



St Gemma's Academic Unit of Palliative Care

Annual Report April 2024 - March 2025

In partnership with:



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



**St. Gemma's
Academic Unit**
of Palliative Care

• UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPICE •

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Executive Summary

The Academic Unit of Palliative Care (AUPC) Annual Report 2024–25 reflects a dynamic year of progress across education, research, and evidence-based practice, underpinned by strong partnerships and innovative approaches. The AUPC continues to improve the quality of life for people with life-limiting illnesses by integrating clinical practice, academic excellence, and collaborative learning.

Key achievements in Education, Research and Evidence Based Practice

Education



1,439

Healthcare Professionals attendances on external training programmes



184

students on placement



417.5

hours of external teaching



128

attendances on external study leave



25

different topic sessions offered within internal training

Research



Participated in **4 Research Studies, 1 National Audit and 2 Service Evaluations**



32

publications by the Academic Unit at the University of Leeds

Evidence-Based Practice



16

guidelines have been updated and approved by the Evidence Based Practice group

7



Lunch & Learn sessions have been held



9

clinical audits have been held across the IPU and Community

Strategic Outlook

Looking forward, the AUPC is prioritising the rollout of a new Learning Hub, expanding the reach of communication skills training, advancing virtual clinical experience, and deepening research capacity. There is a strong focus on integrating evidence-based practice into everyday clinical decision-making, and scaling the impact of educational and research collaborations across the region and beyond.

Introduction

We are pleased to present the Annual Report of the St Gemma's Hospice Academic Unit of Palliative Care (AUPC) for the period April 2024 to March 2025.

This report reflects the breadth and depth of our work across education, research, and evidence-based practice, and highlights our commitment to improving the care of people living with life-limiting conditions.

Over the past year, the AUPC has continued to grow in impact and influence, supporting professionals across hospice, community, and acute settings through high-quality training programmes, collaborative research, and knowledge exchange.

Our work is grounded in the realities of clinical practice, shaped by the experiences of patients and families, and driven by a shared mission to raise standards of palliative and end-of-life care.

This report provides a summary of our key activities, achievements, and partnerships. It also outlines the challenges and opportunities that have shaped our work and will inform our future direction.

Whether through developing and delivering innovative training models, contributing to national policy, or advancing applied research, the AUPC remains at the forefront of palliative care education, research and clinical practice.



Academic Unit of Palliative Care Mission Statement

The Academic Unit of Palliative Care (AUPC) aims to be recognised internationally as a centre of excellence and an outstanding model for improving care of those approaching the end of life through integrated research, teaching and clinical practice.

Our work is guided by our values:



Respect and value
patients, carers, staff and all those we work with



Innovate and integrate
with local clinical practice



Inspire and support
continual development and sharing of knowledge



Build capacity
to ensure a sustainable academic unit



Be responsible and accountable
for the standard of our work

Academic Unit of Palliative Care Structure

The Academic Unit of Palliative Care links academic and clinical partners and is physically located on two sites: the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences, University of Leeds and St Gemma's University Teaching Hospice. This underpins our commitment to integrated clinical academic practice.

Academic Unit of Palliative Care (AUPC)

University of Leeds
Institute of
Health Sciences

St Gemma's University Teaching Hospice

Academic Unit International Research Programme	Research	Learning & Teaching	Evidence Based Practice (EBP)
Policy Research Unit for Palliative End of Life Care	Hospice Research Programme	Internal Training	Clinical Audit
Leeds Deepend Research Alliance	Networking / Research Hub	External Training	Clinical Guidelines
	Research Education and Culture	Clinical Placements	Evidence Sharing Learning Forums

Learning & Teaching



Learning and Teaching

Overview

The Education team have the following remit:

- » External Education Provision to Health and Social Care Professionals
- » Clinical Placements to the Hospice
- » Internal training to St Gemma’s Hospice Staff

Learning & Teaching

Internal Training	External Training	Clinical Placements
Mandatory	Communication Skills	Undergraduate
Clinical Skills	Dementia End of Life	Elective
Non-Clinical Skills	Symptom Management	International
	Breavement & Loss	
	Advance Care Planning	
	Last Days of Life	

From April 2024 – March 2025 the Education Team has delivered a high-quality, wide-reaching training programme, educating 1,439 different health and social care professionals across the UK.

Over the past year, the focus has included embedding new programmes such as the Principles and Introduction to Palliative Care Programmes funded by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, updating existing ones e.g. End of Life Care Programme for Leeds City Council, and responding to requests for bespoke training through new collaborations e.g. Communication Skills Training for Sheffield Teaching Hospital Trust.

All courses are fully evaluated and 100% of all participants would recommend the training to other colleagues:

“What a fantastic course! The course was really engaging, with brilliant actors and facilitators. I learnt so much from the course and feel much more confident in having conversations with angry/very distressed patients but so many other situations too. I would definitely recommend to colleagues in palliative care and beyond.”

(Feedback from a participant on the Advanced Communication Skills Training)

The Learning and Teaching department also supports St Gemma’s staff with continued professional development by delivering a comprehensive internal training programme and approving study leave for non-clinical and clinical staff. There were a total 25 different areas of training offered, including Tracheostomy care, Project Management and Communication Skills Training.

The hospice also supports staff undertaking apprenticeships and 4 staff completed their apprenticeships over this year and 3 new apprenticeships have commenced including 2 Trainee Nursing Associates.

As a University Teaching Hospice, St Gemma’s continues to provide a range of clinical placements. Demand has increased and we have provided 184 clinical placements over the last year. This is an extremely valued placement with consistently excellent feedback.

