

Mid-year snapshot

December 2023



Key highlights so far

Retail going from strength to strength

We have recently opened two new retail shops, with a big focus on helping our community to be more sustainable. Both of these are a little different and demonstrate our commitment to reaching deep into our varied communities:

■ Our new Midsomer Norton Furniture

Shop has a space on the shop floor for the local community to access supplementary Dorothy House services and workshops, enabling us to reach more people in our community, closer to their homes.

Maggie Crowe, Director of Patient and Family Services says: *"The Midsomer Norton shop is in a prime location to give people in the community a better understanding of the services we offer and the support we can provide."*

■ 'Find Ubiety, from Dorothy House' in

Bath is a new lifestyle store, designed to mirror the holistic care and beautiful surroundings of the Hospice itself. Themed around nature, the new store stocks products and offers treatments designed to support personal wellbeing and help customers create their own calm, unique space at home.

Rowena Midgley, Head of Retail says:

"Opening a store on London Road in Bath, close to our already popular Furniture Store, is an opportunity to raise awareness of the wider connection between our Ubiety skincare and home fragrance range and our hospice services. Both share the common principle of holistic care and whole wellbeing, both during and at end of life."

In the first 6 months of the year, our Retail shops have contributed £1,072,747 to patient care.

Dust to Data – life after death

As part of our commitment to making death a part of life, and reaching diverse audiences, we partnered with Kilter Theatre and Cyber Security PhD students at the Universities of Bath and Bristol to create 'Dust to Data' – four short, fictional films about digital immortality. These films were premiered at FilmBath Festival, followed by a showing at the Watershed in Bristol. Audiences took part in a live survey to discover how prepared as a society we are to embrace or reject the emergence of AI immortality.



Impact at every stage...

No journey is the same. There are ups and downs. Steps forward, steps back. Our aim is to meet our community where they are, always asking our patients and families 'what matters to you?' We want to be there - how, where, and when we are most needed.

We are supporting more patients, families and carers than ever before. In the first half of the year, we cared for 1,902 patients, 7% more than the same time last year.

As well as this direct care, we are dedicated to learning from, equipping and empowering our community to look after itself, developing compassionate communities and working with the incredible people, groups, organisations and support that already exist. We do this through partnerships, education, collaboration and appreciating that although we may be experts in end of life care, often it is those closest to the person who best know how to care for them.

None of this would be possible without the amazing generosity of our community, volunteers and donors. We rely on the money you donate to keep working towards our mission that everyone has access to outstanding palliative and end of life care. So, thank you!

This report is a little different. We have used the voices of those we have looked after over the last 6 months to show you how our care supports people in different ways throughout their journey.

Open the page to read the journey of care a patient might follow with us, in the words of those we have supported over the past 6 months.



1,902

patients cared for in the first half of the year.

Our care in the voices of our patients and families

Receiving a life-limiting diagnosis can be a scary and confusing time. Many patients and family members are directed to the Dorothy House website and open access support groups by their GP or Consultant.

■ A wealth of **resources** are available on our website for anyone to access.

In September, 13,000 people visited our site for palliative and end of life care information. This is 28% more than visited in April.

■ One of our **peer-support groups**, Coffee Connections, is run alongside the charity 'We Hear You' and is open to anyone in the community affected by a life-limiting illness.

"The support from others helps me to cope."

"It encourages me to get out of the house and mix with other people."

As a patient's condition worsens, they might experience difficult symptoms and feel they need more specialist palliative support.

■ At this stage, the patient or their family might contact our **Advice Line** directly.

"I was listened to and given all the time to talk about my anxieties with my cancer diagnosis."

"I feel reassured that now professional help and advice is at hand should it be needed."

■ Our **Community Palliative Care Teams** are usually the first contact a patient has from Dorothy House. These local teams are made up of a mix of health professionals.

"As I care for my husband it is comforting and reassuring to have a small team helping me to keep my husband as well as possible."

90%

of our care takes place out in the community and in people's homes.

13,000

people visited our website in September.

