

Rowcroft Strategic Plan 2024-2030





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Our care

Welcome to Rowcroft Hospice, an independent charity dedicated to providing specialist care and unwavering support to individuals facing life-limiting illnesses. Our mission is to help people navigate through the toughest times imaginable, ensuring they can cherish every moment with their loved ones.

As a beacon of compassion in South Devon, we extend our services free of charge to all adults in need. Each year, we proudly support nearly 2,500 patients and their families across an expansive area covering 300 square miles. Our commitment is to empower individuals, making each day the best it can be, and creating opportunities for precious moments to be shared with family and friends.

At Rowcroft Hospice, we understand the importance of comfort and familiarity during challenging times. That's why we prioritise providing care in the comforting surroundings of patients' homes whenever possible. We also offer a warm and supportive environment at our Inpatient Unit in Torquay for those requiring specialised services.

Throughout the pandemic and the ongoing cost of living crisis, the dedication of our wonderful team of nurses, doctors, health and social care professionals, as well as our support staff, has been nothing short of remarkable. They have exemplified the true spirit of compassion and commitment, going above and beyond to ensure uninterrupted care delivery during the most demanding moments.

As we introduce our strategy, we reaffirm our pledge to remain at the forefront of compassionate end-of-life care, continually evolving to meet the ever-changing needs of our community. Together, we embark on a journey of care, empathy, and hope, ensuring that no-one faces the challenges of life-limiting illnesses alone.





Our wonderful community

As an independent charity reliant on the goodwill and generosity of others, we couldn't do what we do without the fabulous support of our local community.

We are endlessly grateful to all the local individuals, groups, corporates and trusts for their unwavering support that continues to astound us. Through taking part in fundraising events and activities, making donations, playing our lottery, supporting our shops and cafes, and joining us as volunteers, our community has shown time and again their heartfelt dedication to our commitment of providing compassionate care to those in their final journey.

In particular, donations made through legacies hold a special place in our heart, as they are a testament to the enduring impact our hospice has made on people's lives. Generous individuals who have included a gift to us in their Will have enabled us to expand our services, ensuring that future generations will receive the care they deserve.

The fundraising efforts of our community exemplify their commitment to our cause. From sponsored walks to skydives, their tireless dedication raises vital funds that directly enhance the quality of care we provide. Their passion and enthusiasm inspire others to join in, creating a ripple effect of support throughout our community.

Donations, both big and small, are the lifeblood of our organisation. Every contribution enables us to offer comfort, dignity, and support to patients and those closest to them during their most challenging moments.

Volunteers are the heartbeat of our organisation, selflessly giving their time and energy to support our hospice. Their essential contribution takes many different shapes and forms – from volunteering in our shops and cafes, to offering support to patients and their families, lending a hand in our hospice gardens and offices, and helping out at our fundraising events. Their dedication is immeasurable and their presence brings warmth and comfort, enriching the lives of those in our care.

Our community's remarkable commitment to our hospice empowers us to continue making a lasting difference in the lives of those we care for.



Building on the success of our 2018-2023 strategy

As a result of implementing our Strategic Plan 2018-2023, we have achieved the following successful outcomes which form a strong platform for the future:

Achieved and maintained the highest standards of care for our patients, ensuring their needs are met effectively and promptly, regardless of location or diagnosis.

Invested in extending our reach to those in our community who find it harder to access our services.

Made substantial investments in our teams (staff and volunteers), equipping them with the necessary resources and training to provide exceptional care and services to our patients.

Continued to develop new initiatives to grow income (through fundraising and retail) during some of the toughest challenges faced by the hospice (pandemic and cost of living crisis).

Launched Devon Farm Kitchen, a highly successful social enterprise that delivers delicious, nutritious frozen meals to elderly people in South Devon. This initiative has enhanced the well-being of our community. Visit www.devonfarmkitchen.co.uk for more information.

Educated and trained almost 5,000 healthcare professionals in palliative and end-of-life care.

Invested in digital marketing to expand our reach and accessibility to our community.