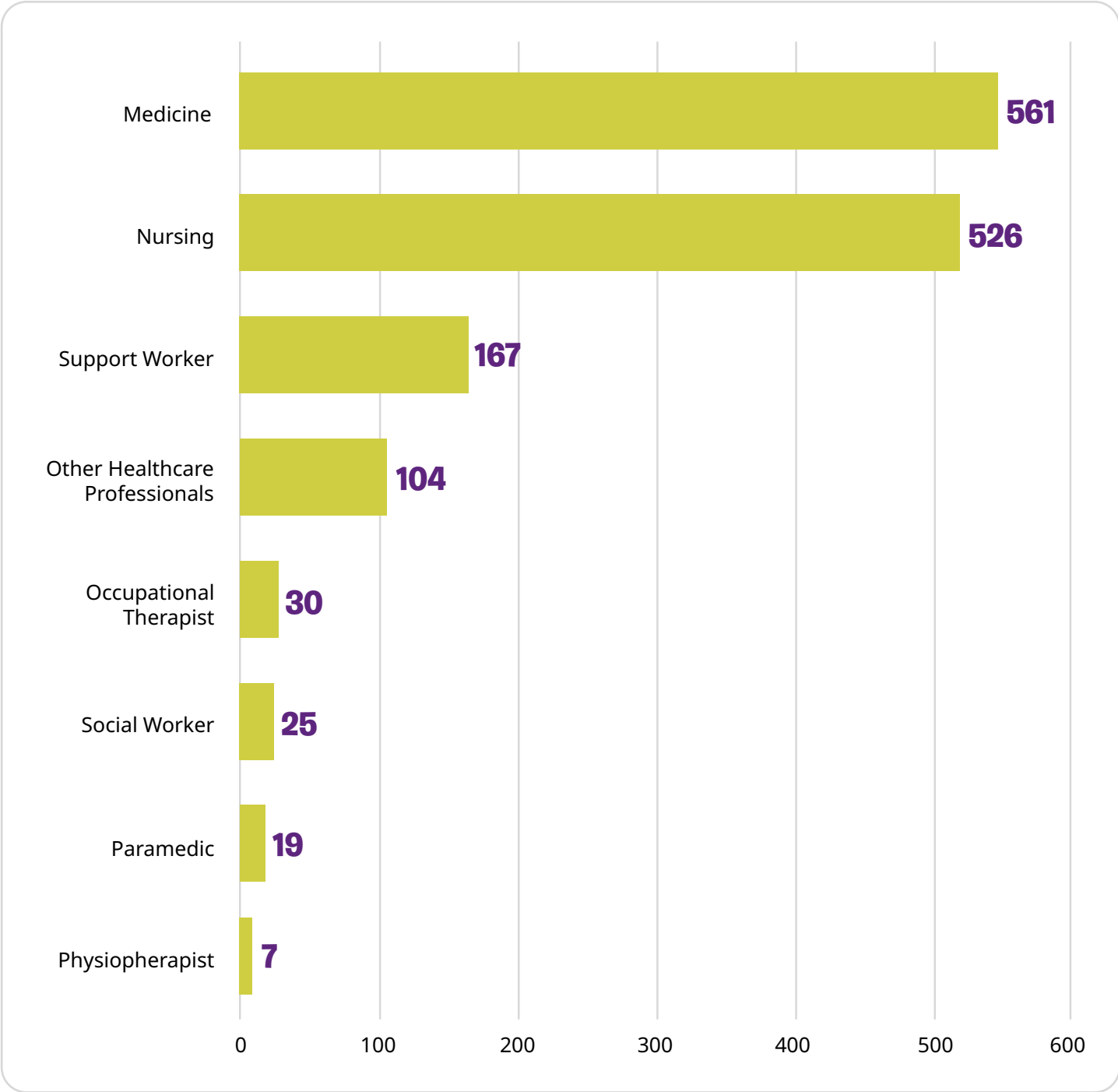
“On the first day all the students had a proper induction day which was a great start to this placement! It is the best placement I have ever had; I can’t thank the staff enough for the support they have given me. An outstanding team”

(Feedback from a 3rd year pre-registration nursing student)

External Training Provision

Healthcare Professionals accessing training

The graph below shows the different professions that have accessed External Training during 2024 – 2025. Medicine is the main profession accessing training this year, this is largely due to Dr Jason Ward training Leeds GP's on GP TARGET training on 3 separate dates in February 2025, totalling 528 GPs across the 3 days.



External Training delivered April 2024- March 2025

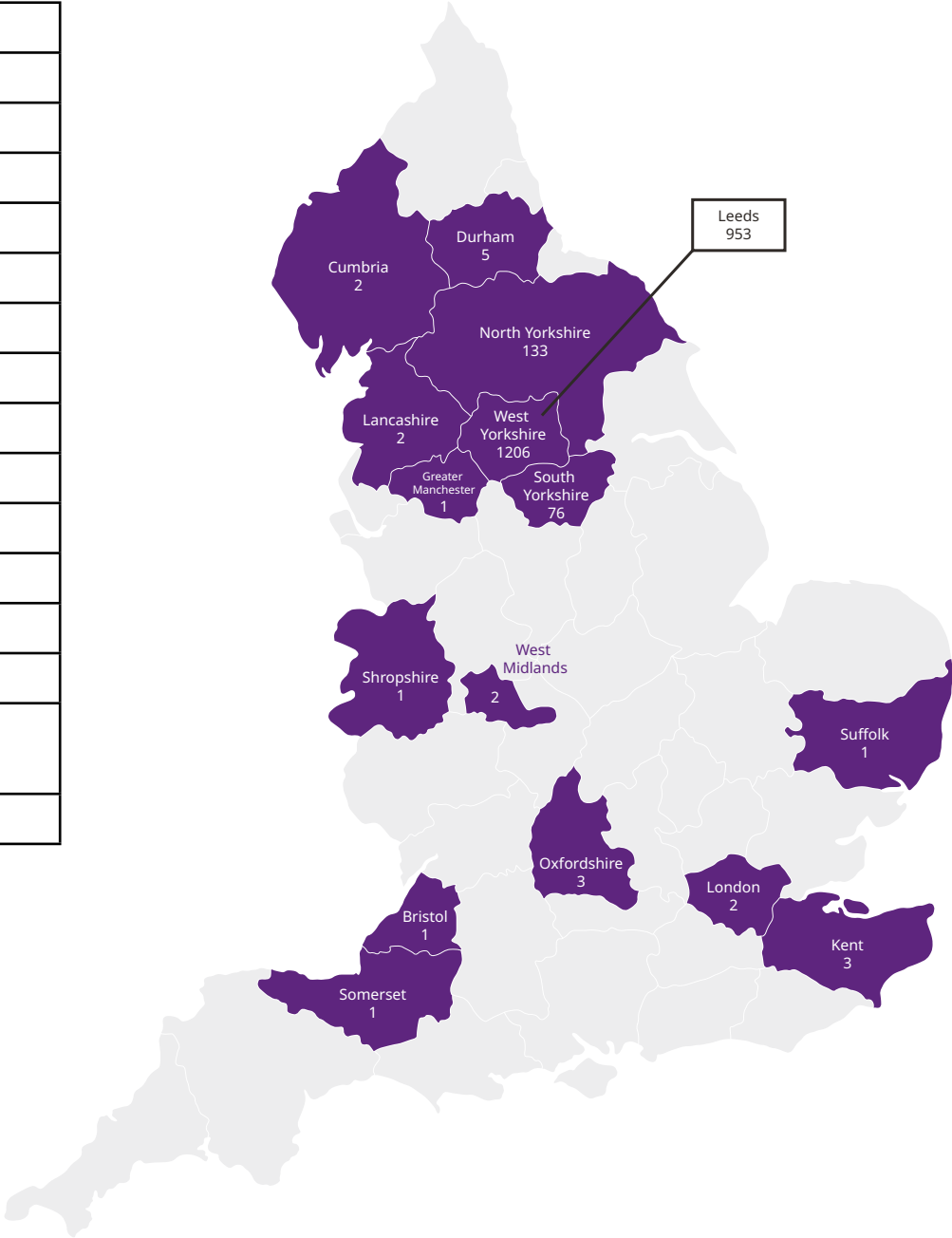
Programme	Audience	Duration	Mode	Total Trained	Notes
Advanced Communication Skills Training	Band 6+ Health Care Professionals; Leeds Community senior clinicians; Sheffield Teaching Hospitals staff	1-1.5 days	Blended, virtual, and face-to-face	156	
End of Life Care Education (General)	Healthcare professionals, nurses, care home staff, ambulance crews, Harrogate District Foundation Trust; Leeds City Council; Yorkshire Ambulance Service	1 day	Face-to-face	113	Includes Dementia Study Days, Advance Care Planning, Difficult Conversations
End of Life Care Webinars	Healthcare professionals in West Yorkshire; Leeds City Council and Care Home Staff	2 hours	Virtual	112	Includes Advance Care Planning, Difficult Conversations, Care in the Last Days of Life, Bereavement & Loss
Introduction to End of Life Care Programme	Health and Social Care Professionals (new or refreshing knowledge)	Multiple half or full-day sessions	Face-to-face and virtual	294	Covers 7 topics including; Holistic Assessment, Supporting people with Learning Disabilities, Long Term Conditions & Frailty, Self-care and resilience, Communication Skills & Advance Care Planning, Care in the Last Days of Life and Ethics, Equity and Diversity
Principles of Palliative and End of Life Care Programme	Registered Health and Social Care staff (Band 4+)	Multiple half or full-day sessions	Face-to-face and virtual	145	Covers 14 topics including Long Term Conditions and Bereavement & Loss, Care in the Last Days of Life, Advance Care Planning, Holistic Assessment, Pain, Dementia and Frailty, Palliative Care Emergencies, Ethics, Equity and Diversity, Spirituality, Nausea, Vomiting and Constipation, Delirium, Anxiety and Depression and Breathlessness and Fatigue
European Certificate in Essential Palliative Care	Healthcare Professionals	9 weeks	Virtual	62	Includes Launch and Assessment Day
Leeds GP TARGET – Palliative Prescribing	Leeds GPs	Not specified	Virtual	528	
Leeds Community Healthcare – Non-Medical Prescribing Forum	LCH Staff	1 day	Face-to-face	29	

