

PACS Project: Patient and Carer Support in Rural West Cheshire

See attached leaflet for the service offered.

Background: Initiated after Jill Cox (from personal experience with dying relatives and training in Conversations for Life material) identified that she wanted to support patients and their carers in their own homes with end of life care conversations and emotional support. She approached Susan Ross-Turner of Ash-Worth Time Bank as a potential host organisation for the project and Susan added the dimensions of practical support and Holistic Therapies to support patients and their carers.

Aim: To provide patients and carers in rural West Cheshire with a listening ear, respite care, holistic therapies and practical support, all in their own home, free of charge. This hopefully enables the patient, along with other currently available support, to remain in their own home (where practical) and make the remaining time for both patient and carer as positive as possible.

Current Resources available:

- Ash-Worth members – over 200 members, a proportion of whom are volunteers who can help carers and patients with practical tasks (lifts, cleaning, companionship etc).
- Volunteer holistic therapists – around 10, with training in aspects of home visiting, working with those towards the end of life and their carers, and spotting opportunities for end of life care discussions.
- Central co-ordinator – to clarify the needs of each individual and agree a valued service that works for each client. To support clients in end of life care conversations if requested or identified as one of the needs. To arrange/deliver appropriate training for volunteers.
- Ash-Worth Time Bank office to take initial requests for help and be the point of contact for clients.
- A supervisor to run volunteer supervisory and support sessions.

Potential Resources:

- Grant from The Big Lottery – application been submitted by Susan, awaiting feedback.

People we've publicised this project with to pass on referrals:

- One local area (Kelsall) – GPs, District Nurses, Macmillan Nurses, Vicar, Parish Council, Local Authority Councillors.
- Wider publicity – LWDW Partnership, Carers Group, Hospices (day care centres).

The Story so far:

- No clients yet! Possible reasons; Use of 'Palliative' and 'End of Life' in original leaflets inhibiting people handing it out, potential clients not wanting 'strangers' in their home or thinking that there are others with a greater need than them.
- We've recently rewritten the publicity leaflet to take out any reference to 'Palliative' or 'End of Life' so handing the leaflet out is made easier.
- Systems and paperwork in place (including support and supervision processes for all volunteers).
- Shared information and learning with other similar projects.

Next Steps:

- Attend the Clinicians' Education Event for Western Cheshire (13th December) to meet Rural GPs and Practice Nurses in all target areas with the new leaflets and they can see who we are, so hopefully feel comfortable in referring patients and their carers to our services.
- Radio interviews with local stations.
- Article in the local newspaper.
- Replace all old leaflets with the new (revisit Macmillan and District Nurses, Hospices, Carers Groups etc).
- Continue to engage with the public at relevant events/meetings (WI, Church Pastoral visitors, Age Concern etc).
- Any other suggestions please!