Invested in technology to support patient care and deliver services as seamlessly as possible, including the deployment of a shared service model with fellow hospices.

Built a stronger financial base and acquired the estate from which the hospice operates in order to protect the hospice in the future.

Established The Ella Rowcroft Endowment Trust, a permanent endowment designed to generate a sustainable income stream for the hospice in the long term. This trust ensures our long-term financial stability and enables us to continue providing exceptional care to those in need.

Secured planning permission to realise our vision of creating an optimal care environment for our patients and their loved ones. This includes the remodelling of our Inpatient Unit, which will enhance comfort and support for generations to come. Additionally, we have developed a plan for generating new income streams for the hospice by constructing a 60-bed specialist dementia and complex needs nursing home, along with a 40-bed assisted living accommodation facility.



These accomplishments exemplify the successful outcomes of our strategy, which places hospice care at the forefront of our mission. We remain committed to improving the lives of our patients and their loved ones, and these achievements demonstrate our dedication to delivering the best possible care and services.



An evolving future

Looking into the future, Torbay faces the challenge of an ageing population, with 33.8% of its residents over the age of 65, and 7% aged over 80 (UK Census, 2021). This trend is expected to continue, with the proportion of people over 65 in Devon projected to increase from 1 in 4 to 1 in 3 by 2040. Additionally, there is a predicted 50% rise in the number of people over 65 living with dementia by 2030, with one-third of them requiring nursing home care. The rise in older individuals living alone is also notable.

These demographic shifts will have implications for the workforce, particularly in the healthcare and social care sectors, where there is already a shortage of professionals such as nurses (50,000+) and doctors (20,000+). To address this challenge, recruitment and training efforts will need to be intensified to ensure adequate support for the ageing population.

Torbay itself is expected to experience a 6.5% increase in its population by 2030, with a significant rise of 22% and 28% in the number of individuals over 65 and over 75 respectively. This trend is projected to continue, with a staggering 69% increase in the number of people over 75 between 2020 and 2043. These statistics highlight the pressing need for enhanced elderly care services and facilities to meet the growing demands of this population.

In the wider context, economic factors such as Brexit and the recovery from COVID will impact the UK economy, potentially affecting people's expendable income. Older individuals, who may have more financial resources than younger families, could play a significant role in sustaining local businesses and services.



The healthcare landscape is expected to witness significant advancements, with the UK aiming to be a world leader in AI-driven technologies for health and wellbeing. This focus on innovation holds the promise of improving the quality of care and enhancing the overall healthcare system.

In this evolving landscape, it will be essential for South Devon's hospice and the broader community to adapt and innovate. Embracing technological advancements, strengthening workforce capacity, and enhancing elderly care services will be critical in ensuring that the needs of the ageing population are met with compassion, dignity, and high-quality care.



Following the pandemic, we are thrust into another crisis with cost-of-living /inflationary pressures and a shortage of registered nurses and support staff. Our team have stepped up to this challenge and shown amazing resilience living our values and working collectively to cover shifts and sickness. We have also deployed innovative recruitment solutions, from trainee nurse bursaries through to exploring international recruitment.

The increased inflationary costs are having a disproportionate effect on us as an organisation given that 80% of our operating costs are staff-related. As such, we are now budgeting deficits for the foreseeable future and becoming increasingly reliant on legacies.

To respond to these challenges the Senior Management Team have undertaken a detailed review of the previous strategy and learnings alongside a growth strategy model known as the 3 Horizons. This has been further supported by a STEEPLE review.

STEEPLE measures the macro-environmental external factors. The acronym stands for Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, Legal and Ethical. This analysis gives practical insight into each of the above factors that can affect an organisation.



Our strategic response

Our utmost priority lies in nurturing our core strengths and delivering impeccable specialist palliative care, unwavering in our commitment to maintaining the highest quality of care for our patients.

We know that we can't do this alone. That's why we will focus on building strong connections with our intricate network of partners. In everything we do, we're committed to preserving our excellent reputation and identity and protecting the valuable brand we've built.

