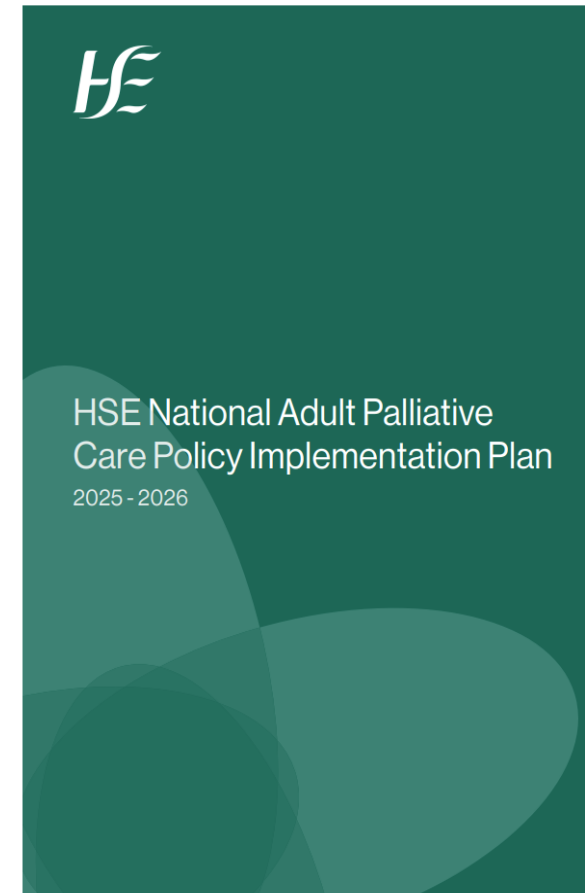


HSE National Palliative Care Policy Implementation Plan

Maurice Dillon, HSE National Lead for
Palliative Care, Access and Integration

Feargal Twomey, Clinical Lead, National
Clinical Programme for Palliative Care

06/11/25



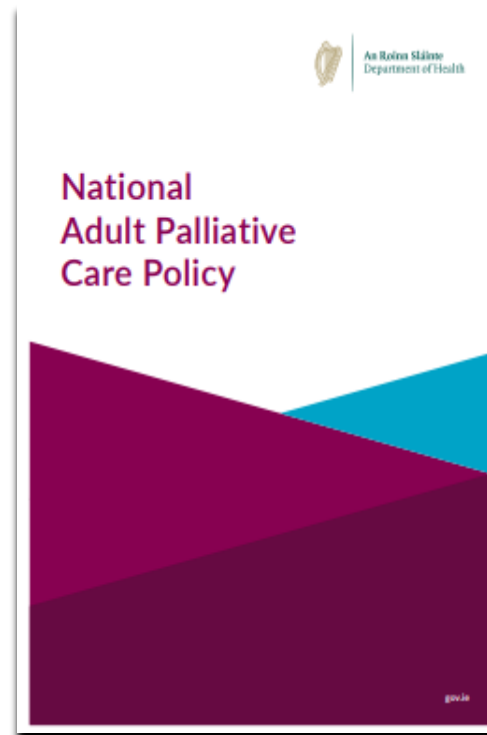


Launch of National Adult Palliative Care Policy 2024

The policy was launched by the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly on the 10th September 2024 at St. Francis Hospice, Blanchardstown.



Fintan Fagan, Marian O'Mahony, Minister Donnelly, Professor Karen Ryan





National Adult Palliative Care Policy 2024

The policy presents 25 recommendations and 104 activities for the development of universal palliative care in Ireland aligned with Sláintecare vision and principles.

- **Right Care** – Development of safe, effective and person centred palliative care services
- **Right Time & Right Place** – Ensure palliative care is available and accessible to all when required
- **Right People** – Development of a skilled workforce to provide palliative care
- **Good Governance** – Strengthen leadership, accountability and quality improvement capacity.



