



**forget
me
not
children's
hospice**



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

**Information for families, staff, volunteers,
supporters and members of the public.**

Registered Charity No. 1110457





Proposal Summary

Due to the rising costs of providing high quality care, an uncertain climate for fundraising and retail and insufficient funding from the NHS, we are proposing to cease offering services from our children's hospice facility at Grace's Place in Bury. We are currently consulting with staff on this proposal as detailed in this document.

We recognise that this news will be devastating for the families we support at Grace's Place, our staff, volunteers and supporters. We are doing everything we can to minimise the impact this will have, such as creating a transport fund to enable families on our current caseload to access alternative services, either at our Huddersfield hospice or at other children's hospices in Greater Manchester.

Please read this proposal and if you have any further questions, contact Luen Thompson CEO on 01484 411040 or via email at luen.thompson@forgetmenotchild.co.uk





Introduction to the proposal

Forget Me Not has begun a consultation with our staff on a proposal to cease offering services from our children's hospice facility at Grace's Place in Bury. If this proposal is confirmed, all children and families currently receiving their care from Grace's Place will be offered an alternative service. **Our priority will be to demonstrate to these families that they will still be able to receive the high standards of care they expect, but in a different way.**

We have no choice but to make this proposal now because despite the tremendous goodwill and support that Grace's Place has received from the local community, the costs of providing high quality care are rising and continue to outstrip our ability to raise sufficient funds, even before we have been able to fully open our doors.

In common with many other children's hospices we spent in the last financial year significantly more on delivering our care than we raised from our shops and supporters, and have not been able to secure sustainable funding from the NHS. Shortfalls have had to be made up from our depleting reserves and this is just not a sustainable position for the charity.

We acknowledge and sincerely regret that this proposal will be devastating for families, and staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to build Grace's Place to where it is today.





How families using Grace's Place will be supported

Our first priority is to ensure that families using our services at Grace's Place can be given a choice about what happens next. This might include receiving services from our other hospice in Huddersfield, or us working with other children's hospices who cover the Greater Manchester area to support these families in finding alternative care options.

To support the 17 families on our core caseload, we will provide a transport fund to ensure that any additional transport needs can be met, so they can access the services they need, wherever they choose to access them from. We will also support families to apply for grants that may help to meet their needs and to secure a carers assessment if they don't already have one. We are supporting other families with services such as our perinatal care, counselling and music therapy and we will endeavour to support these families through their current situation. **But from 1/7/2019, we will not be taking any more referrals.**

Our care team staff will talk to all families who are currently using Grace's Place and work with them to signpost them to other services in the area, or to introduce them to the team at our other hospice, Russell House in Huddersfield. Every family will receive a personalised review and support to move on to something different that will meet their needs.

We deeply regret causing families any uncertainty and upset, and in no way underestimate the distress that the proposed closure of Grace's Place will cause to them.

However, our responsibility at Forget Me Not is also to families who may need our children's hospice care for decades to come. This proposal has been made because we have a duty to ensure we can provide sustainable high quality services long into the future which we aim to do from our main hospice at Russell House in Huddersfield. Our hospices are 28 miles apart and the trip between the two takes an average of 40 minutes when travelling by motorway. Many of the families we are supporting already live closer than 28 miles away.





The impact on our Forget Me Not colleagues at Grace's Place

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 would like to say sorry to our staff for the distress and uncertainty this proposal will cause them. We will be seeking to mitigate the impact on them by:

- Communicating with them clearly and transparently through the consultation period
- Listening closely to their feedback on the proposal
- Supporting them to find suitable alternative employment either within Forget Me Not or externally.

