A collaborative Model to Improve Care Around Dying in Care Homes in Tayside

A collaborative mixed-methods study and educational intervention

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A practical study grounded in care-home experience

Understanding what staff notice, discuss and change as people in their care approach death.

WHY THIS MATTERS

1 in 5 people die in care homes. Expected to increase to 1 in 3 people by 2040.

Staff need practical support to recognise change early, communicate well and change goals of care to focus on comfort.

The person and family need to feel empowered and supported.

The focus was not simply on documentation, but on care that reflects what matters to people and families.



Mixed-methods design

Care record audits	Care home records and KIS (pre & post intervention)
Staff experiences	How staff felt (interview 20; questionnaire 33)
Family feedback	Post intervention (planning ahead & care following death)

Three linked challenges

Each challenge affected the next: planning, recognition and shared understanding.

01

Meaningful future care plans

Plans needed to be person-centred, realistic and useful.

02

Earlier recognition of deterioration & changing goals of care

Difficult to identify deterioration in frailty.

Challenges changing focus towards comfort

03

Understanding the changes associated with dying

Families needed information and support

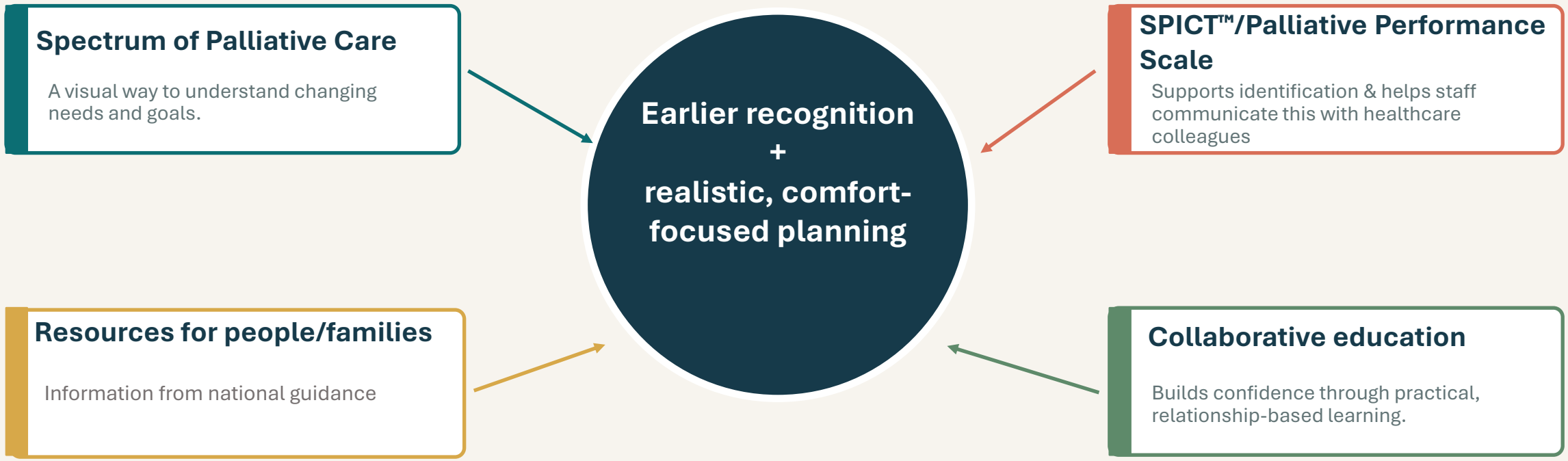
Staff needed confidence to have conversations

The opportunity: connect planning with earlier recognition and honest, compassionate communication.

OUR RESPONSE

A shared language for change

Targeted education combined practical tools with discussion and reflection.



Tools supported conversations. They did not replace professional judgement or knowing the person.

WHAT CHANGED

Evaluation at 4–6 months

Improvements were visible in records, staff confidence and family experience.

Care planning

- Person and/or family preferences recorded
- Treatment Escalation Plans more comprehensive
- Future Care Plans available on KIS

Staff

- Increased confidence
- Greater readiness to recognise change
- More realistic, comfort-focused care planning

Families

- Better communication
- Better information and support
- High quality care around dying

Earlier conversations • clearer plans • care focused on comfort and what matters most

WHAT NEXT

Building on the learning to support lasting improvement across Tayside

Nutrition & Hydration

- Work with Care Inspectorate & care home providers
- Dietetic education programme
- Decision-making flow chart
- Personalised care planning resources

Information Resources

- Family information leaflets
- Based on national guidance
- Co-designed with stakeholders
- Testing with families and care homes

Spectrum Palliative Care

- Roll out across Tayside
- Staff education & support
- Earlier recognition of need
- Embed in routine practice

Working together • building confidence • improving care

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

A collaborative model can strengthen recognition, communication and person-centred care around dying in care homes.

LISTEN

To staff experiences
To people and families

LEARN

Build knowledge
Build confidence

LEAD

Turn learning into action
Improve care

Improving care around dying starts with listening, grows through learning and is sustained through partnership.

Thank you