For our patients we need to reinforce the role of the hospice:

Managing symptoms and supporting people with life-limiting illnesses and their loved ones to make every day the best day possible

Providing comfort and peace

Providing a home from home

Supporting patients' wellbeing

Providing guidance and support to those closest to them

Clinically

In order to address the evolving needs of our patients, we must prioritise several key areas. Firstly, we need to establish additional capacity and capability to effectively cater for the anticipated rise in patient numbers and the increasing complexity of their conditions. This includes ensuring that our staff possess the necessary skills and expertise to manage a broader range of conditions, such as heart disease, frailty, and dementia, which are becoming more prevalent.

Furthermore, it is imperative that our Inpatient Unit (IPU) is meticulously designed and equipped to meet the specific requirements of our patients. This entails continuous evaluation and adaptation to ensure that the IPU remains fit for purpose, providing a comfortable and supportive environment for those under our care.

To truly understand and fulfil the desires of our patients, we must deepen our knowledge about them and actively engage in understanding their preferences and aspirations. This knowledge will allow us to tailor our services accordingly and ensure that we remain responsive to the needs of our ageing population.

Navigating the intricacies of the modern healthcare system can be challenging for patients, particularly those facing complex health issues. As a result, we must extend our support to empower patients in making informed choices about their care, providing guidance and assistance throughout their journey.

To achieve these goals, it is vital that we cultivate a skilled, capable, and future-proofed workforce. By investing in ongoing training, professional development, and attracting new talent, we can ensure that our staff possess the expertise and resilience to adapt to evolving demands and deliver the highest standard of care.

In addition, we must meet the new Safety Statements outlined by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), adhering to their updated guidelines to guarantee the safety and well-being of our patients.

Lastly, we must strive to align with the national ambitions for end-of-life care established by the National Palliative and End of Life Care Partnership. By embracing these ambitions, we can contribute to a broader movement aimed at enhancing the quality and accessibility of end-of-life care throughout the country.

Through these concerted efforts, we can continue to provide exemplary care while actively responding to the changing needs and aspirations of our patients, with the aim of ensuring their well-being and comfort in their most vulnerable moments.

Commercially

We embark on a journey to construct a sustainable future that aligns with our charitable objectives while reducing dependence on traditional funding models. Central to this endeavour is gaining a comprehensive understanding of the economic value our care brings to our broader community. By recognising and communicating this value, we can foster a deeper appreciation for the vital role we play in the lives of those we serve.

In our pursuit of sustainability, we must remain adaptable and nimble, ready to respond to market changes and to effectively manage patient budgets alongside emerging funding models. This requires us to embrace an agile mindset, constantly seeking innovative approaches and remaining flexible in our operations.

To secure a stable income that supports our vision, we must nurture a culture that leverages the skills and expertise of our hospice to develop new commercial ventures. This will enable us to build strong and diversified income streams, further empowering us to deliver exceptional care to those in need.

In our quest for progress, we must embrace a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship, continuously seeking opportunities to expand the reach of our care and drive efficiency and effectiveness. By exploring new avenues, we can extend our impact and ensure that our services reach those who may otherwise go unserved.

Recognising the power of collaboration, we must actively explore partnerships with like-minded organisations, both within the NHS and other hospices. By joining forces, we can minimise risks, pool resources, and collectively enhance the quality and accessibility of care for the benefit of our communities.

Together, with compassion and determination, we strive to build a sustainable future that enables us to make an even greater difference in the lives of those we serve.