Webinar recording – dissemination of the policy

Webinar on the National Adult Palliative Care Policy 2024



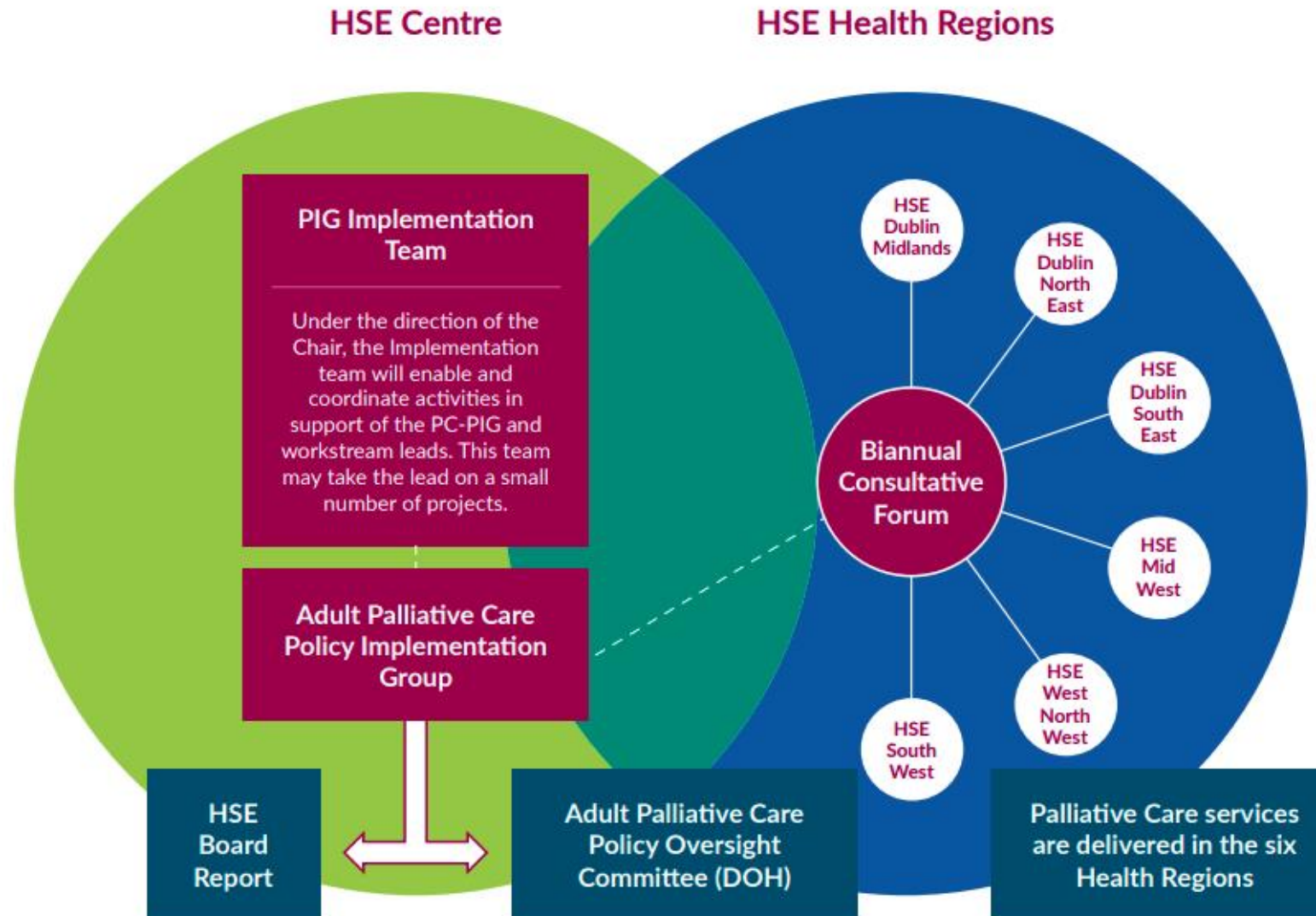
Hosted by the All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care, this webinar provided an overview of the new policy, its recommendations, planned actions and the next steps to support policy implementation.