Learning and Teaching

The AUPC’s external training programmes continue to make a strong impact across the region, with particularly high engagement in West Yorkshire, especially Leeds, which accounted for the majority of participants. While most attendees were based locally, we also welcomed healthcare professionals from other parts of England, including Kent, London, and the West Midlands.

The infographic below illustrates the current geographic spread of participation. Although the reach beyond Yorkshire is modest, it reflects the potential of our blended and virtual delivery models to extend access nationally. We are committed to building on this foundation to further expand our reach and support workforce development across a broader range of regions.

Bristol	1
Cumbria	2
Durham	5
Greater Manchester	1
Kent	3
Lancashire	2
London	2
North Yorkshire	133
Oxfordshire	3
Shropshire	1
Somerset	1
South Yorkshire	76
Suffolk	1
West Midlands	2
West Yorkshire	1206
Leeds	953
Total	1439



Summary of External Training Evaluation:

All external training sessions are evaluated to ensure quality, capture learner experience, and identify areas for improvement. A summary of participant feedback is provided below.

Positive Learning Experiences

Participants described the training as enjoyable, engaging and supportive.

Effective Facilitation Support

Facilitators were consistently recognised as knowledgeable engaging and supportive.

Flexibility of Delivery

Both face-to-face and virtual formats were well received.

Recommendations and Return Intentions

Numerous participants indicated that they would recommend the training to others and were interested in future sessions.

Practical and Realistic Learning

Learners valued the real-life application of the course content.

Communication Skill Development

Significant improvement was reported in communication skills, especially in challenging or high—pressured situations.

Knowledge and Confidence Gained

Many participants reported increased confidence and transferable skills development.

Areas for Improvement

Minor suggestions included environmental comfort, session timing and pacing.



Case Study from a learner who accessed the Principles of Palliative and End of Life Care Programme

Three to six months following completion of the programme candidates and their managers/mentors are contacted to gain an understanding of how they are using the knowledge and understanding from attending the programme. Many are reported in using the knowledge to develop their roles, disseminate knowledge with colleagues and students and act as champions/link nurses for palliative and end of life care.

This candidate is employed by a Primary Care Network (PCN) in Leeds, as a Frailty Care Coordinator and Complex Social Prescriber. During the programme, she brought valuable insight to group discussions and built strong connections with fellow health and social care professionals.

Supported by a Community Matron, she has applied her learning to the PCN's 'Dying Well' project, backed by the Integrated Care Board (ICB). She highlighted two main areas of impact:

- 1 Exploration of Spirituality – Engaging patients and families in conversations about faith and personal beliefs, ensuring these are reflected in advance care plans.
- 2 Improved Conversations Around Care – Using everyday language to explore patient wishes around dying, focusing on what matters most to them in a patient-centred, rather than clinician-led, approach.

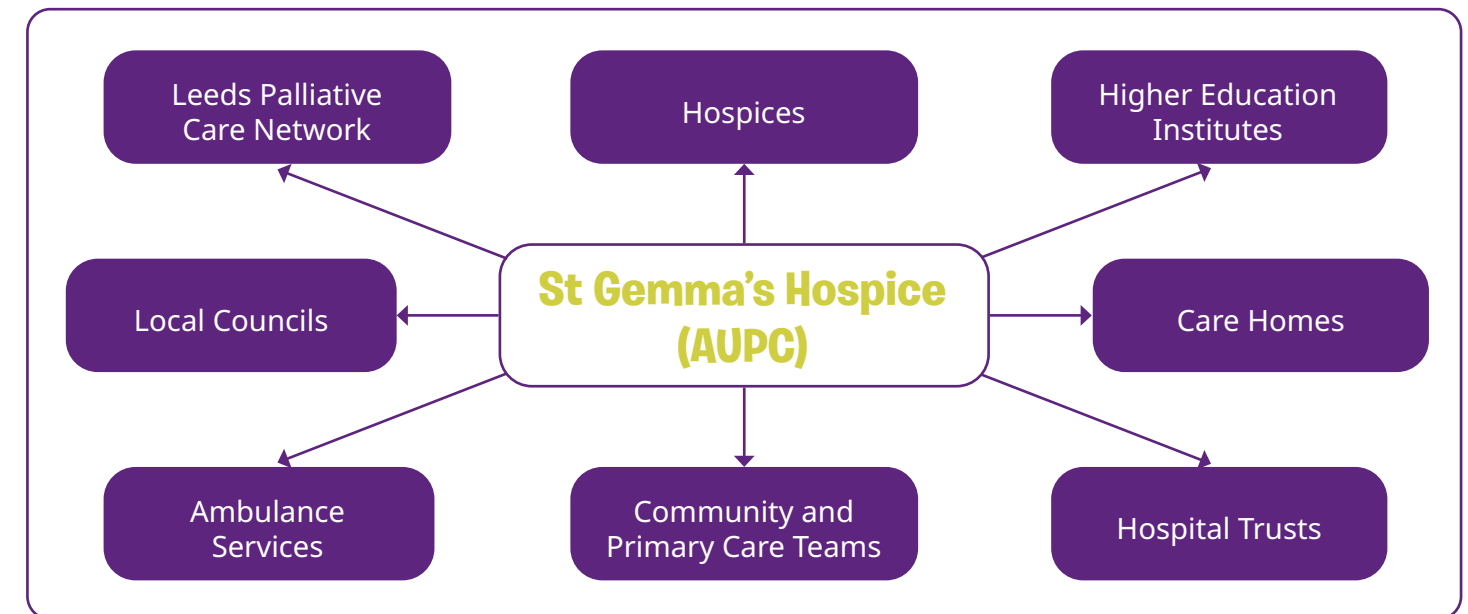
She also led her first public event, Let's Talk about Life, Love and Loss, which she described as a beautiful occasion that fostered rich, meaningful conversations around grief. She credits the Principles of Palliative Care programme with equipping her to take a lead role in the 'Dying Well' project.



Key Partnerships

In our education work, partnerships include both organisations that access our training (as participants) and those that commission or collaborate with us to co-design and deliver education programmes.

These partnerships span a wide range of sectors, including hospices, NHS trusts, care homes, community healthcare teams, universities and third-sector organisations. Through these relationships, we extend the reach and impact of our education offer, ensuring it meets real-world needs and contributes to workforce development and improved patient care.