An inclusive vision

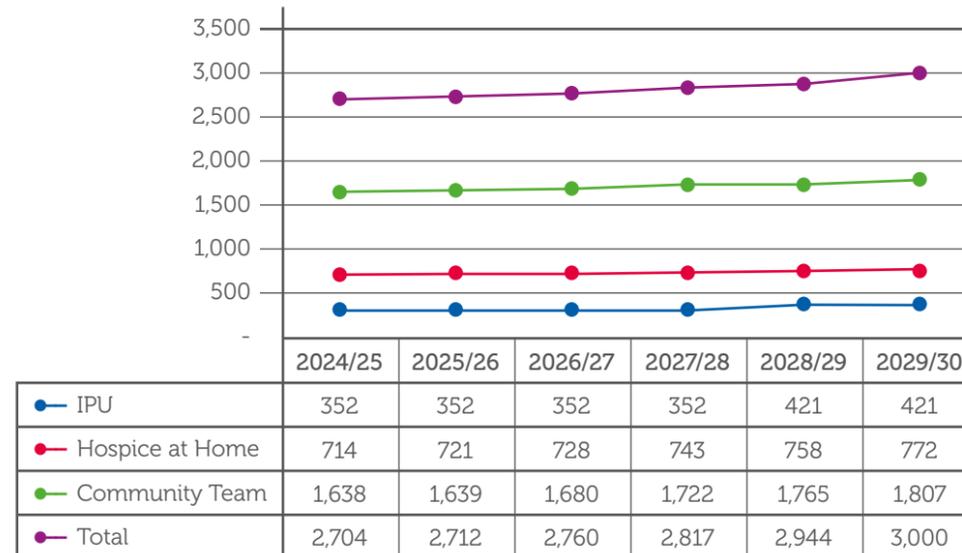
“To make every day the best day possible for patients, and those closest to them, living with life-limiting illnesses in South Devon”

Our strategic goals and measurement

Goals

Goals	Measurement
1 Deliver a specialist palliative care service to an impeccable standard when and where it is needed, 24/7, regardless of diagnosis or circumstance	CQC / patient and family feedback
2 Extend our delivery of palliative care to reach over 3,000 adults per year by 2030	Referrals recorded
3 Build a sustainable future for the hospice (commercially and environmentally)	Balance sheet

Growth in patient numbers



Our strategic pillars - 3Ts

Talent

Build exceptional teams, united as one, embracing the future

Technology

Embrace innovation for greater impact

Together

Engage our community at all levels

Diversify income

Remodel the hospice for the future





Strategy - 3Ts

A range of strategic initiatives are outlined under each strategic pillar in order to ensure we deliver our goals.

Each is detailed as follows:

Talent

Build exceptional teams, united as one, embracing the future

Invest in our people to build an effective and resilient workforce.

Attract, develop, train and retain our talent.

Create the environment and culture for our teams to thrive.

Nurture a culture of 'one team' where colleagues work together across the hospice for maximum impact.

Provide a seamless patient and family experience across all services and ensure care is available when and where it is needed.

Technology

Embrace innovation for greater impact

Deploy technology that drives efficiency and impact across the organisation to enhance patient care.

Utilise innovative systems and tools that help to provide the best-in-class service to all stakeholders.

Further develop the shared IT service model across Rowcroft and other hospices (and charities) to deliver enhanced technology and effectiveness.





Together

Engage our community at all levels

Ensure we continue to deliver our services to meet local needs by engaging and partnering with all key stakeholders in the community – including healthcare commissioners and other professionals within the broader healthcare system, as well as existing and potential supporters, organisations, trusts and corporates.

Diversify income

Develop innovative income generation strategies (including social enterprises) to achieve a 10% share of core revenue by 2030. We will also safeguard our services by setting reserves at 50% of the hospice's annual running costs.

Launch a new nursing home and prepare for the assisted living accommodation.

Remodel the hospice for the future

Ensure the future sustainability of the hospice by remodeling Main House.



Vision

“To make every day the best day possible for patients, and those closest to them, living with life-limiting illnesses in South Devon”

Objectives

Deliver a specialist palliative care service to an impeccable standard when and where it is needed, 24/7, regardless of diagnosis or circumstance

Extend our delivery of palliative care to reach over 3,000 adults per year by 2030

Build a sustainable future for the hospice (commercially and environmentally)

Our strategic pillars

Talent

Build exceptional teams, united as one, embracing the future

Technology

Embrace innovation for greater impact

Together

Engage our community at all levels

Diversify income

Remodel the hospice for the future

A clear standard of patient care

At all times we will:

- 1 Treat you as an individual, with respect and dignity and without distinction or judgment.
- 2 Always strive to respect your wishes as much as possible.
- 3 Make every day the best it can be during your time in our care, providing the highest quality of care possible.
- 4 Offer a holistic approach to care through our multi-disciplinary teams.
- 5 Share our knowledge and expertise with your family, friends, and the wider community to enhance your care.
- 6 Show compassion at all times.
- 7 Maintain confidentiality and integrity in everything we do.