[Watch 2024 webinar](#)



Implementation Roadmap

Fig 5. p.69 Proposed Implementation Structure



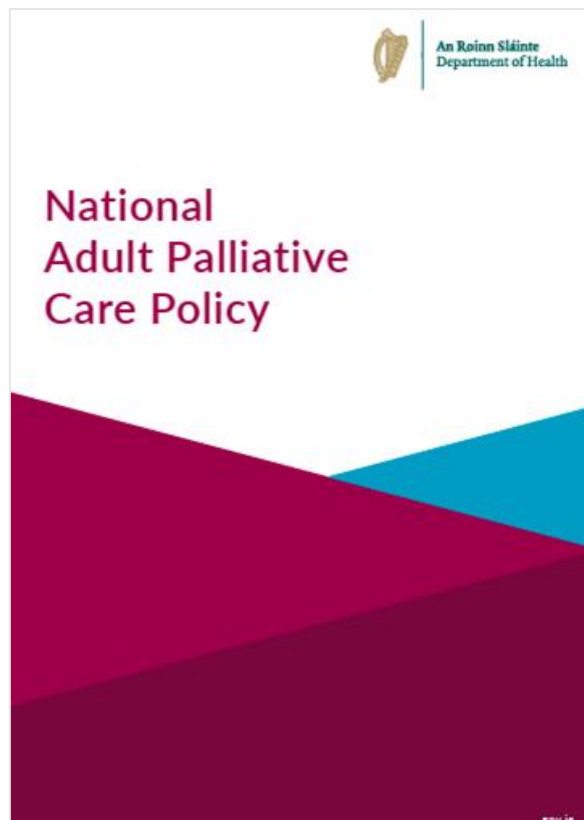


Steering Group

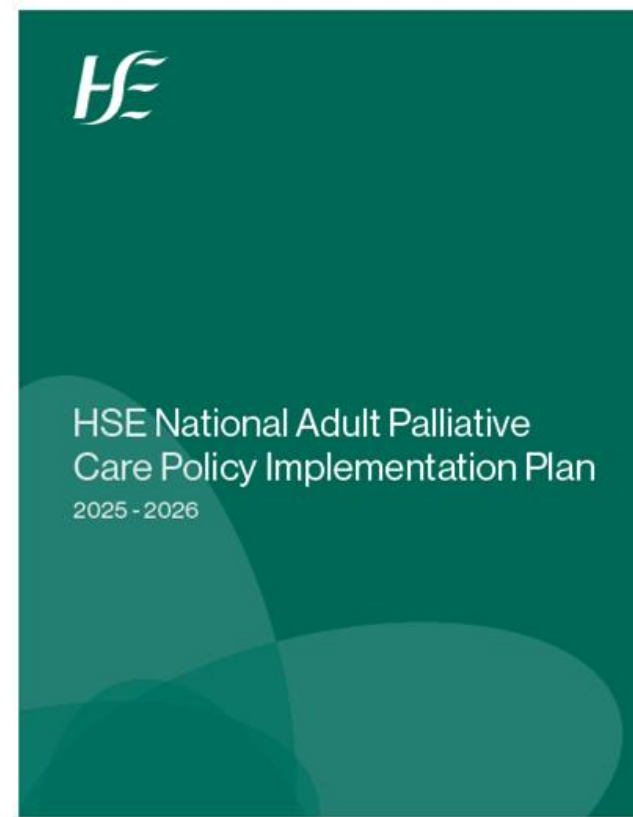
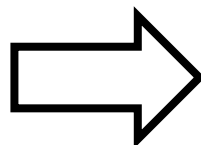
Sector	Category Representative	Representative	Job Title
HSE National Centre	National Lead for Palliative Care	Maurice Dillon	HSE National Lead for Palliative Care
	Clinical Program for Palliative Care	Dr Feargal Twomey	HSE Clinical Lead, National Clinical Programme for Palliative Care
		Martina O'Reilly	HSE Programme Manager National Clinical Programme for Palliative Care
	National Cancer Control Program	Terry Hanan	HSE Nursing Development Coordinator National Cancer Control Programme
HSE Health Regions	HSE Dublin North East	Fintan Fagan	CEO St Francis Hospice
	HSE Dublin Midlands	Dr Siobhán Ni Bhriain	HSE Incoming Clinical Lead in Medicine DM region
	HSE Dublin South East	Úna Nugent	General Manager – Primary Care Waterford/Wexford
	HSE Mid-West	Sinéad O Sullivan	Director of Nursing, Therapies and Social Care Milford Care Centre
	HSE South West	Dr Mary Jane O'Leary	Consultant in Palliative Care Medicine, Marymount Hospice
	HSE West North West	Ann Cosgrove	IHA Manager Galway Roscommon (Chair)
Voluntary and Community Sector	Voluntary Hospice Group	Mary Nash	CEO Galway Hospice (Vice Chair)
	Irish Hospice Foundation	Paula O'Reilly	CEO Irish Hospice Foundation
	All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care	Karen Charnley	CEO AIHPC
Patient and Family	Voices for Care nominee x 2	William Higgins Marian Kerrigan	Public and Patient Involvement Representatives
Clinicians	Health and Social Care Professions	Orlaith Martin,	Occupational Therapist Manager OLH&CS
	Nursing	Mairead Bluett	(A) Director of Nursing of South East Palliative Care
	General Practitioner	Dr Brendan O'Shea	General Practitioner
Education	Higher Education Institute/University	Prof Michael Connolly	Associate Professor in Clinical Nursing UCD & OLH&CS
