

Abstract, Hospice UK Conference 2017, Liverpool, 22-24 November 2017

**Conference title:** Leading, Learning and Innovating

Submitted under the 'work in progress' category

**Title:**

**Researching an innovative Cottage Hospice model of care: An academic and hospice partnership**

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**Background:**

Exploring innovative models of hospice, palliative and end of life care is imperative to meet contemporary demands in caring for those approaching the end of life. To this end, a new Cottage Hospice model is being developed in the south of England. The hospice concerned commissioned a concurrent two-year research study to track the programme development. This addresses the call for hospices to work with academics in determining which types of care work best.<sup>1</sup>

**Aim:**

To evaluate the development of Cottage Hospice using a research approach where solutions to challenges are developed collaboratively with a range of stakeholders. Results from this work will assist decision making as the programme proceeds.

**Methods:**

Participatory Action Research is being used to evaluate the programme. A situational analysis using documents ( $n=77$ ) and interviews ( $n=25$ ) explored the programmes foundations. Action cycles ( $n=4-8$ ) in which issues are worked on in small groups to agreed solutions followed the initial phase. Findings will be fed back to stakeholders in workshops to share and refine the results.

**Results:**

Initial results demonstrate a need for conceptual clarity about the model to be sought between staff, volunteers and service users in order to achieve a shared vision and support for the programme. Action cycles to address conceptual understandings and practical issues including staffing and family caregiver role are underway. It is anticipated that these will highlight areas for further action cycles.

**Conclusions:**

The early involvement of an academic research team in evaluating a new model of hospice care represents an embedded and enlightened approach in which research is not an afterthought. We believe this strengthens the basis for this new initiative. Gaining an in-depth, evidence based understanding of how challenges were resolved in the implementation of Cottage Hospice may be of use to others in the sector planning similar initiatives.

1. Payne S, Preston N, Turner M, Rolls L (2013). *Research in palliative care: Can hospices afford not to be involved?* London, Hospice UK.