

The Argyll and Bute Delivering Choice Programme

Development and implementation of palliative care service improvements in a remote and rural environment

Jenny Dryden¹, Diana Hekerem¹ & Hilary Brown²

¹Marie Curie, Scotland

²NHS Highland, Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership



Care and support
through terminal illness

Background

Argyll and Bute is the fourth most access deprived area nationally, with 75% of the population living in remote small towns or rural areas¹. In addition, the population of Argyll and Bute is ageing, with the number of people aged over 75 projected to increase by 75% by 2037². It is important that local palliative and end of life care services are tailored to this rural environment and meet the needs of an ageing population.

Marie Curie was commissioned in 2012 to review and redesign palliative and end of life care in Argyll and Bute by assessing gaps in existing services and developing, implementing and, where possible, evaluating improvements in partnership with existing and local agencies

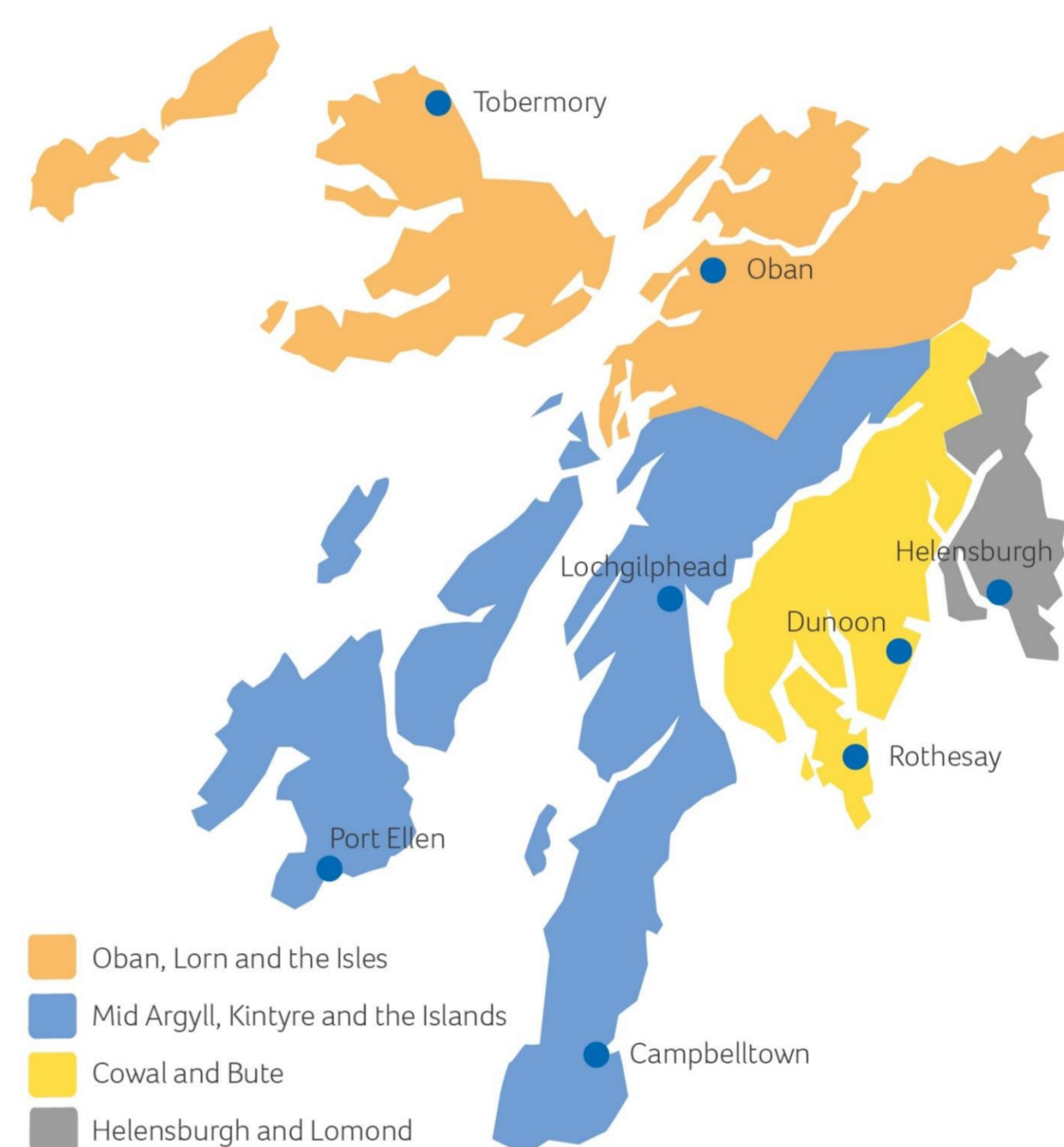
Methods

The Delivering Choice Programme has three phases

Phase 1 reviewed the population of Argyll and Bute and their health needs, including general, specialist and third sector providers.

Phase 2 workshops held with local stakeholders including NHS, Social Work, independent and third sector to generate potential initiatives and solutions for the problems facing Argyll and Bute.

Phase 3 six projects approved and implemented.



Projects and findings

Locally coordinated Marie Curie Nursing Service: supported more patients before they reached a crisis point, improved patient equity and provided more, flexible daytime visits.

Palliative Care training and support for care homes: trained 84 staff members from 5 care homes, in partnership with local Macmillan Clinical Nurse Specialists, with clear benefits for staff knowledge and confidence in various palliative and end of life care issue.

Guidance and support for carers: carer training sessions in Oban addressing the various palliative care issues faced by informal carers, in partnership with North Argyll Carers Centre and NHS Highland.

'Remote and Rural Helper' service: unique volunteer service developed for people living with a terminal illness, in partnership with 3 local voluntary organisations, to address the challenges of a remote and rural environment.

Guidance on transport for rural patients: transport information booklet developed in partnership with NHS 24, NHS Highland, Scottish Ambulance Service and other community transport providers.

Health Promoting Palliative Care activities: community events encouraging individuals and communities to have open conversations about death and dying, including Power of Attorney.

Conclusions

The Delivering Choice Programme successfully implemented local palliative care service improvements in Argyll and Bute, targeted at identified gaps in service provision. Palliative care reaches across the whole health and social care system. This was demonstrated by the need for a range of projects, which implemented solutions from a community to health board level.

Each of the projects represented a local solution; co-designed by local partners and implemented in partnership with various local agencies. Such partnership working resulted in sustainable solutions that meet local need and that will continue past the lifetime of the Delivering Choice Programme, demonstrating the beneficial approach of working together to deliver the right care and support at the right time.

References

¹The Scottish Government. (2010). Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, (100024655), 5547. Retrieved from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification>

²NHS Highland. (2015). Population Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/OurAreas/ArgyllandBute/HealthImprovement/Pages/PopulationStatistics.aspx>

For more information contact:

Diana Hekerem (diana.hekerem@mariecurie.org.uk)
Follow us on Twitter @mariecurieuk

Visit www.mariecurie.org.uk/argyllandbute