	Royal College of Physicians of Ireland	Audrey Houlihan	CEO of Royal College of Physicians Ireland
Secretariat	National Office of Palliative Care	Helen Gleeson	HSE Office and Project Manager, National Office for Palliative Care
	Centre for Effective Services	Mark O'Kane	Project Specialist, Centre for Effective Services



Overview



25 recommendations and 104 activities:
91 HSE owned Activities, 13 owned/
coordinated by the DoH



65 out of 91 Activities,
115 Deliverables



CEO Foreword

This implementation plan is a demonstration of how policy, strategy and frontline service delivery can come together in practice. It builds on the robust foundations laid by the voluntary and statutory sectors over recent decades and is guided by a clear vision: that palliative care, in all its forms, should be universally accessible, person-centred, and seamlessly integrated into the fabric of our healthcare system.



Bernard Gloster

CEO of the HSE



Snapshot of Palliative Care in Ireland



83%

of people would prefer to receive care at home at the end of their life

Source: Report on the Department of Health's Public Consultation for the Palliative Care Policy for Adults, 2022

PLACE OF DEATH



27%

Nursing home



40%

Hospital



11%

Hospice



22%

Home

Source: National Office of Palliative Care, Access & Integration, 2023

HOSPICE LOCATIONS



14 current hospice locations

3 scheduled hospice locations: Cavan, Drogheda, Tullamore

Source: National Office of Palliative Care, Access & Integration, 2023

Where to access information about palliative care and end of life services?



38%

of people are either unsure or do not know

Source: Report on the Department of Health's Public Consultation for the Palliative Care Policy for Adults, 2022

Caru

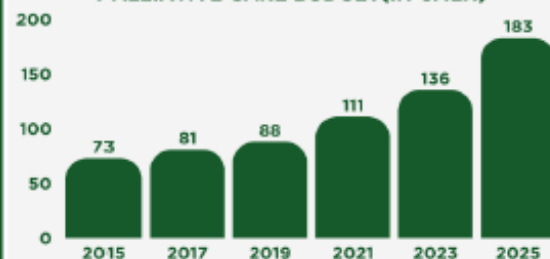
Supporting Care & Compassion at End of Life in Nursing Homes: A continuous learning programme