Talent

Build exceptional teams, united as one, embracing the future

Invest in our people to build an effective and resilient workforce

Ensure our workforce and staffing levels are sufficient to safely and effectively deliver our aims

Implement our Learning and Development Strategy to ensure our people are equipped to deliver our aims

Deliver our Volunteer Strategy to ensure volunteers are at the heart of delivering our care

Achieve employer accreditation by 2025

Attract, develop, train and retain our talent

Develop and implement innovative recruitment strategies

Develop rotation posts internally and with healthcare partners

Create the environment and culture to enable our teams to thrive

Build a safe environment for our people with high levels of trust, inclusion and belonging

Provide the conditions for autonomy and excellence for our employees, volunteers and wider workforce

Build a values-led culture supported by high behavioural standards

Develop creative solutions to challenges and opportunities to enable the hospice to thrive

Nurture a culture of 'one team' where colleagues work together across the hospice for maximum impact

Continue to invest in training our multi-disciplinary teams to provide the best possible care when and where it is needed across all service areas

Invest in training our superfluid nurses to provide support across all service areas

Embed our CQC compliance framework, RISE (Reflect, Innovate, Suggest and Engage) across the organisation so that everyone in Rowcroft understands their role in meeting the CQC framework

Lead the way in developing new and innovative ways of delivering care. This will require research and development

Support and encourage cross disciplinary working across the hospice to enable the delivery of the strategy





Provide a seamless patient experience across all services and ensure care is available when and where it is needed

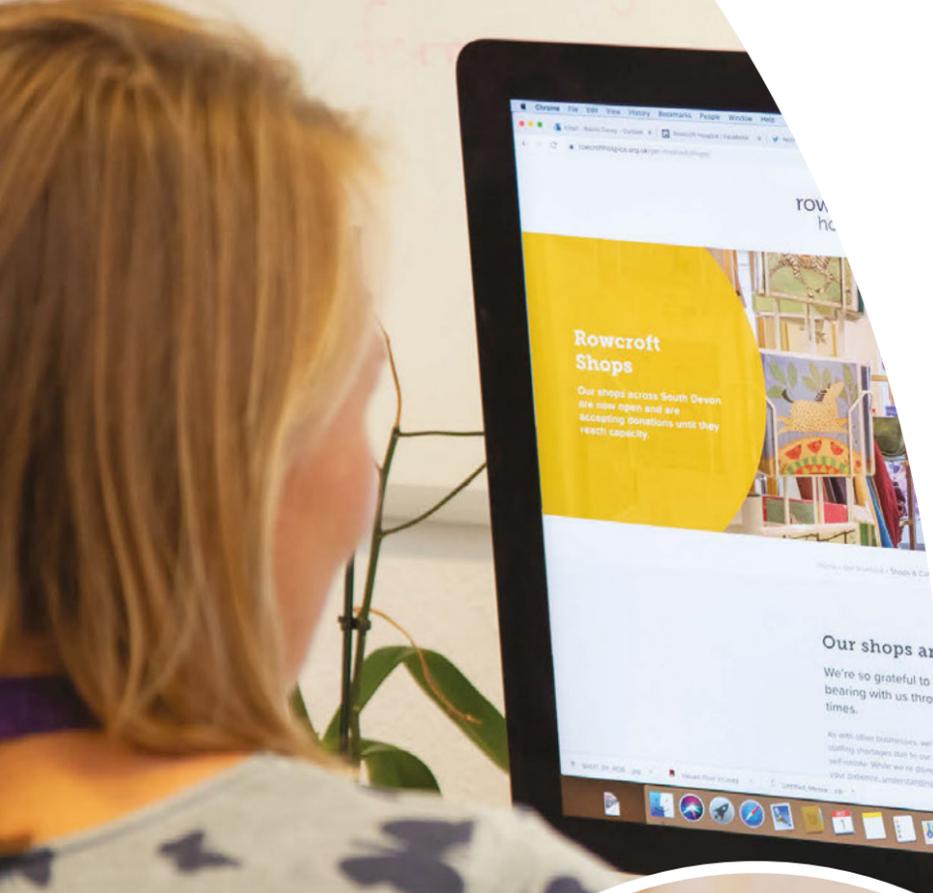
Invest in our multi-disciplinary teams to provide 24/7 support and access for patients, and for our partner healthcare providers.

