

Annual Report Summary



Connecting people



Sharing expertise



Leading action



Providing information



SPPC's Member Organisations

We strive together to improve everyone's experiences of living with serious illness, dying and bereavement.



Everyone dies.

Palliative care helps people to live until they die.

Each year an estimated £1.7 billion is spent on health and social care for people in their last year of life in Scotland.

These resources are spread across a range of sectors and care settings, a range of staff roles, and supporting people with various health conditions.

This can easily lead to fragmented working within a complex system.

The Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care therefore provides an essential function:

With connections across the whole system, the Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care brings people together to find ways of improving experiences of death, dying and bereavement in Scotland.

Scotland's aging population means that the numbers of people who need palliative care are increasing.

Around 89% of people in Scotland will need palliative care.

By 2040, 63,353 people each year are expected to die with a palliative care need. 42% of these people will be aged over 85.



1 in 3 hospital beds are occupied by people in the last year of their life.

Most people who live in **care homes** for older people are in their **last 18 months of life**.



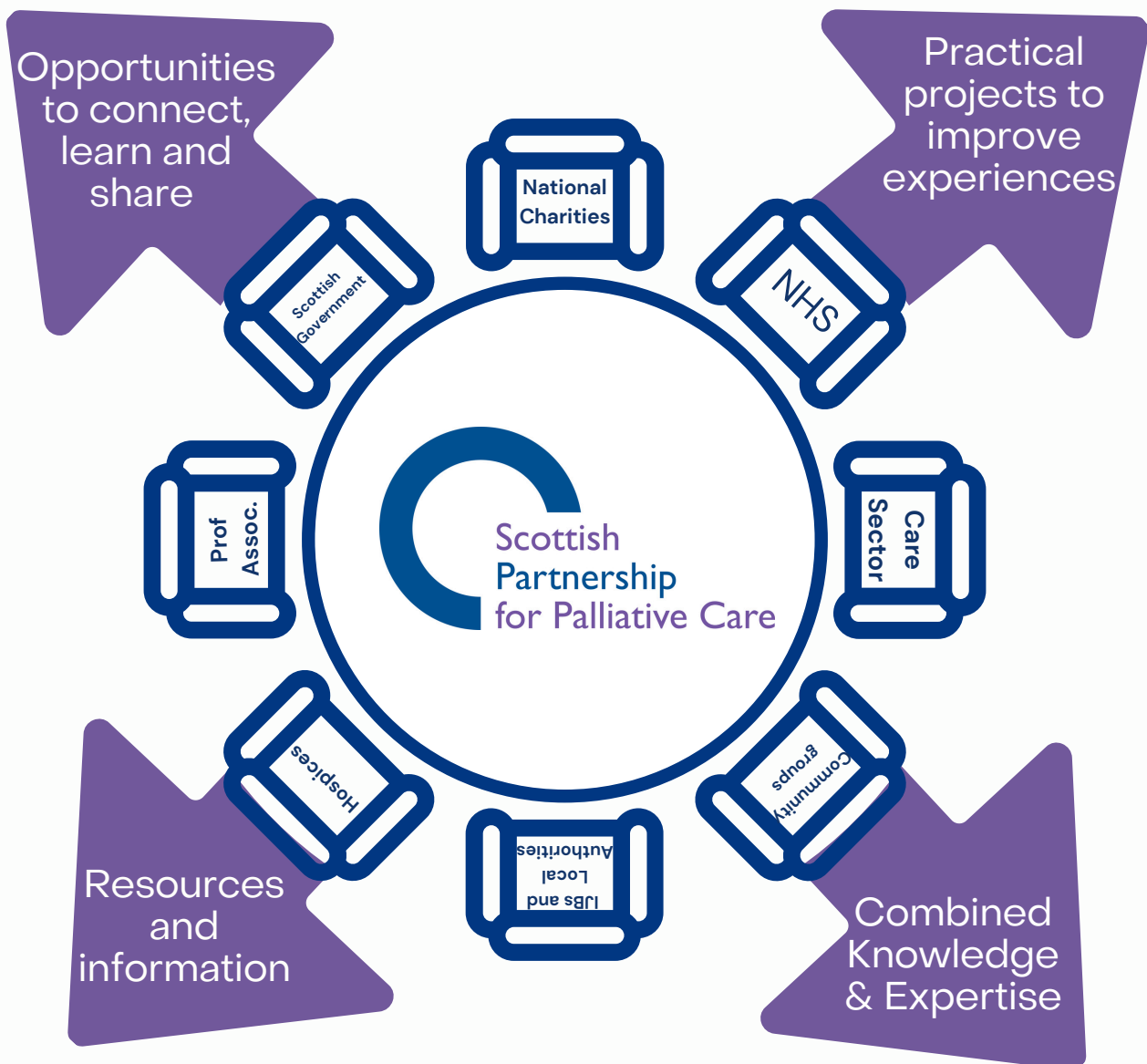
Over **30,000 frail older people** receive **care at home** each week.