Below is a testimonial from the Operations Manager at Yorkshire Learning Providers who have worked with the AUPC to gain funding from West Yorkshire Combined Authority on two of the programmes ran this year, The Principles of Palliative and End of Life Care and The Introduction to Palliative and End of Life Care.

“

“We have been working with St Gemma's for the past two years as we are the funders for the Skills Connect Health and Social Care programmes which is funded through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

As a Prime contractor I have found working with St Gemma's fantastic. They have been professional and incredibly responsive throughout the contract. Any issues have been resolved quickly to avoid any issues/delays and always in a professional manner. The caring and empathetic delivery has ensured that learners feel comfortable and heard on their programmes which is essential when working with such as sensitive element of care and can evoke many personal emotions.

I can't recommend St Gemma's enough and will keep them in mind for any further funding opportunities which arise in the Health and Social Care sector.”

Kelly Townend, Operations Manager, Yorkshire Learning Providers.

Webinar Contribution to the Association for Palliative Medicine (APM) Senior Clinician Series

In May 2025, Dr Hannah Zacharias, Consultant in Palliative Medicine, was invited to co-present a webinar as part of the APM Senior Clinician Series, in collaboration with Catherine Malia, Nurse Consultant. The session, entitled “Can Hospices Be Integral to 24/7 Care?”, focused on the evolving role of hospice in-patient units within a fully integrated, round-the-clock healthcare system. Drawing on clinical experience and service development insights, the presentation explored models of care, operational challenges, and opportunities for greater collaboration between hospices and acute services.

The webinar was attended by healthcare professionals, including Palliative Medicine consultants, specialty registrars, SAS doctors, and senior palliative care nurses. It provided a platform to share best practices, stimulate discussion, and advocate for the strategic inclusion of hospice services in urgent and emergency care pathways.

Conference Presentation: British Association of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN) Annual Conference 2024

In November 2024, Moira Cookson, Advanced Pharmacist Palliative Medicine, delivered a presentation at the BAPEN Annual Conference, held in Newcastle. The session focused on the complex and often under-recognised challenges associated with the use of medications via enteral feeding tubes at the end of life.

The presentation highlighted key clinical considerations, safety concerns, and practical approaches to ensure effective and compassionate care for patients requiring enteral support in palliative settings. This contribution formed part of a wider programme aimed at advancing multidisciplinary understanding and improving nutritional care across healthcare settings.



Internal Training

The Learning and Teaching department supports St Gemma's Hospice staff with continued professional development by delivering a comprehensive internal training programme and approving study leave. The overall hospice mandatory training compliance for 2024-25 was 92.5%.

Face-to-face sessions during this period have included:

Core Clinical Training	Advanced Communication Skills Training Band 5 Communication Skills Training HCA Communication Skills Training	
	HCA Training Days (2-day): - Vital Signs and NEWS - Urinalysis - Chest and Abdominal Drains - SHAM (Safe Handling and Moving) - Oxygen Safety - Syringe Drivers	- Supporting Patients with Dementia/Cognitive Impairment - Holistic Care - Pressure Ulcer Update - Group Reflective Discussion
Mandatory & Induction Training	Clinical Induction (2-day): - Introduction to Palliative Care - Care at the End of Life - Bereavement and Loss Awareness - Advance Care Planning - Mental Capacity Act & DoLS - Spirituality & Resilience	Essential Information Induction Session Welcome Sessions (Student Nurses): - Introduction to the Hospice - Infection Prevention & Control - Introduction to Palliative Care - Resilience and Wellbeing
Clinical Skills and Updates	Clinical Skills Updates (2-day for RNs): - SHAM - Peripheral and Central IV Therapy - Blood Transfusion - Verification of Expected Death - Oxygen Therapy - Chest & Abdominal Drains - Pressure Ulcer Care 4AT Delirium Screening - Tracheostomy Training	Catheterisation Session Gastrostomy Tube Training Single Nurse Administration of Drugs (SNAD) Symptom Management: - Breathlessness and Fatigue - Management of Over-Opiation - Seizure Management - Palliative Care Emergencies
Safety & Compliance	AED/CPR, Anaphylaxis and Choking Fire Marshall Training FIT Testing	PPE (LV1), Fit Testing (LV3), Hoods Training (LV3) SHAM for AHPs Safeguarding Level 2
Professional Development	Nurse in Charge Study Day Project Management Workshop Community Education Programme	
Reflective Practice & Support	Reflective Discussion Sessions (1:1, Peer, Group) Reflective Discussion Training Session Lunch and Learn Sessions	Meet & Greet the HLT for New Starters Wellbeing Sessions (IPU Team Away Day)



Simulation Equipment

Palliative care requires the highest standards of patient safety and clinical competence. Simulation equipment is vital in allowing staff to safely practice and build confidence in essential skills.

Recognising a need for more equipment, we approached St Gemma’s fundraising team. Thanks to the fundraising team’s efforts, we secured around £5,000.00 from the Joseph Fattorini Charitable Trust, the George A Moore Foundation, and the Hirshfield Charitable Trust.

- » A Chester Chest for medication administration via portacaths and Hickman lines
- » A Hungry Mannikin for feeding tube care
- » Venatech IM and SC simulators for Saf-T Intima insertion
- » A suction training kit for tracheostomy and laryngectomy care
- » A pressure ulcer training kit for wound assessment

