



What matters **AT THE END?**

*Northumberland's commitment
to its communities and what
you can do to help*



togethernorthumberland.co.uk

CARING TOGETHER
Northumberland

Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for all Northumberland residents, as well as their family, loved ones and carers.

No matter what stage of your life you're at, it's never too early to start thinking about your death and what your wishes are – where do you want to die and who do you want there with you, for example.

Working out what a good death looks like for you is crucial and we need to work together to get right.

We want every resident in Northumberland to live a full life and have a dignified death.

Our vision

We want every resident to have a good death and to die with dignity through:

- having honest conversations with professionals that provide enough information to make timely decisions
- accessing the highest quality services for themselves, their families, loved ones and carers wherever they live
- feeling comfortable and free from distress
- being supported by “one” team seven days a week, day and night
- having staff who are compassionate and highly skilled in communicating and delivering care
- living in a community which is supportive, willing to discuss death and dying, and offers practical help.

Our approach

We want to set out a minimum level of expectations for end-of-life care to ensure all Northumberland residents have a good life all the way to the end.

This should be a good death, by which we mean one which is free of pain, dignified, in the place of one's choosing and with family, friends and loved ones nearby.

We will work together with our residents, their families, loved ones and carers, and health and care staff. This affects us all and we all have an important role to play.

We aim to break the taboo about talking about death and dying as part of all our lives, by providing opportunities for honest but sensitive discussions to take places in appropriate places at the appropriate times with the appropriate people.

We should all plan for our deaths using this approach, which can then apply in the case of all reasonably expected deaths.

Principles

- **Respect** – to acknowledge death as part of all our lives.
- **Time to plan** – to be given the opportunity to develop plan for our care. If appropriate, to be told clearly and compassionately the reality that death is coming.
- **Care** – to have access to end-of-life care in the location you choose with every effort made to support this.
- **Support** – to have support with the practicalities of dying, death and matters after death.
- **Compassion, dignity, honesty and clear communication**

Our Community Commitment

We will...

... have honest conversations with you
listen to what matters to you and respect your wishes, beliefs and values
provide tailored information as it is needed
treat you with dignity, respect and privacy at all times
talk to you about changes in your health and when the end of your life is approaching
support planning for the end of your life
ensure the services that you need are available
do all we can to enable you to die in your preferred place
support those who you care about before and after your death.

We want you to...

... Think about your death
Ask questions that are important to you
Talk to your family and friends about what is happening
Tell people what really matters to you
Talk about your hopes, fears or any uncertainties
Tell people what a good death looks like for you
Think about making a will or other plans before you die.

Together...

...we will all play our part to help people in Northumberland achieve a good death.

What we want the future to look like

- We break the taboo and it becomes easier for everyone to talk openly about our wishes and plans for the end of our lives.
- Each resident has considered what a good death is for them and has had constructive conversations with their loved ones to share their plans.
- Every resident in Northumberland is supported to have the best death possible, built around respect, support, good communication, honesty, dignity and comfort.
- If a resident chooses to die within hospital, that they can choose to do so in a private room if they wish.

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