Engage more volunteers in supporting patient care.

Implement our ED&I (equality, diversity and inclusion) plans to ensure our service is accessible to all who require it irrespective of diagnosis, background, ethnicity or condition.

Invest in a triage service to ensure the right service is available within only one step of making contact with Rowcroft.





Technology

Embrace innovation for greater impact

Deploy technology that drives efficiency and impact across the organisation to enhance patient care

Deploy technology so that any patient or family member is one step away from their Rowcroft healthcare professional, and to support staff in their work.

Achieve paperless operations by 2030 through the use of digital/AI (artificial intelligence) or other suitable technologies

Develop a digital/AI model or decision-making framework for the proposed new nursing home



Utilise innovative systems and tools that help to provide the best-in-class service to all stakeholders

Provide an IT service to hospice colleagues that meets a maximum four-hour response for initial enquiries, a four-hour resolution for critical incidents, and a resolution of five working days for non-urgent requests.

Provide project management and technical consultancy expertise to deploy new innovative systems

Further develop the shared IT service model across Rowcroft and other hospices (and charities) to deliver enhanced technology and improved effectiveness

Formalise a joint venture model to enable the ONE TEAM to flourish and win new customers/partners.

Share best practice to the hospice sector so that others may benefit from this learning and success.





Together

Engage our community at all levels

Ensure we continue to deliver our services to meet local needs by engaging and partnering with all key stakeholders in the community - including healthcare commissioners and other professionals within the broader healthcare system, as well as existing and potential supporters, organisations, trusts and corporates.

Work collaboratively with healthcare colleagues across primary, secondary and social care and other charities to ensure we collectively meet the needs of our community.

Continue to offer outstanding training in end-of-life care through Rowcroft's Education Team.

Implement our ED&I plans to ensure our service is accessible to all who require it irrespective of diagnosis, background, ethnicity or condition.

Review opportunities to continue to support this seamless approach against our investment case.

Support patients and families navigating an increasingly complex health and care system to make informed choices and realistic advance care plans.

Build an economic model to understand where Rowcroft delivers value across the community. This will then be used to bid for additional services.

Diversify income

Develop new funding streams (including new social enterprises) to represent at least 10% of our core income by 2030. Safeguard our services by setting reserves at 50% of the hospice's annual running costs.

Develop innovative income streams within existing income generation services. Where possible new income streams will include an element of IP (intellectual property).

Prepare detailed business plans and if approved launch new commercial enterprises. Each business concept will be tested against key criteria: ethical, low level of reputational risk and return on investment (three-year payback). Each enterprise should be a self-contained commercial operation.

Launch a new nursing home and prepare plans for the assisted living accommodation.

Deliver a 60-bed specialist dementia and complex nursing home at Ella's Gardens (Rowcroft grounds), which delivers the commercial model proposed.

Prepare plans for delivery of the 40-bed assisted living accommodation.





Remodel the hospice for the future

Ensure the future sustainability of the hospice by remodelling Main House.

Remodel Main House and build a new Inpatient Unit to care for our community for the next 40 years.

This will include:

- expansion to 14 single rooms all with ensuite facilities
- new bistro for patients, families, staff, volunteers and the community
- space for expanded clinical teams
- new education and training facilities
- lodges/accommodation for families to stay overnight
- a design focused around a home
- centralised team working

If any intellectual property is developed during the remodelling of the hospice we will seek to license this for the benefit of the hospice sector.