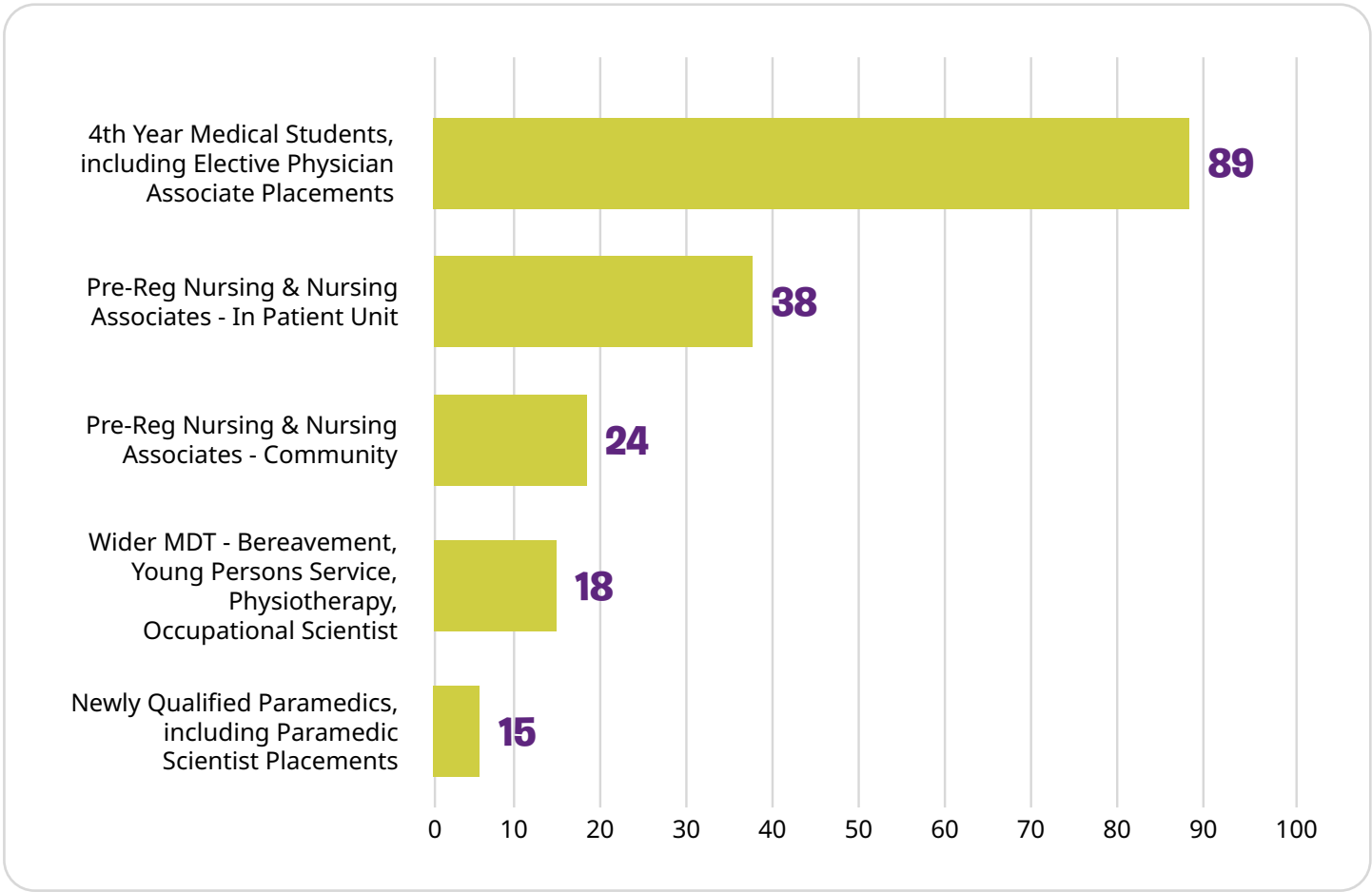
Looking ahead, we hope to establish a dedicated simulation suite on the inpatient unit.

Clinical Placements

As a University Teaching Hospice, St Gemma’s continues to provide a range of clinical placements. These placements offer a unique and invaluable experience for healthcare students and professionals in palliative care.

They provide an opportunity to develop not only technical skills but also critical interpersonal skills such as empathy, compassionate communication and holistic care. The hospice has a significant role in teaching students about comfort, dignity and quality of life for patients with life-limiting illnesses.

Demand for placements at the hospice has increased, with consistently excellent feedback. The graph below shows the number of student placements during this period.



The number of 4th year medical students has increased over the last year with an increase in student numbers on the programmes. The number of professionals wanting placements has increased and also the bereavement team have taken on more counselling students which is always a popular placement choice.



Student Reflections on Placement:

Students consistently describe their placement at St Gemma’s as a formative and supportive experience. Below is a snapshot of recent feedback, highlighting the impact of our learning environment on their confidence, skills, and future career aspirations.

“

Amazing hospice. Absolutely loved everything about it. I will always recommend this one as it was such a good place with the friendliest staff I have ever met.

Feedback from a Year 4 Medical Student on Placement.

“

Environment for learning was brilliant, with ample resources and opportunity. I feel like I learned a lot, and this was definitely thanks to how kind and encouraging everyone was.

Feedback from a Year 4 Medical Student on Placement.

“

The best placement I have ever had, I can’t thank the staff enough for the support they have given me. An outstanding team

Student evaluation feedback from students on placement from the University of Leeds.

“

Halfway through my nursing course, I had a brief placement at St Gemma’s Hospice that completely transformed my outlook on nursing.

At a time when I was struggling with the pressures of ward work and the fast pace of hospitals—especially in end-of-life care—I found myself questioning whether I was cut out for this field. However, at St Gemma’s, I witnessed a profoundly different approach to care. The staff not only showed immense compassion but also took the time to truly connect with each patient, proving that every person is much more than just another name in the system.

Although I only spent two short weeks with the team, those days became some of the most invaluable of my training. Their support helped me realise that I am capable of handling palliative care, and I will always be grateful for the lessons I learned from both the team and the patients I cared for. I eagerly look forward to becoming a hospice nurse when I qualify, and that will always be because of the wonderful people at St Gemma’s

Feedback from a Pre-Registered Student Nurse, Paisley Kelly whilst on placement.

Supporting the Future Workforce:
A Model for High-Quality Student Placements

Leeds Health and Care Academy recently published a spotlight article on Supporting the Future Workforce through Student Placement, featuring St Gemma’s Clinical Educator, Caroline Brennan. Caroline plays a key role in supporting nursing students during their placements at the hospice.

The article highlighted the hospice’s strong commitment to developing the next generation of healthcare professionals through meaningful, high-quality placement experiences. Caroline described the key elements that make placements at St Gemma’s so valuable: a dedicated welcome session covering practical orientation, palliative care, self-care, and resilience; and a team of experienced, supportive mentors who foster a welcoming and educational environment.

With many years of experience in hosting students from a wide range of disciplines—including nursing, medicine, therapies, and apprenticeships—the hospice has cultivated a learning culture that benefits both students and staff. Placements offer fresh perspectives, encourage reflective practice, and contribute to staff development. This approach has proven highly effective, with several former students returning to join the team as qualified professionals.

Virtual Clinical Experience (VCE)

St Gemma's Academic Unit of Palliative Care has introduced a Virtual Clinical Experience (VCE) platform, developed in partnership with Global Health Education Group, to enhance palliative care teaching. This platform enables medical students to join live consultations remotely—using smart glasses, cameras, and a digital stethoscope—offering a “front-row seat” without disrupting patient care.

- » **Expanded access:**
Students observe clinical scenarios they might otherwise miss, especially in under-served regions
- » **Real-time interaction:**
Learners can ask questions during consultations and participate in group debriefings with clinicians
- » **Patient-centred safeguards:**
Students complete preparatory training, follow session protocols, and technology is only used with full patient consent, with sessions paused if needed
- » **Positive feedback:**
Patients report the tech is non-intrusive and reduces infection risk; families note students can “ignore the students” and behave more naturally
- » **Interprofessional learning:**
The platform supports combined training for medical, nursing, and other healthcare students

Broader Significance:

- » **Pioneering approach:**
Likely a first for any hospice globally, the VCE removes geographic barriers, broadening palliative care education access
- » **Scalable and collaborative:**
Initial pilots at the University of Central Lancashire show promise, with aspirations to extend the model nationally and internationally, benefitting students, educators, and patients alike



St Gemma's is leading an innovative shift in palliative care education by deploying virtual clinical experiences. This initiative enhances training quality and accessibility while placing patient comfort and consent at its core. With positive pilot outcomes and strong potential for scaling, it marks a significant advancement in clinical education practice. This is a new method of training that we will be developing and taking forward over the next year.

Apprenticeships and Workforce Development

As part of our commitment to workforce development and career progression, we actively support a range of apprenticeship programmes across the hospice. These apprenticeships offer staff the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications while developing valuable skills in the workplace.

Our participation in the national Apprenticeship Levy scheme enables us to invest in the development of both clinical and non-clinical staff, supporting long-term workforce sustainability and talent retention.

We continue to work in partnership with accredited training providers to ensure that our apprenticeship offerings remain relevant, accessible, and aligned with organisational priorities.