374

Nursing Homes have so far participated in Caru Programme

Source: Irish Hospice Foundation, as of 28 Feb 2023

PALLIATIVE CARE BUDGET (IN €MLN)

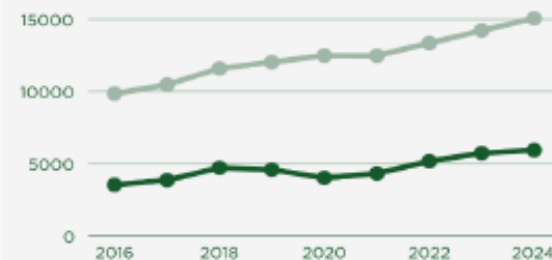


Source: National Office of Palliative Care, Access & Integration

WHERE WE ARE NOW

GROWTH OF REFERRALS 2016-2024

● Hospice referrals ● Community referrals



Source: National Office of Palliative Care, Access & Integration, 2023

EVIDENCE OF FUTURE NEED*

2026 **32,860**

2036 **40,209**

2046 **48,631**

*Number of people aged 65 and over in Ireland, based on population growth projections from the National Population Projections 2022-2046. Source: Department of Population and Social Statistics, 2022.

*Number of people aged 65 and over in Ireland, based on population growth projections from the National Population Projections 2022-2046. Source: Department of Population and Social Statistics, 2022.

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On average

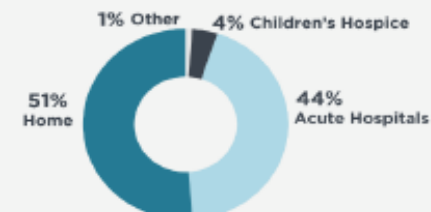
371

children per month are receiving palliative care from Clinical Nurse Coordinators



Source: National Office of Palliative Care, Access & Integration, 2023

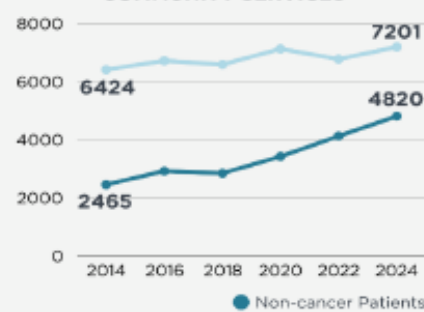
PLACE OF DEATH OF CHILDREN RECEIVING PALLIATIVE CARE



Source: National Office of Palliative Care, Access & Integration, 2023-2024

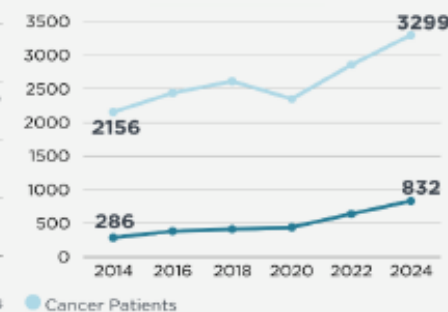
INCREASE IN PATIENTS RECEIVING SPECIALIST PALLIATIVE CARE IN:

COMMUNITY SERVICES



Source: National Office of Palliative Care, Access & Integration, 2023

HOSPICES



Source: National Office of Palliative Care, Access & Integration, 2023



Implementation and Governance

- Initially, each HSE-owned activity (91) was reviewed and key stakeholders involved in their delivery were consulted with. Drawing input from these key stakeholders, a project plan was developed for each activity. These project plans were used to inform this Implementation Plan which contains detailed deliverables, owners and timelines under the relevant activity for 2025 & 2026.
- It is envisaged that at least two further HSE Implementation Plans (or cycles) will be required over the next seven years. Each cycle of implementation planning will benefit from the experience of and learning from the previous cycle.
- It is anticipated that as policy implementation progresses, Implementation Plans will come to have an increased regional focus to reflect local priorities and developments.