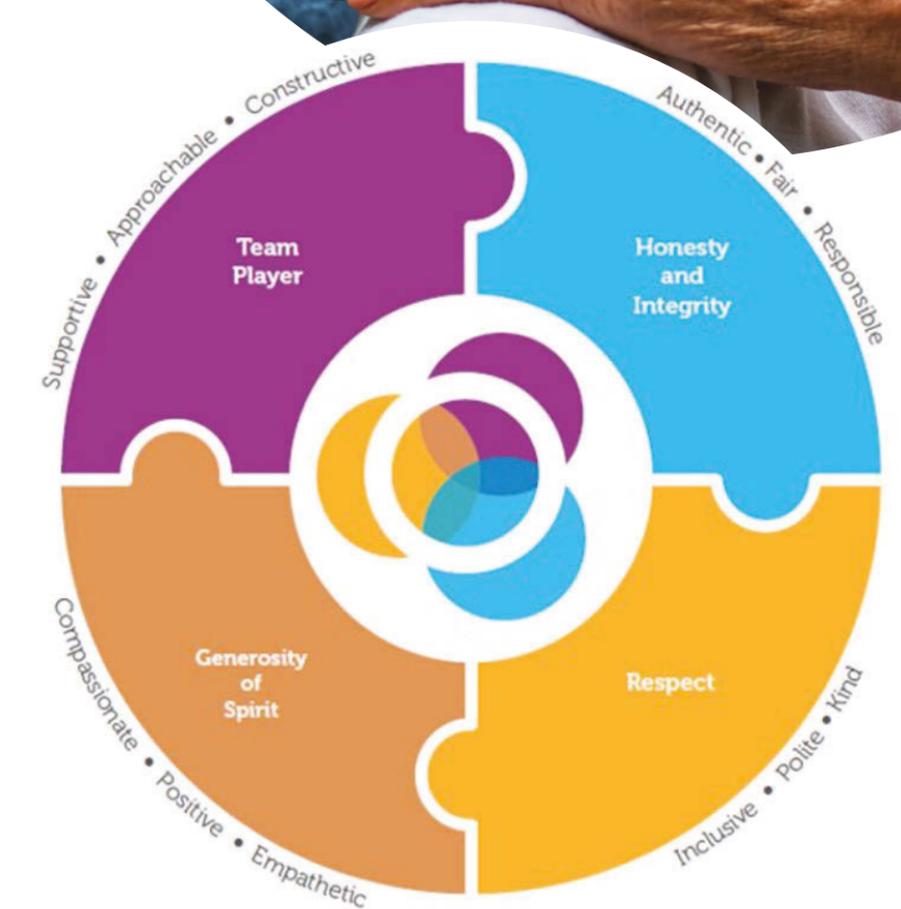
Living our values

We will ensure staff and volunteers all live our values of:

- Honesty and integrity
- Generosity of spirit
- Team Player
- Respect

across everything we do by:

- Involving our values in everyday discussions
- reviewing performance against our values within team meetings
- continuing to be driven by our values to support recruitment and appraisals
- seeking staff feedback on our values
- communicating our values regularly
- leading by example throughout good times and bad



