

St Francis Hospice Community Palliative Care Service

Information regarding our service during COVID-19 outbreak



About Community Palliative Care

The Community Palliative Care team aims to help patients be as well as possible at home, for as long as possible.

Most contact from us will be from one of the Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) in Palliative Care. The CNS can give you information, advice and support. The role of the CNS is particularly to help you and work with your GP to manage complex symptoms. The CNS can contact our Palliative Care doctors for specialist medical advice. Your GP is still responsible for your medical care and your written prescriptions when you are at home. Any medical decisions will be made with your GP. When needed, we will liaise with your hospital team.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to change the way we work to protect you and to continue to provide the service. We want to reduce the risk of you or our staff being exposed to COVID-19.

How we will support you during COVID-19

- We want to keep you as well as possible, so we will continue to provide advice and support. However, most of our support will be by telephone. This is following the HSE guidance. Often your concerns and problems can be addressed by telephone support.
- If issues arise that might be solved a video conversation, we may try that.
- If we can only help by visiting you in your home, that is what we will do.

For each telephone call

- Please have a list of the medicines you are taking ready as we will go through the list each time we contact you, to make sure that we are clear about what medications you are taking.

For video call

- We ask you to turn on the lights so it easier for us to see you and to close the windows/doors so the room is quiet.
- We will call you from a well-lit, quiet and private place.

Before any planned visit

- We will telephone first to ask about your problems and concerns. It helps us to prepare for our visit to you, when we know what your problems are.
- We will ask you to have a list of the medicines you are taking.
- We will assess for the risk of COVID-19. We will ask whether you, or anyone in or visiting your house, have a fever or temperature, or new cough/sneezing or breathlessness. We will ask if anyone close to you is known to be COVID-19 positive or is suspected to be positive. Please be honest with us in your responses—we will still visit you if a visit is needed, but it is important for us to know whether we need to wear protective equipment (like a mask /apron/gloves).

The visit itself

- If it is dark, please leave a light on outside.
- Please provide a smoke free environment.
- Remember your pet may not be friendly to strangers.
- We will aim to keep the visit to 15 minutes where this is possible. We are trying to keep our in-person visits to less than 15 minutes so that the risk of transferring infection between patients, family members and staff is as low as possible. This is in keeping with HSE guidance.
- Only one person/family member should be with you during your visit. We ask that that person try to keep a distance of 2 metres (6 feet) where possible. This social distancing is so important to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus, that our nurse/doctor *may need to leave* if families do not keep to this.
- We know that many family members might have questions or worries or feel they need to talk to us. We can talk to family members afterwards by telephone, or perhaps we could even meet in a large room, or outdoors in the garden, keeping 2 metres between each person.

Hours of service

- Regular follow up: 09.00-17.00 Monday to Friday.
- There is a limited support service at weekends.
- One palliative care nurse is available 17.00-20.00 each evening to respond to your problem.
- A telephone-only support service is available 7 days a week/24 hours a day (Raheny 01 832 7535 and Blanchardstown 01 829 4070).

Suggestions

We aim to continue to give the best possible care to our patients and their families at this difficult time. If you have any idea or suggestion to improve our service, please speak to our staff or send an email to info@sfh.ie.

Complaints

We recognise that there may be times when you are not satisfied with our service and you may wish to make a complaint. If that is the case, we advise you to speak to the person in charge of that area. They will try to address your concerns as quickly as possible. If it is not possible to resolve your concerns in that way, you may wish to make a formal complaint in writing. Please send this to: The Complaints Officer, St Francis Hospice Dublin, Station Road, Raheny, Dublin 5, D05E392.