The impact on volunteers at Grace's Place

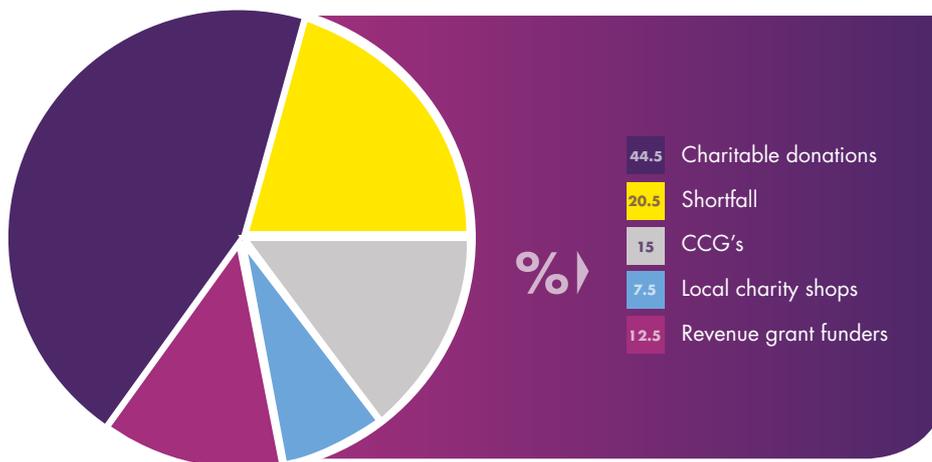
We recognise the enormous disappointment this will cause to our team of generous and committed volunteers, people who have supported staff, fundraised and helped to build our hospice. We will keep volunteers informed about the progress of the consultation, and hope to re-engage with some of them where possible to continue to support the important work of the charity.



Why is Forget Me Not proposing the closure of Grace's Place?

Forget Me Not is fortunate to enjoy tremendous goodwill, encouragement and financial support across the communities where we work. Our hospices were built and opened as a result of the generous financial support we receive locally and from the contribution of the many volunteers who work in our shops, support our fundraisers and work alongside our staff.

Of the £270,000 we spent on running Grace's Place in the last year only 15% (£40k) has come from the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's), and we know this will reduce to only £20k next year. The balance of running costs have been supported through a £20k profit from our local shops, £34k from revenue grant funders and £120k from charitable donations, leaving a shortfall of £56k. Sadly, despite everyone's best efforts, it's just not enough.



It's not enough because this has only allowed us to fund opening the hospice on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and alternate Saturdays for day-care only. This means we are working with a shortfall before being anywhere near having enough funds available to offer a full hospice service. **We estimate the true costs of running a full service hospice proposition from our base in Bury would be around £1.2m every year.** Due to the depleted level of reserves we hold, we cannot take the risk to extend the opening hours by employing more staff when we cannot confidently predict where the money will come from to pay for them.

We are not alone in this position.

In the last month, Acorns Children's Hospice in the Midlands has been consulting on the proposed closure of one of its 3 hospices and Shooting Star Children's Hospices, which runs two children's hospices in the south-east, plans to stop offering respite care from November to half the 500 local families who need it. Zoe's Place, a baby hospice in Liverpool has also had to close beds in recent months. And if that isn't enough, Hospice UK, who represent all hospices, including children's hospices, has reported that over 82% of all hospices are operating deficit budgets, which is not a long term sustainable position for the hospice movement to be in. Along with colleagues from other hospices and Together for Short Lives, we have been calling on government and the NHS for more funding which has been much in the news of late, but sadly any resolution to this would be too late to save Grace's Place.



In fact, air ambulances and hospices are the only part of the NHS which are funded from voluntary funds, despite the provision of clinical care as part of their core service. A review is happening within NHS England about this, but it is not clear whether any monies will be ring-fenced for children's hospices and whether the existing grant from NHS England will even be available in the future. Grace's Place in any case has not been offered this grant in the current year. We are not clear when this review will complete.

So we feel we have no choice but to move to a single hospice for three related reasons:

1. We exist in a very challenging fundraising and retail environment and the costs of providing care are outstripping our income. Many charities are struggling to raise the funds they need and are running deficit budgets, but this cannot continue. 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.
2. There is continued uncertainty ahead, the current conditions for charities are not straightforward and it has become increasingly difficult to accurately predict future income. Our reserves are not sufficient to counterbalance this uncertainty.
3. We have struggled to secure NHS partnerships. As NHS England has committed to a major review of its financial support to children's hospices, it has become clear that what looked like a very promising commitment may be hidden within a wider commitment to paediatric palliative care overall, and the promised money for children's hospices is therefore unlikely to be ring-fenced. This has meant that we have not been able to negotiate any firm and meaningful commitment from the NHS or some of the CCGs in the area and that things are unlikely to change over the next 12 months whilst this is being sorted.

