognition and more effective communication with the patients themselves and other professionals in the community, the Gold Standards Framework enables better care for people in the last months of their life. These hospitals should be congratulated for leading the way and being exemplars for others to follow."

Yeo and Yarty wards at Royal Devon and Exeter, oncology and haematology wards respectively, and Ward 23 at Royal Lancaster Infirmary, a stroke ward, provided evidence of measurable change to the way they systematically organise their care, and the impact on patients and their relatives and carers and staff.

They demonstrated early recognition of decline (with more than a third all patients identified as being in the final year of life), offering advance care planning discussions to all and improved communication with GPs, with more patients discharged to live and die at home where appropriate.

The wards undertook several on-line evaluations, assembled a portfolio of evidence demonstrating the attainment of five key standards and underwent a visit from the GSF assessment team.

The GSF accreditation for Acute Hospitals is endorsed by the British Geriatric Society (BGS) who also partnered in its assessment.

Dr Martin Vernon, BGS End of Life Care lead, said: : “The vast majority of patients approaching the end of life are cared for by generalist doctors, nurses and other members of the multidisciplinary care team rather than specialist palliative care professionals. Hospitals increasingly care for greater numbers of people towards the end of their life with frailty and complex health conditions.

“That’s what makes this such a milestone event, as staff on the wards that have been accredited will feel more empowered to provide the coordinated care this most vulnerable of patient groups require. GSF accreditation in the general hospital setting helps to drive up quality in the delivery of end of life care by ensuring recognised standards are maintained for providers.”

The successful hospitals are among more than 40 to have completed the GSF Acute Hospitals Training, a two year programme which aims to enable the provision of integrated tailored care, by helping generalist frontline staff better recognise decline, anticipate and meet their needs in line with patients’ preferences. In turn, this has helped them, where appropriate, reduce the length of patients’ hospital stay and improve the discharge process, leading to better outcomes once the patients return home.

In Yeo oncology ward more than half (57%) of patients are being identified as being in the last year of life, which has helped staff then initiate conversations with patients about their wishes so care can be planned and given in line with those wishes.

Em Wilkinson-Brice, Chief Nurse/Chief Operating Officer at the Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We are thrilled to have received the Gold Standards Framework (GSF) Quality Hallmark Award in End of Life Care. Achieving this accreditation is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all the staff and End of Life teams on Yeo and Yarty who daily provide safe, high quality and compassionate care for our patients.”

Dr Pradeep Kumar, Stroke Consultant at Royal Lancaster Infirmary, said: “I think the biggest change has been the culture change..... it’s about getting patients and their families to take ownership of their care. GSF is the framework that allows us to make that happen.

“The best bit is making sure that patients receive the care they want, where they want it, when and how they want it and the satisfaction they and we get from that.”

Professor Keri Thomas, GSF National Clinical Director, said: “Caring for patients nearing the end of life is one of the biggest challenges facing the acute hospital sector. What these two hospitals have proved is that by implementing a structured systematic approach such as GSF with earlier recognition, improved communication with patients and fellow professionals, and better coordinated care, it is possible to provide a higher quality of care for people in the final year of life wherever they are. We hope others will aspire to this standard, as others have in primary care and care homes also thereby developing a national momentum of best practice for all people nearing the end of life everywhere.”

**ENDS**

## **Notes to Editors**

The **Gold Standards Framework Centre** started in 2000 in primary care, now runs training programmes in end of life care in all settings, and is the biggest and most comprehensive programme to improve care at the end of life.

Gold Standards Framework gives outstanding training to professionals providing end of life care to ensure better lives for people and recognised standards of care.

GSF helps health and social care professionals feel better equipped to deal with the challenging task of looking after patients until they die by providing a framework for earlier identification, assessment of needs and then planning of care of those people in the last years of life.

Among its key aims are offering everyone the chance to record an Advance Care Planning discussion to clarify their needs and preferences.

More information on the Gold Standards Framework can be found at:

[www.goldstandardsframework.org.uk](http://www.goldstandardsframework.org.uk)

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