



**forget me not  
children's hospice**

## **Press statement from Luen Thompson, Chief Executive of Forget Me Not Children's Hospice**

### **Proposal for the future of Forget Me Not Children's Hospice at Grace's Place, Bury.**

It is with deep regret that I have to announce that we have begun a consultation with our staff on a proposal to close our children's hospice service at Grace's Place in Bury.

Despite the tremendous goodwill and support Grace's Place has received from the local community, the costs of providing high quality care are rising and exceed the funds we are able to raise.

Combined with insufficient funding from the NHS, we have had to make up the shortfall from depleting reserves - a position which is not sustainable long-term.

I recognise that this news will be devastating for the families we support at Grace's Place, our staff and volunteers and our supporters. We are doing, and will continue to do, everything we can to minimise the impact this will have.

**What this means for children and families:** We do not underestimate the distress that the proposed closure of Grace's Place will cause to families and deeply regret causing them any uncertainty and upset. If this proposal goes ahead, all the children and families we currently care for will receive a personalised review and support to move on to something different that will meet their needs. We are also creating a transport fund to enable families on our current caseload to access care and support either at our other hospice, Russell House in Huddersfield, or at other children's hospices in the Greater Manchester area.

**What this means for Grace's Place employees:** If the proposal goes ahead, there will, regrettably, be significant job losses. All members of staff at Grace's Place have been placed "at risk" due to the proposal to close the hospice. We will be listening closely to their feedback on the proposal and supporting them to find suitable alternative employment either within Forget Me Not or externally.

**What this means for volunteers:** We recognise the enormous disappointment this will cause to our team of generous and committed volunteers, people who have supported staff, fundraised and helped to build our hospice. We will keep volunteers informed about the progress of the

consultation, and hope to re-engage with some of them where possible to continue to support the important work of the charity.

**What this means for supporters of Grace's Place:** All money raised in aid of Grace's Place has been spent in either the initial set-up of the hospice or on the care delivered to the 67 families that we have worked with so far. We thank our supporters for the commitment they have shown in trying to help us to establish a much needed service for the 650 children in North Manchester living with life-shortening conditions. Supporters who are still fundraising for Grace's Place or have yet to pay over funds already raised can continue to do so, this money will be ring-fenced in our transport fund, ensuring that families who wish to use services at different locations are not disadvantaged.

To read the full proposal on the future of Grace's Place, please visit [www.forgetmenotchild.co.uk/buryproposal](http://www.forgetmenotchild.co.uk/buryproposal)

## **ENDS**

Media enquiries and requests for interviews should be directed to Emma Harding at Forget Me Not on 01484 411 040 / [emma.harding@forgetmenotchild.co.uk](mailto:emma.harding@forgetmenotchild.co.uk)

### **Notes to Editors:**

How many children & families will be affected?

We are currently caring for 17 children and families at Grace's Place. We are supporting other families with services such as our perinatal care (5), counselling (7) and music therapy (4) and we will endeavour to continue to support these families, however we can.

How many employees will be affected?

11 employees will be affected should this proposal go ahead.

When will the hospice close? How long will the consultation last?

The consultation with staff began on 1<sup>st</sup> July and will continue for two weeks. If the proposal is confirmed we will cease to offer services from Grace's Place on 15<sup>th</sup> August.

How much does it cost to run Grace's Place?

It costs £270,000 to run Grace's Place currently and that has only enabled us to be open 3 days a week and alternate Saturdays for day care, for half a year (we opened in January 2019) as well as providing hospice at home services. To open 24/7, we would need £1.2million a year.

What is the shortfall?

Of the £270,000 it costs to run Grace's Place (opening 3.5 days a week for half a year), we had a shortfall of £56,000. To open 24/7, it would cost £1.2M a year.

Why are you proposing this now?

We exist in a very challenging fundraising and retail environment and the costs of providing care are exceeding our income. We feel it is better to close the hospice now when we can continue to help the relatively low number of families find new services rather than at a point in the future when we may have to let down many more people.

How long has Grace's Place been providing services to children and families?

Forget Me Not took on Grace's Place in July 2017. By December 2017 we were providing services to a small number of families in their own homes while the building was refurbished and equipment purchased. We opened its doors in January 2019 for 3 days a week and alternate Saturdays for day care.

More information about Forget Me Not is available at <https://www.forgetmenotchild.co.uk>