The apprenticeships that are currently in progress are:

- » **Business Administrator level 3**
- » **Health Support Worker level 2**
- » **Health Support Worker level 3**
- » **Trainee Nursing Associate level 4**
- » **Leadership level 7**



St Gemma's AUPC hosts the LPCN Education team which consists of the LPCN Clinical Practice Educator and Education administrator. This team supports the development of training and collaborative working across Leeds.

St Gemma's staff have supported the LPCN training by co-facilitating in the following areas:

Planning Ahead (ReSPECT) Training

Planning Ahead and ReSPECT training involves training senior clinicians in both hospice, Primary Care and Leeds Community Health Care Trust, to be new ReSPECT signatories or updating those who are already signatories. The training covers:-

- » **Overview of Advance care planning (Including the legal framework and What Matters to Me)**
- » **ReSPECT- what it is and the process**
- » **CPR/DNACPR- decision making**
- » **Treatment escalation**
- » **The Planning Ahead (ReSPECT/EPaCCS) Template**

Between April 2024 – March 2025 there has been 3 training programmes where 41 senior clinicians attended.

Project Extension of community healthcare outcomes (ECHO®)

St Gemma's AUPC is an established ECHO® hub licenced to run networks. The LPCN funds and supports the hub to provide ECHO training for Health Care Professionals in Leeds.

The LPCN planned and delivered an Allied Health Professionals Palliative and EOL ECHO® programme for Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapist within Leeds. This was delivered June 2023 – May 2024. This included a Curriculum setting day, 7 education sessions and an evaluation day. The sessions evaluated well. 5 further education sessions are to be delivered over the next 5 months.

Research

Welcome to

**St.
Gemma's**
ACADEMIC UNIT
OF PALLIATIVE CARE



Research

The St Gemma's Academic Unit of Palliative Care brings together academic and clinical partners across two sites, Leeds Institute of Health Sciences and St Gemma's Hospice. This strengthens our commitment to integrated practice.

University of Leeds Research

Introduction

This has been a successful period in relation to grant income with over £1.3m of research funding secured in the last 6 months through projects led or involving team members. Matthew Allsop will be receiving two best paper awards at the European Association of Palliative Care Conference. One for Paper of the Year from Palliative Medicine for a paper reporting the findings of OPTIMAL care (#9 listed below) and also Paper of the Year from the International Journal of Palliative Nursing for work exploring oncology nurses' experiences working in Gaza.

New roles/appointments:

One of the strategic objectives has been to strengthen the pipeline of clinical academics working in palliative care and we have had some recent success in this regard with the recent appointment of Emilie Couchman to an Academic Clinical Lecturer post and Abbie Festa to an Academic Clinical Fellow post. Their appointment alongside Jack Mowatt (Clinical Academic Fellow appointed in 2024) means we now have a strong cohort of clinical academics in the team.

Lucy Ziegler has been appointed Pro-Dean for Research and Innovation for the Faculty of Medicine and Health. The role commences in May 2025 and involves leadership of the Research and Innovation strategy across the Schools of Medicine, Healthcare, Psychology and Dentistry. Lucy will retain some leadership responsibilities for the Academic Unit of Palliative Care alongside Matthew Allsop who has been appointed joint Head of the Academic Unit of Palliative Care.

Matthew Allsop has been appointed to the Committee of the Faculty for Oncology and Palliative Care for the British Psychological Society.

International activities:

The palliative care team and wider division have been hosting Dr Susan Wong, an academic nephrologist from Seattle. Susan is spending a year with the team, funded through a Fulbright scholarship. The scholarship was awarded to Susan to learn from UK experiences of conservative kidney management, especially how to scale and sustain programmes. During the year Susan will be undertaking interviews and ethnographic work to gain generalisable insights that may be transferable to US contexts.

Current Grants

New grant applications submitted and under review			
Title	Funder	Investigators	Amount
NIHR HSDR Intervention to optiMise Palliative caRe for peOple with liVed Experience of homelessness	IMPROVE	Lucy Ziegler	£814,478.00
A novel mobile system to support palliative care services for late-stage cancer patients in urban and rural Tanzania.	US National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute	Matthew Allsop	£1.7m
Development and feasibility testing of a digital health intervention for delivering diet and physical activity support to advanced breast cancer survivors in Uganda	World Cancer Research Fund	Matthew Allsop	£85,000.00
Digital Health for Palliative Care in Europe: Inauguration of a Bilateral Centre of Excellence.	British Council Springboard Programme for UK-Germany partnerships	Matthew Allsop	£9,640.00
RCT of Oral Cannabinoid for chemotherapy induced peripheral neuropathic pain (The ACTION trial)	Not specified	Matt Mulvey	£1.4m
Kings Prize Fellowship		Will Goodman	
Enhancing the implementation and scaling up of personalised multicomponent pain management programmes for individuals with multiple long-term conditions	Horizon Europe	Matthew Allsop	£3.4m

Grants Ongoing

Grants ongoing			
Title	Funder	Investigators	Amount
Equitable Care for All Ethnicities (ECAE): Improving data collection on ethnicity and religion within palliative care settings	Marie Curie Research Grant	PI: Gemma Clarke and Matthew Allsop is a Co-I.	£127,525.00
Enabling equity for minority ethnic unpaid and family carers: Cultural acceptability of the Carer Support Needs Assessment Tool Intervention and Methods for Evaluation	NIHR RfPB	Co-I: Gemma Clarke (PI: Prof Jonathan Koffman, University of Hull)	£249,903
HOPSCOTCH: Helping Optimise Primary Care Support During Transition from Children's Hospice Care	NIHR HSDR	PI: Lucy Ziegler and Sarah Mitchell joint Chief Investigators	£989,000.00

Grants ongoing				
Title	Funder	Investigators	Amount	Dates
AI4HOPE: Artificial intelligence-based health, optimism, purpose, and endurance in palliative care for dementia	Horizon Europe	PI Professor Abdulhamit Subasi at the University of Turku and Matthew Allsop is a Co-I.	£6.1M	2024 – 2028
Arts and Humanities Research Council – Creative Arts as a Therapy in Palliative Care	1 day	Face-to-face		2024 – 2028
The Association of Social Determinants of Health in Decision Making at the End of Life: A Retrospective Observation Cohort Study	BMA and Royal Marsden		£271,462.00	2023 – 2025
NIHR Palliative and End of Life Care Policy Research Unit	National Institute of Health and Social Care Research	PI: Professor Katherine Sleeman at King's College London, Lucy Ziegler and Sarah Mitchell are Co-Is	£3m	2024 - 2029
ESRC White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership (WRDTP) 1+3 Pathway Postgraduate Studentship Award.	ESRC	PI Gemma Clarke	£86,632.00	2023-2027
Intensive Interaction for children and young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities: INTERACT trial	Marie Curie	Co-I L Ziegler	£141,644.00	July 2022- July 2024
Economic evaluation of non-communicable diseases related programs applied in emergencies in fragile and conflict-affected areas	ESRC White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership	Joint-CI Matthew Allsop	£135,000	
Functional Loss and rehabilitation towards the end of life	NIHR	Chief Investigator Matt Maddocks Kings (Lucy Ziegler Co-I)	£99, 256.00	Jan 2021- July 2023
The Yorkshire & Humber Palliative Care Research Network: Addressing Inequalities Across All Ages	NIHR	Chief Investigator: Prof Fliss Murtagh (Lucy Ziegler Co-I)	£99,932.00	Jan 2021- Jan 2024
Developing the UK Collaborative Paediatric Palliative cAre Research (CoPPAR) Network	NIHR	Chief Investigator: Prof Lorna Fraser (Lucy Ziegler Co-I)	£96,673.00	2022-2023
Improving health Status and Symptom experience for people living with advanced cancer (RESOLVE)	Yorkshire Cancer Research	Chief Investigator: Dr Lucy Ziegler	£1,400,000.00	2018-2024-extended
Electronic Palliative Care Co-ordination Systems (EPaCCS) in end of life care: evaluating their implementation and optimising future service provision OPTIMAL Care	NIHR	Chief Investigator: Dr Matthew Allsop	£660,000.00	2020-2025
Addressing Inequalities in Access to Hospice Care	ESRC	Chief Investigator: Dr Lucy Ziegler	£79,288.00	2019-2024
Cancer pain-assessment Toolkit for use in routine oncology outpatient services: a multi-centre cluster randomised feasibility trial CAPTURE	Yorkshire Cancer Research	Chief investigator: Dr Matt Mulvey	£350,540.00	2021-2024-Extended