Implementation Workstreams

Workstream	Total Activities	Total Deliverables
Community Development and Public Engagement	8	10
Education, Training, and Research	14	28
Health information systems and performance metrics	10	17
Service Design, Delivery, and Integration	22	42
Workforce Planning	11	18
	65	115



Workstream 1: Community Development and Public Engagement

Department of Health National Adult Palliative Care Policy Activity	Objective	HSE Co-Ordinator	Deliverable(s)	Deliverable Owner	Deliverable Supporter	Deliverable Timeframe	Strategic Goal
5.2 Identify, evaluate and implement exemplar models of community action in palliative, end-of-life care and bereavement through competitive applications to the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme.	To submit successful applications to Sláintecare Healthy Communities program which support development of compassionate communities	NLPC	Share programme application information with Specialist Palliative Care services on process to apply for Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme investment.	NLPC	DoH	Q2 2025	Strategic goal 1: Right care
19.2 Establish a National Palliative Care Volunteer Coordinators network.	Volunteer coordinator network is in place and coordinators are working in a cohesive manner to support Specialist Palliative Care volunteering across the country.	NLPC	Volunteer coordinator network, supported by the AIIHPC, is established.	AIIHPC		Q2 2025	Strategic goal 3: Right people
17.4 Develop and support a national public, patient, and carer forum for engagement with palliative care research and innovation.	Train public, patient, and carers in palliative care and research in order to meaningfully engage with the National Public, Patient and Carer Forum; support researchers to meaningfully engage with public, patient and carers to improve palliative care practice and support policy	NLPC	AIIHPC to host an awareness event for researchers to promote engagement with Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) throughout the research lifecycle via the National Public, Patient and Carer Forum.	AIIHPC	NLPC	Q3 2025	Strategic goal 3: Right people
			AIIHPC to provide training and support to Voices4Care members regarding palliative care and research so they may meaningfully engage in the newly established National Public, Patient and Carer Forum.	AIIHPC	NLPC	Q4 2025	



Monitoring Implementation

- A quarterly report will be produced for the DoH Adult Palliative Care Policy Implementation Oversight Committee. This report will provide a BRAG status update (Blue, Red, Amber, Green) against each activity (based on the progress of their deliverables) within 2025 - 2026.

Activity	Objective	HSE Co-Ordinator	Deliverable(s)	Deliverable owner	Deliverable supporter	Deliverable timeframe	Strategic goal	BRAG Status	Q1 Activity Status
6.5 Update Health Atlas to include data on palliative care services and providers.	Enable the identification of Palliative Care services by updating Health Atlas Finder to include Palliative Care services and providers	NLPC	Complete a report scoping decision makers needs for a national palliative care Atlas for Ireland	HSE National Health Intelligence Unit	NLPC, Specialist Palliative Care Provider Network	Q1 2025	Strategic goal 1: Right care	4. On Track	<i>[Narrative update on activity progress: key achievements, milestones reached, blockers to progress, issues et.c]</i>
		NLPC	Health Atlas Ireland Finder updated to include Palliative care services and providers	HSE National Health Intelligence Unit	NLPC	Q1 2026	Strategic goal 1: Right care		



BRAG Status

Zone	Rating	Scoring Criteria
Blue	5	Activity Completed with regard to the HSE National Adult Palliative Care Policy Implementation Plan:2025 - 2026
Green	4	Strong Assurance that the Activity will be fully achieved, on the basis that: 100% of Deliverables are currently on track and this is expected to be maintained
	3	Assurance that the Activity will be substantially achieved, on the basis that: ≥ 80% but <100% of Deliverables are currently on track, and this is expected to be maintained
Amber	2	Concerns that the Activity will only be partially achieved, or is at risk of being off track , on the basis that: ≥ 50% but <80% of Deliverables are currently on track
Red	1	Significant Concerns that the Activity will not be achieved , or will be significantly off track , on the basis that: <50% of Deliverables are currently on track;