“

Dorothy House has been amazing – I feel like I’m leaving here a different person



Our patients are often referred on to receive care from a variety of Dorothy House teams. We will always ask ‘what matters to you?’ and tailor care accordingly.

■ **Our Day Hospice** offers the opportunity to meet with other patients in a safe and friendly environment, and to share experiences.

“Staff were very professional, my needs were considered and catered for. The group sessions were informative and all contributions were shared. Overall a very positive experience.”

■ **Our physiotherapy team** is here to help maintain and improve patients’ independence.

“I was delighted to meet Catherine today when she visited me in her capacity as physiotherapist. She showed me many useful exercises and advised strategies to help with my condition. I plan to do the exercises every day.”

■ **Our comfortable Inpatient Unit (IPU)** is available to patients who require specialist support from our multi-disciplinary team. Patients often stay for a short time to have their needs assessed and to balance medication.

92%

occupancy in our IPU in the first 6 months of the year.

“Dorothy House has been amazing. I feel like I’m leaving here a different person. They have sorted out my mobility and all my pain and I am truly grateful.”

■ We are also here for the families and carers of our patients. We offer **complementary therapy and counselling**, not only for patients, but also their loved ones.

“Anne wasn’t just there for Suzanne but all of us as a family and nothing seemed too much, even if it was just to feel the reassuring presence of someone and sit quietly with a hand to hold.”

“I found my treatment very relaxing and Sharon listens to my problems and helps me get things in perspective. Excellent at her job and a lovely calm person.”

15,237

hours of care delivered by our
Hospice at Home team.

We put the person at the centre of their care, and encourage conversations about end of life plans and wishes. Many people would prefer to spend their final days at home surrounded by their loved ones.

When hospital is the right place for someone to be cared for, we are there too. In partnership with our RUH colleagues we provide medical and companion support when required.

■ Our Hospice at Home team is made up of experienced healthcare assistants, providing palliative care in people's homes.

"My husband received first class care during the last couple of weeks of his life at home. Nothing was too much trouble. Without this service we couldn't have managed ourselves and my husband would have been in hospital instead."

62%

of people we supported died at home over the last 6 months.

“

My husband received first class care during the last couple of weeks of his life at home – nothing was too much trouble



After a patient dies, their family will continue to be supported by Dorothy House for as long as they need us.

■ We are here to help both adults and children, before and after bereavement. This includes **one to one counselling and group work** such as our 'Bereavement Help Points'.

"There is nothing that could have been improved upon, I have been treated with the utmost care, professionalism, patience, compassion, understanding and given time to heal mentally with the help from my counsellor."

"Dorothy House has/is giving us amazing support... it's nice to have an outlet and gain support by meeting other families in the same position as us."

122

family members supported by our specialist Bereavement Support Team

763

visits to a Bereavement Help Point over the last 6 months.



Many family members find our Winsley site offers a space for reflection, peace and connection with nature.

■ We have recently expanded our '**Firefly Woods**' – hundreds of individually handmade 'Fireflies' donated by local artist Bruce Munro. Each Firefly is a constellation of separate small lights, which can be dedicated to a loved one.

"While I am not religious the Fireflies seem to symbolise life and hope, they blow in the wind in the beautiful woodland setting and feel so peaceful and positive."

Peace of Mind Planner

In August we launched a new tool to encourage and support our community to consider end of life wishes, and ensure they are prepared for the future. Our Peace of Mind Planner is designed to help the person record and provide access to important life information, such as spiritual or cultural beliefs, who will look after any children or pets, and any end of life wishes.

The Planner has been amazingly well received, already seeing more than 500 physical copies and over 300 web downloads going out into the community, with hugely positive feedback from patients and families.



Printed with 100% renewable energy and vegetable based inks

Dorothy House catchment Area

Aligning our care across the whole of B&NES, we have recently taken over the Chew Valley area.



Thank You

This care would not have been possible without your kindness and generosity. For that, we cannot thank you enough.

Dorothy House Hospice Care Winsley, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 2LE | dorothyhouse.org.uk

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