Grants ongoing				
Title	Funder	Investigators	Amount	Dates
Understanding access to palliative care by ethnic minority groups in the UK: with a focus on South Asians and those with refugee or asylum seeker status	Academy of Medical Sciences/Marie Curie	Chief investigator: Dr Gemma Clarke	£111,918.00	
Black and Minority Ethnic pain management	Marie Curie	Chief Investigator: Dr Gemma Clarke/ Mike Bennett	£171,870.00	
How does choosing to fundraise in memory impact the bereavement journey? A qualitative study".	Marie Curie	Gemma Clarke Co-I.	£13,482.00	
Leeds Deep End	NIHR Y&H RRDN	Co-leads Sarah Mitchell & Aaishah Aslam	£51,000	
Supportive care for patients with primary brain tumours and their carers.	YCR BE-SPECIAL	co-I Lucy Ziegler	£998,000	
Equitable Palliative care In the Community through Primary Care (EPIC-PC): a realist study to propose a new integrated neighbourhood team approach to palliative and end of life care	NIHR HSDR	Joint Chief Investigators Sarah Mitchell and Lucy Ziegler	£1,086,598	
The scale-up and sustainable rollout of a digital health intervention for palliative care delivery in Uganda and the wider Africa region	Impact Acceleration Account Fund	Chief Investigator Matthew Allsop	£55,000	
A tailored remote patient monitoring service in home-based palliative care for cancer patients	Research Council of Norway	Chief Investigator Matthew Allsop	£600,000	
Perspectives on Telehealth for Palliative Care for Underserved Populations	Royal Society Te Apārangi	Co-investigator Matthew Allsop	£80,000	
Parent and professional experiences of 24/7 paediatric end of life care a mixed methods process evaluation.	Marie Curie	Co-I L Ziegler	£141,644	July 2022- July 2025
Addressing Inequalities in Access to Hospice Care	ESRC	Chief Investigator: Dr Lucy Ziegler	£79,288	2019-2025

For papers that have been published in peer reviewed journals, please see appendix 1.
 For conference poster presentations during this period, please see appendix 2.

St Gemma’s Hospice

Research Co-ordination in the Hospice

In September 2023, St Gemma’s Hospice appointed a fixed-term Research Practitioner (RP), funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This strategic appointment aims to strengthen the organisation’s research infrastructure and promote a culture of evidence-based practice across all services.

Current Research Projects in the Hospice

Research Project Title	Short Title	Sponsor	NIHR Portfolio	Recruitment Target (for our site)	Total recruits to date (for our site)	Closing Date
Exploring the experiences of changes in walking in people with advanced cancer		NA – doctoral study	No	4	0	Dec-24
Addition of a mindful breathing intervention for psychological distress to optimise symptom management for patients living with cancer	RESOLVE-i	University of Leeds	Yes	8	5	TBC
Usability and acceptability of virtual reality technology (VRT) within the pre-hospital ambulance setting	Ambulance VRT EOLC	Yorkshire Ambulance Service	No	5	3	March-25
Enabling equity for minority ethnic unpaid and family carers: Cultural acceptability of Carer Support Needs Assessment Tool Intervention and Methods for Evaluation	CSNAT-I	Hull York Medical School	Yes	12	Study in set-up	Dec-26
Personal Music Use in Emotional Wellbeing after a Bereavement		NA – doctoral study	No	4	Study in set-up	May-26

Research projects and external audits that St Gemma’s Hospice have participated in between April 2024 – March 2025.

Networking / Research Hub

- » The RP attended the Yorkshire & Humber (Y&H) Palliative Care Research Network conference in York.
- » The RP is in regular contact with already-made connections. This is through meetings and webinars. Further connections with different healthcare providers have been made across the country.

Evidence Based Practice Link

The RP works closely with the St Gemma's Hospice Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Group, which has proven instrumental in achieving recruitment goals and integrating research into clinical practice.

Key contributions include:

- » RESOLVE-i: Successfully identified and recruited staff participants through EBP consultation.
- » Presented research updates and training opportunities following attendance at external events.
- » Delivered a Lunch & Learn session titled "Research in Palliative Care", introducing staff to the RP role, active studies, and participation pathways.
- » EBP group facilitated contact with clinical leads to support the setup of new studies, including CSNAT-I and the Bereavement Music Study.

Research Education and Culture

The RP has undertaken multiple initiatives to promote research literacy and engagement across the Hospice:

Area	Activities
Communication and Visibility	- Monthly strategy meetings with Digital Marketing & Communications - Development of: • Dedicated research section on the Hospice website • Regular research blog (achievements and challenges) • Frequent internal stakeholder bulletins
Staff and Patient Engagement	- Active presence on wards and in outpatient clinics: • Wears identifiable uniform • Offers direct research support and Q&A - Engages outpatient groups - Attends cross-departmental meetings to promote recruitment
Training and Development	- Promotes external research conferences and learning opportunities - Collaborated with Training & Development Manager to: • Introduce a research session during Clinical Inductions • Explore blended learning research programme for clinical staff - Updating HNet research section to include: • Policy and process documents • External training links and opportunities

Governance and Processes

A significant focus has been on reviewing and updating research governance across the Hospice. The RP consulted with research professionals nationwide to benchmark best practice. Over this period, RP has successfully:

- » Revised and updated the Hospice's Research Policy (approved)
- » Developed a comprehensive Feasibility Assessment Process for internal study review
- » Updated the Hospice Research Application Form, streamlining project approval

The introduction of the Research Practitioner role has already had a marked impact on research activity and engagement across St Gemma's Hospice. Progress has been made across education, governance, culture, and strategic partnerships. The Hospice is now well-positioned to continue expanding its research portfolio, improving patient outcomes and contributing to national and regional evidence in palliative care.

Evidence Based Practice



Evidence Based Practice

Evidence based practice requires that healthcare decisions are based on the best available, current, valid and relevant evidence. It enables the development of a culture in which good decisions are made and clinicians feel confident to question and challenge practice.

The **Evidence Based Practice (EBP) Group** meets monthly with the aim of ensuring that our clinicians are supported to integrate latest evidence alongside clinical expertise in order to underpin safe and effective patient care. Membership of the group is multidisciplinary with representation from nurses, therapists, pharmacist, doctors, research practitioner and the newly appointed Quality and Governance Practitioner. The future vision of the group is to widen membership to ensure that all St Gemma's staff are encouraged to understand why we practice in the way we do and to promote a culture of mutual questioning and challenge.