Deliverable Summary – Q2 2025

Quarter	Deliverables due	Complete	On Track	On Track	Concerns	Major issues
Q1 2025	7	6			1	
Q2 2025	14	14				
Q3 2025	19		17	2		
Q4 2025	24		18	4	2	
Q1 2026	11		10		1	
Q2 2026	7		7			
Q3 2026	16		12	4		
Q4 2026	17		15	1	1	
Total	115	20	79	11	5	0



Progress updates in 2025 by workstream

Workstream 1 Community Development and Public Engagement

Activity 3.1

Conduct a review of the All Ireland Adult Palliative Care Hub; use findings to inform its future development and the development of evidence-based training and support programmes for family caregivers.

2025 Progress

The updated Adult Palliative Care Hub was launched in July 2025. The redeveloped site was informed by a public survey, two online focus groups with Healthcare Professionals, and an in-person focus group with Voices4Care (PPI) group. The content of the site has been significantly updated and made more accessible and mobile friendly.

The updated Adult Palliative Care Hub ensures accurate and contemporary information on palliative care in Ireland is available to the general public as well as healthcare professionals.



Progress updates in 2025 by workstream

Workstream 2 Education, training and research

Activity 2.5

Produce and disseminate modules for communications training related to provision of palliative care and end of life care.

2025 Progress

In addition to the existing one day **Final Journeys** training, the Irish Hospice Foundation in collaboration with HfH End-of-Life Care Coordinators, RCSI and the HSE have developed a **Practical Language and Phrases Workshops for Medical Professionals**. This replaces the previous *Breaking Bad News* course. 613 participants have attended these workshops across 13 hospitals nationally in 2025.



Workstream 3 Progress update example in 2025

Workstream 3 Health information systems and performance metrics

Activity 10.3

Develop essential enablers to the delivery of integrated palliative care including data collection and sharing capability and the implementation of shared systems such as summary care records, shared care records, electronic health records, anticipatory and advance care plans, and advanced healthcare directives.

Q2 2025 Progress

The Clinical Management System for specialist palliative care has been incorporated in 2025 into the HSE's Digital Health program Community Connect. Significant preparatory work has been completed in 2025 within the specialist palliative care sector to develop a blueprint for an advanced clinical solution that will be deployed in all specialist palliative care services in Ireland, commencing in 2026.



Progress updates in 2025 by workstream

Workstream 4 Service Design, Delivery, and Integration

Activity 1.6

Fully implement and embed in practice the recommendations of the report on 'Clinical governance and operational arrangements for supporting a model of care for children with life limiting conditions towards the end of life in the community in Ireland'.

Q2 2025 Progress

In line with 2020 HSE Professor Bee Wee report, three Regional Paediatricians with a Special Interest in Palliative Medicine were appointed in Q1 2025 and Q2 2025 (HSE West and North West, HSE South West, and HSE Mid West). These appointments are key to strengthening children's palliative care in the Regions, and providing leadership and clinical expertise to support the model of care for children with life limiting conditions. South East post advertised again in Q3 2025



Q2 2025 achievements by workstream

Workstream 5 Workforce planning

Activity 1.1

Appoint a Clinical Lead, GP Lead, Nursing Lead, Health and Social Care Professional Lead, Programme Support Manager and Grade V administrator to the NCPPC. Provide budget and expertise to support data collection and evaluation capability.

Q2 2025 Progress

Forty one new posts were allocated to specialist palliative care in 2025 and are on track to be onboarded by year end. This included funding for a Nurse Lead and a Health and Social Care Professions Lead for the National Clinical Programme for Palliative Care. Having dedicated professional leadership will strengthen the capacity of the National Clinical Programme for Palliative Care to drive strategic actions, and implement the National Adult Palliative Care Policy.