Therefore we feel that we have to act now to reduce our expenditure and by so doing will create more stability within the charity as a whole, shoring up the foundations at our fully established hospice in West Yorkshire.





Alternatives to closing the hospice at Grace's Place

We have recently made difficult decisions to make a number of other staff redundant in order to manage our costs. We have not replaced some staff who have left and this year, no staff will receive a pay award unless there is a legislative reason to do so (i.e. National Living Wage regulations). Some staff have also agreed a cut in pay. All of these measures were designed with the explicit aim to preserve our two hospices and create the time for them to position themselves within the local health and social care economy and eventually grow. But this has proved impossible, and so this further, more significant change is now necessary.

Information for supporters of Grace's Place

If you are a supporter of Grace's Place, and want more information, or have any concerns or questions about this proposal, please contact our Director of Income Generation, Gareth Pierce on 01484 411040 or by email gareth.pierce@forgetmenotchild.co.uk

We would like our supporters to know that all money raised in aid of Grace's Place has been spent in the set-up of Grace's Place or in delivering services from Grace's Place. During our time in the area, we have worked with 67 families and aimed to work with many more. We thank our supporters for the commitment they have shown in trying to help us to establish a much needed service in North Manchester for the 650 children in the area living with life limiting conditions. Anyone still donating or paying over funds from events they have run, will still be supporting local families because we will ring-fence that money into the transport fund to ensure the families currently receiving services are not disadvantaged.

Our care services and staff at our Huddersfield hospice are not affected by this proposal and will be continuing to work with some of the families we are supporting in North Manchester. They did so before Grace's Place opened and they will continue to do so now.

If this proposal goes ahead, we will be inviting our current families to receive services in a different way, which can include accessing them from Huddersfield backed up by our transport fund to enable access. These children and families will still need your support.

Information for supporters of Russell House

Thank you for your continued support of our work.

Your support has never been more important as we consolidate and shore up our foundations for the future. We will of course see through the commitments made to families we have been supporting in North Manchester, but in future will be concentrating all of our efforts in services we have developed in West Yorkshire. Concentrating on further developing what we uniquely do, and building supportive relationships with partners, funders, donors, volunteers and the general public, ensuring our community service is owned and loved by the community it serves.

If you have any questions, please contact our Director of Income Generation, Gareth Pierce on 01484 411040 or by email gareth.pierce@forgetmenotchild.co.uk



About Forget Me Not

Forget Me Not Children's Hospice opened its doors in 2012 following a long fundraising campaign to secure a children's hospice in West Yorkshire.

Our vision, mission and values

Our vision is to deliver pioneering care through pregnancy, childhood and loss, whenever families need us, whatever their future holds. We will make our vision a reality by:

- offering high quality, bespoke, specialist services for mums and dads to be, babies, children, and their families, coping with life limiting conditions and living with loss,
- being inclusive, accessible and available 24/7 in our hospices, at home, in hospital and in our communities,
- ensuring every penny raised and every minute gifted is focussed on the needs of the families we support.

Our values are; **caring, courageous, positive, pioneering, genuine.**

What we do and why we do it

At Forget Me Not we are committed to providing high quality family centred care. Our aim is to support children, young people and their families by working in partnership with other agencies in order to deliver flexible services that meet the needs of each family. These will range from practical and emotional support to play and specialist palliative care, from the point of referral, through to end of life and bereavement care.

This is what we offer across the charity:

- Emergency and end of life care
- Snowflake (memory making) care
- Bereavement care
- Counselling
- Sibling support
- Respite care in hospices and at home
- Hospice at Home services
- Perinatal services
- Sudden unexpected death in a child services.

These proposals will help us to continue to deliver our charitable objectives into the future for the children and families who need us in West Yorkshire. This is where we started, and this is where we will focus our time, energy, commitment and resources. A focus on the 1350 children with life limiting conditions who can most benefit from the support we can provide as a local, much loved effective children's hospice.

Thank you for understanding our current position and the difficult decision we will make pending the outcome of this consultation. Your ongoing support is much appreciated.



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Registered Charity No. 1110457