Create a culture of enquiry and innovation

The EBP Group updates clinical guidelines, oversees the clinical audit programme and promotes evidence based practice. Representatives of the group contribute to citywide palliative care guidelines through membership of the Leeds Palliative Care Network.

Lunch and Learn

Is aimed at all Hospice staff (Clinical and non-clinical). Each month a different department is asked to discuss a topic and how evidence in this area is used to improve quality and standards. For example; Role of the Medical Examiner, Learning Disabilities and the Autism Team at LHTT and Research in Palliative Care.

The five-step cycle of EBP used in the hospice, supports safe, effective, and person-centred care by combining the best evidence with clinical expertise, patient values, and education—ensuring continual reflection and improvement.

Below is an example of how mouthcare was used in the 5 step cycle.



Step 1: Ask a question.

Are we following the Mouthcare guideline?

Step 2: Find the best evidence.

Used St Gemma's Hospice Mouthcare guideline (written November 2022 and up for review in November 2025) as the evidence base.

Step 3: Evaluate evidence.

Compare practice vs guideline. Key outcomes were: Improvement in Mouthcare plans, however further education required in documentation.

Step 4: Apply information in combination with clinical experience, patient values and education.

Education has been included in Clinical Skills Update study days. Mouthcare group has been established. Renewal of guidelines planned.

Step 5: Evaluate outcomes.

Compare outcomes over time and will re-audit in 2026.

Strategic Priorities & Future Plans



Strategic Priorities and Future Plans

Building on our mission to be recognised internationally as a centre of excellence in palliative care, and guided by our core values of respect, innovation, inspiration, sustainability, and accountability, the AUPC has developed a refreshed strategy for 2024–2028. This strategy aligns with the Hospice’s overarching strategic pillars – Impact, Connect, and Extend – and sets out a clear vision and direction across the AUPC’s three core domains: research, education, and clinical practice. The Senior Academic Leadership Team are currently developing the following key objectives to deliver on this vision:

AUPC Strategy 2024-2028

Summary of AUPC Strategic Objectives:

A Centre of Excellence for Palliative and End of Life Research, Education and Application into Practice

Aupc Strategic Objectives:

- » Expand and modernise Communication Skills Training
- » Commercialise targeted areas of training Review and develop the education infrastructure and environment
- » Build research capacity, capability and delivery at the hospice
- » Develop the hospice as a research hub for a network of research active units
- » Strengthen engagement, culture and clinical utility of evidence based practice
- » Integrate EBP with education and quality improvement
- » Create a sustainable model of collaborative partnership between the hospice and the University of Leeds

Core Principles & Services

**Widening Access**

**Having Impact**

**Improving Quality**

**Creating Sustainability**



Strategic Enablers



Future upcoming strategic priorities for 2025-26

Learning and Teaching:

- » Implementation of the new ‘Learning Hub’ for St Gemma’s staff providing a personalised, interactive, easily accessible and versatile approach to learning.
- » Increasing the number of Advanced Communication Skills Training courses offered with a reviewed delivery model and implementation of the a ‘Train the facilitator’ model.
- » Implement Hospice wide training programme on Managing Psychological and Emotional Distress Level 1.
- » Take forward the Virtual Clinical Experience model of training.

Research:

- » Develop a vision for the future of research at St Gemma’s, including the possibility of expanding the team with an additional research staff member.
- » Collaborate with the Training and Development manager to design and implement a plan for educating staff in various aspects of the research process.
- » Meet recruitment targets for ongoing research studies.
- » Expand St Gemma’s research portfolio through increased participation in NIHR-funded studies.

Evidence Based Practice:

- » Implementation of new SharePoint site to make guidelines more accessible and to encourage staff to engage with different aspects of EBP including audits and lunch and learn.
- » Create a process to ensure that learning from audits is disseminated more widely and that any actions from the audits are completed.



Appendix

Appendix 1:

Papers published in peer review journals from April 2024 - March 2025.

- Paley CA**, Paley AT, Ziegler LE, Kane EC, McCleery I, **Chapman EJ**. Narrative review: what constitutes contemporary, high-quality end-of-life care and can lessons be learned from medieval history? *Ann Palliat Med*. 2024 May;13(3):607-619. doi: 10.21037/apm-23-552. Epub 2024 Mar 7. PMID: 38462940.
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- Asuquo EO, Absolom K, Ebenso B, **Allsop MJ**. Symptoms, concerns, and experiences of women living with and beyond breast cancer in Africa: A mixed-methods systematic review. *Psychooncology*. 2024 May;33(5):e6342. doi: 10.1002/pon.6342. PMID: 38747633.
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- Birtwistle J**, **Allsop MJ**, Bradshaw A, Millares Martin P, Sleeman KE, Twiddy M, Evans CJ. Views of patients with progressive illness and carers about the role of digital advance care planning systems to record and share information: A qualitative study. *Palliat Med*. 2024 Jul;38(7):711-724. doi: 10.1177/02692163241255511. Epub 2024 May 30. PMID: 38813756; PMCID: PMC11290031.
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- Chapman EJ**, **Paley CA**, Pini S, **Ziegler LE**. Updating a conceptual model of effective symptom management in palliative care to include patient and carer perspective: a qualitative study. *BMC Palliat Care*. 2024 Aug 19;23(1):208. doi: 10.1186/s12904-024-01544-x. Erratum in: *BMC Palliat Care*. 2024 Oct 4;23(1):237. doi: 10.1186/s12904-024-01571-8. PMID: 39160491; PMCID: PMC11331639.
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Appendix 2:

Conference Poster Presentations during April 2024 – March 2025.

1. Poster Presentation at European Association of Palliative Care (EAPC) 2024, Barcelona: Does a healthcare professional based conceptual model of effective symptom management represent patient and carer experience? **Emma Chapman**, Simon Pini, **Carole Paley**, **Lucy Ziegler**
2. Oral Presentation at EAPC 2024, Barcelona: What constitutes contemporary, high-quality end-of-life care and can lessons be learned from medieval history? **Carole Paley**
3. Palliative and End of Life Care in House of Lords; **Sarah Mitchell** presented on 22nd January and **Matthew Allsop** on 13th March.
4. Presentation at Palliative Care Congress, March 20th in Belfast: **Sarah Mitchell**
5. Attendance at Palliative Care Congress, March 20th in Belfast as PCRS rep: **Emma Chapman**
6. Poster arising from student ESREP project - presented at Palliative Care Congress 2025, Belfast. **Emma Chapman**
7. Presentation at Marie Curie and James Lind Alliance Event to launch the revised research priorities for palliative and end of life care on 10th Feb: **Sarah Mitchell**
8. A brief overview of the RESOLVEi study 'Improving symptoms for people living with cancer' was presented at the Deep End Leeds Cluster Meeting & Launch Event in Leeds, January 2025. At this meeting, we met representatives of community groups who support people currently underrepresented in research, e.g. Leeds refugee forum, with a view to sparking their interest in future research involvement – **Emma Chapman**
9. Oral presentation at The Royal Marsden Opioids, Cannabinoids and Gabapentinoids study day, "Gabapentinoids for (neuropathic) cancer pain" presented in November 2024 – **Matt Mulvey**







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