PC Needs Assessment



Topic 4
Referral, eligibility and discharge

The roles of Specialist Palliative Care are explained, eligibility for referral, and reasons for discharge are discussed.



How to register for this programme:

Registration and completion of this programme is completed through HSE LanD. Log in to HSE LanD using your account details. In the search bar, search: "Palliative Care Needs Assessment eLearning Programme"

Click the green button that says 'Enrol and launch' and you may begin!

Enrol and launch

hseland.ie



Palliative Care Needs Assessment eLearning Programme

Introduction:

The Palliative Care Needs Assessment (PCNA) eLearning Programme has been developed for all health and social care professionals providing the palliative care approach who might meet patients with palliative care needs. These patients might require the palliative care approach, general or specialist palliative care. This programme aims to ensure that people with palliative care needs will have the needs of greatest concern to them, identified and responded to by skilled and confident staff.

- Describe the levels of palliative care provision and the settings in which you should provide them.
- Summarise the four domains of palliative care in the context of a PCNA.
- Conduct a holistic assessment of a person's palliative care needs and document the outcomes.
- Describe the eligibility criteria for referral to and discharge from, a Specialist Palliative Care service.

 This programme should take about 60 minutes to complete, plus assessments.

1 CPD hour awarded in accordance with NMBI guidance
1 CPD credit awarded by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland

The programme includes 4 topics

Topic 1
The purpose of the PCNA

The PCNA is a means of identifying palliative care needs that are of most concern to a person with a life-limiting condition.

An appropriate care plan can then be developed to respond to these needs.

You should consider carrying out a PCNA for a person when:

- They receive a diagnosis of a life-limiting condition.
- Their disease is progressing.
- They or their family request it.
- There is a significant change in their functional status.
- There is a significant change in their family/social support.
- They are at the end of their life.

Topic 2
Considering a PCNA for a person

Topic 3
Documenting PCNA outcomes

On completion of each PCNA you need to have documented:

- The needs in each of the four domains of most concern to the person.
- If the person's needs can be met by the current team.
- If complex needs that cannot otherwise be met are identified, consider referral to your local Specialist Palliative Care service. Please remember to attach a copy of the completed PCNA with the referral.

Discuss the outcomes of the assessment with the multidisciplinary team and others involved in the patient's care before finalising the PCNA.



hseland.ie

The Palliative Care Needs Assessment (PCNA) eLearning Programme (which takes less than an hour to complete), was designed by an interdisciplinary steering group of general and specialist palliative care providers as a learning module for all health and social care professionals.

The programme aims to ensure that a person with a palliative care need can be assured that each healthcare professional they meet is competent to identify any palliative care needs that they might have.

In turn, the healthcare professional will be able to identify the right person/service to best manage each of the patient's palliative care needs, particularly those of greatest concern to them.



Before end of 2025....

- Establish the Palliative Care Education Network to drive development of education in palliative care
- Develop and roll out a blended learning program on children's palliative care in last days of life
- Deliver a review of palliative care support bed provision
- Complete an independent evaluation of Night Nursing services to support future development
- Secure Planning Permission for Midlands Hospice Tullamore
- Appoint a Consultant in Adolescent and Young Adult Palliative Medicine to establish AYA service based at St. James's Hospital Dublin
- Complete mid-term evaluation of IHF-led Caru Nursing Home programme for EOL, PC & Bereavement Care
- Secure funding to open additional beds at North West Hospice, Kerry SPC Unit & Milford Care Centre.



Closing Message

- Positive to have established Implementation Structures and have published an Implementation Plan within 12 months of the DoH Adult Palliative Care Policy 2024
- The Steering Group will oversee the implementation plan across 2025 & 2026 but will need support from across all six health regions
- Work on next iteration of plan 2027/2028 will need to commence next year and will likely have a stronger regional lens
- While the Palliative Care sector are creative & innovative in leveraging existing resources, it is essential that additional resourcing is provided in order to meet the rising demand for services and deliver on the policy's vision for universal palliative care