Palliative care is provided in care homes, in hospitals, in hospices and in people's homes.

It is palliative care regardless of whether someone has cancer, organ failure or 'old age'. It is palliative care whether they are living at home, in a hospice, in a care home or in a medical ward, ICU or neonatal ward. Palliative care is not synonymous with death – it is about life, about the care of someone who is alive, someone who still has hours, days, months, or years remaining in their life, and about optimising wellbeing in those circumstances.

Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care

The Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care (SPPC) was founded in 1991. The idea was to create a neutral organisation to enable palliative care professionals and other stakeholders to collaborate to improve palliative care across the whole system. That original intent remains more relevant than ever. SPPC has grown over the years to welcome everyone with an interest in improving experiences of death, dying and bereavement.



2024-25 Opportunities to learn and connect

We create opportunities to share best practice, collaborate, and keep abreast of the latest developments.



Groups and Networks	Who is it for?
Scottish Network for Acute Palliative Care (SNAPC)	Hospital palliative care teams
Community/Primary Palliative Care Network	Professionals providing palliative care in the community
Specialist Palliative Care Group	Professionals who provide specialist palliative care
National Charities Group	National Charities providing palliative care and bereavement services in Scotland
Truacanta: Scotland's Compassionate Communities Network	People and organisations interested in compassionate communities
SPPC Annual Conference & Poster Exhibition	Palliative Care Professionals
Update Monthly e-bulletin	Palliative care professionals
Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief e-bulletin	Volunteers, communities, professionals and organisations

"SPPC is very supportive and provides current information which is helpful for my role. Creates a great community and network"

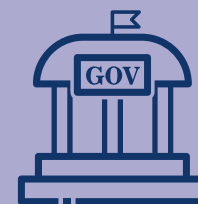
"SPPC supports transformation of palliative care approach across so many areas, geographical and organisational, be wonderful to see this approach spread"

2024-25 A source of knowledge & expertise

SPPC members and staff have a combined knowledge and expertise that can play a hugely helpful role informing relevant policy and practice.

Scottish Government Palliative Care Strategy

During 2024-25 SPPC continued to support Scottish Government's development of a new national strategy for palliative and end of life care.



Policy & Legal Scrutiny

Part of SPPC's work is to engage with policy consultations and legislative scrutiny processes.

In 2024-25 SPPC continued to provide the secretariat to the Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Palliative Care, and also contributed to:

- Scottish Human Rights Bill Advisory Board
- Scottish Human Rights Bill Wider Implementation Group
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Standards Development Group on Care of Older People with Frailty.
- Health and Sport Committee's scrutiny of the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill.
- Scottish Government consultation on proposed reforms to the Adults with Incapacity Act.
- Proposed revised Scottish Government guidance on 'Care in the last days and hours of life'.
- Cross Party Group meetings on Funerals & Bereavement, and End of Life Choices



Input to Relevant Work Streams

During 2024-25 SPPC shared work, insights and perspectives at numerous meetings and events.

This included:

- London University Global Palliative Care study day
- NHS Tayside Managed Care Network Relaunch event
- Grampian Managed Care Network
- NHS Lanarkshire occupational health seminar
- NHS Lothian Bereavement Steering group
- NES Bereavement Steering Group
- Bereavement Charter Group
- And many more...



2024-25 Practical Projects

We lead Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief, a community of action for people interested in creating more openness and knowledge around death, dying and bereavement in Scotland.

We take a public health approach to palliative care. This means that we try to understand and influence the structural and social determinants of death, dying and bereavement experiences.



To Absent Friends Festival

To Absent Friends is a people's festival of storytelling and remembrance that takes place across Scotland from 1-7 November each year.

Groups, communities and organisations are encouraged to plan events, and these become the To Absent Friends event programme.

2024 saw the biggest To Absent Friends festival so far, with 76 events and activities compared to 41 events in 2023. Activities took place in 2 prisons, 4 public libraries, 5 hospitals, and many community centres and meeting places.

"Was so beautiful tonight, gave my little soul a massive lift. Thank you for all the hard work everyone put into making it so special!"
– Event participant



Demystifying Death Week

Each May we run Demystifying Death Week.

The week is about giving people knowledge, skills and opportunities to plan and support each other through death, dying, loss and care.

Organisations, community groups, and individuals across Scotland organise events.

We provide support for participation including small grants, event ideas and activities.

From Uist to Montrose and from Cromarty to Dumfries members held 60 events and activities in May 2024 – up from 43 the previous year. 92% of event organisers said they were likely to take part in DD Week again. 85% of respondents used GLGDGG resources in planning or delivering their event and all respondents felt supported by SPPC.

2024-25 Practical Projects

Through Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief we run several projects focused on supporting death literacy and compassionate communities in Scotland.

These projects support community-led action across Scotland.

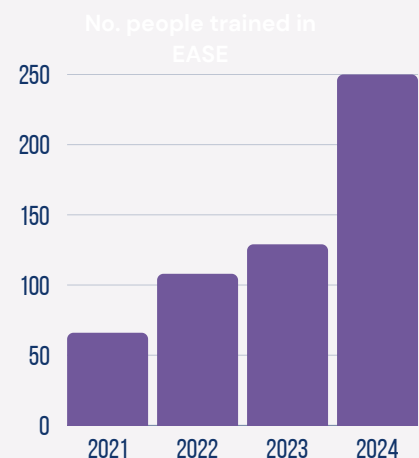
"It was one of the best courses I've done in ages. Wish I'd done this before my Dad died. It's been hugely supportive. I've met a wonderful community. Very special group that really trusted and shared very sensitively and openly. Learned/relearned so much." EASE participant

End of Life Aid Skills for everyone (EASE)

SPPC developed EASE, a free course for people who want to be better equipped to help friends or family who are caring, dying, or grieving. SPPC runs courses, and equips volunteer facilitators to run EASE within communities across Scotland.

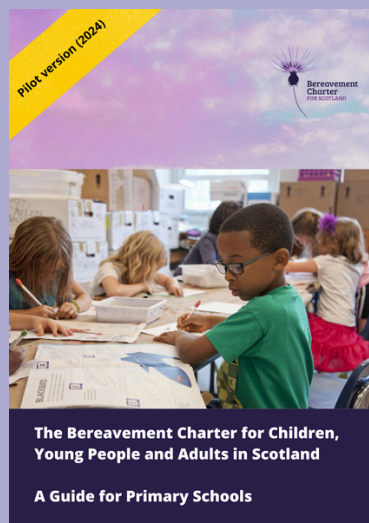
In 2024:

- 250 people participated in EASE
- there were 37 active EASE facilitators
- we ran 7 taster courses reaching out to new communities
- we produced an EASE promotional film
- EASE won an award for Best Self-Management Resource



Bereavement Charter Mark: Schools

In collaboration with St Columba's Hospice Care and University of Strathclyde SPPC has developed and supported the piloting of a Charter Mark for primary schools. To date four schools have successfully applied for the schools charter mark, and interest in the scheme is growing.



Bereavement Charter Mark: Workplaces

Working with the Bereavement Charter Group, the SPPC led the development of the Bereavement Charter Mark for Workplaces.

Organisations can earn the Bereavement Charter Mark by taking actions to make their organisation more supportive of bereaved employees.

SPPC has developed an online toolkit to support employers achieve Charter Mark. To date **41 organisations** have achieved the Workplaces Charter Mark.

2024-25 Resources and information

SPPC develops free information and practical resources for professionals and members of the public.

Public-facing information

In 2024-25 we refreshed the Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief website, providing information, support and signposting on matters relating to death, dying and bereavement.



Information for professionals

Our monthly e-bulletin shares the latest news relevant to palliative care in Scotland. It goes to 1300 professionals each month and web metrics show that recipients actively engage with content.



Supporting Compassionate Communities

We created two new resources for communities – *To Absent Friends: Guide to Organising an Event* and *Demystifying Death: Planning your event*. We created a new online resource to support the creation of more grief aware schools.



We continued to loan out the It Takes A Village Exhibition, send out free information leaflets, and update the Compassionate Communities Toolkit and Bereavement Friendly Workplaces with the latest resources.

Punching above our weight.

SPPC's small staff team works with our wide membership to deliver ambitious and impactful programmes of work.

SPPC is proud to hold a **Scottish Public Service Award**.

In 2024, we won the **Self-Management Resource of the Year Award**.

We also received international recognition – Public Health Palliative Care International awarded SPPC the inaugural **Community Builders Prize** for our programmes of work on bereavement.



Our work depends on your continuing support.

Looking to the future.

After over 30 years, the SPPC continues to grow in impact and reach. Over 2025/26, with sufficient funding, we will:

Support delivery of Scottish Government's forthcoming strategy for palliative care.

Run virtual networks to support collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Provide a monthly digest of relevant policy, practice, research and news.

Deliver more EASE courses, with a focus on groups experiencing disadvantage.

Provide measured, evidence-based input to policy and legislation.

Support community-led action and a public health approach through GLGDGG.

Proactively support Bereavement Friendly Workplaces and Grief Aware Schools.

Run Demystifying Death Week and To Absent Friends, supporting community participation.

Provide high-quality useful information for the Scottish public

We will continue to bring people together to improve experiences of death, dying and bereavement in Scotland.