Timeline

Talent		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Invest in our people to build an effective and resilient workforce.	Ensure our workforce and staffing levels are sufficient to safely and effectively deliver our aims.							
	Implement our Learning & Development Strategy to ensure our people are equipped to deliver our aims.							
	Deliver our Volunteer Strategy to ensure volunteers are at the heart of delivering our care.							
	Achieve employer accreditation by 2025.							
Attract, develop, train and retain our talent.	Develop & implement innovative recruitment strategies.							
	Develop rotation posts internally and with healthcare partners.							
Create the environment and culture to enable our teams to thrive.	Build a safe environment for our people with high levels of trust, inclusion and belonging.							
	Provide the conditions for autonomy and excellence for our employees, volunteers and wider workforce.							
	Build a values led culture supported by high behavioural standards.							
	Develop creative solutions to challenges and opportunities to enable the hospice to thrive.							
Nurture a culture of 'one team' where colleagues work together across the hospice for maximum impact.	Continue to invest in training our multi-disciplinary teams to provide the best possible care when and where it is needed across all service areas.							
	Invest in training our Superfluid Nurses to provide support across all service areas.							
	Embed our CQC compliance framework, RISE across the organisation so that everyone in Rowcroft understands their role in meeting the CQC framework.							
	Lead the way in new and innovative ways of delivering care which will require research and development.							
Provide a seamless patient experience across all services and ensure care is available when and where it is needed.	Support and encourage cross disciplinary working across the hospice to support the delivery of the strategy.							
	Invest in our multi-disciplinary teams to provide 24/7 support and access for patients, and our partner healthcare providers.							
	Engage more volunteers in supporting patient care.							
	Implement our ED&I plans to ensure our service is accessible to all who require it irrespective of diagnosis, background, ethnicity or condition.							
	Invest in a triage service to ensure the right service is available within only one step of making contact with Rowcroft.							

Technology		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Deploy technology that drives efficiency and impact across the organisation to enhance patient care.	Deploy technology so that any patient or family member is one step away from their Rowcroft healthcare professional and to support staff in their work.							
	Achieve paperless operations by 2030 through the use of digital/AI or other suitable technologies.							
	Develop a digital/AI model or decision-making framework for the proposed new nursing home.							
Utilise innovative systems and tools that help to provide the best-in-class service to all stakeholders.	Provide an IT service to hospice colleagues that meets a maximum four-hour response for initial enquiries, a four-hour resolution for critical incidents, and a resolution of five working days for non-urgent requests.							
	Provide project management & technical consultancy expertise to deploy new innovative systems.							
Further develop the shared IT service model across Rowcroft and other hospices (and charities) to deliver enhanced technology and improved effectiveness.	Formalise a joint venture model to enable the ONE TEAM to flourish and win new customers/partners.							
	Share best practice to the hospice sector so that others may benefit from this learning and success.							

Together		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Ensure we continue to deliver our services to meet local needs by engaging and partnering with all key stakeholders in the community – including healthcare commissioners and other professionals within the broader healthcare system, as well as existing and potential supporters, organisations, trusts and corporates.	Work collaboratively with healthcare colleagues across primary, secondary and social care and other charities to ensure we collectively meet the needs of our community.							
	Continue to offer outstanding training in end-of-life care through Rowcroft's Education Team.							
	Implement our ED&I plans to ensure our service is accessible to all who require it irrespective of diagnosis, background, ethnicity or condition.							
	Review opportunities to continue to support this seamless approach against our investment case.							
	Support patients and families navigating an increasingly complex health and care system to make informed choices and realistic advance care plans.							
Build an economic model to understand where Rowcroft delivers value across the community. This will then be used to bid for additional services.								

Timeline continued...

Together		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Develop new funding streams (including new social enterprises) to represent at least 10% of our core income by 2030. Safeguard our services by setting reserves at 50% of the hospice's annual running costs.	Develop innovative income streams within existing income generation services. Where possible new income streams will include an element of IP.							
	Prepare detailed business plans and if approved launch new commercial enterprises. Each business concept will be tested against key criteria: ethical, low level of reputational risk and return on investment (three year payback). Each enterprise should be a self-contained commercial operation.							
Launch a new nursing home and prepare plans for the assisted living accommodation.	Deliver a 60-bed specialist dementia and complex nursing home at Ella's Gardens (Rowcroft grounds), which delivers the commercial model proposed.							
	Prepare plans for delivery of the 40 bed assisted living accommodation.							
Ensure the future sustainability of the hospice by remodelling Main House.	Remodel Main House and build a new Inpatient Unit to care for our community for the next 40 years. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expansion to 14 single rooms all with ensuite facilities • new bistro for all patients, families, staff, volunteers and the community • space for expanded clinical services teams • new education and training facilities • lodges / accommodation for families to stay overnight • a design focused around a home • centralised team working 							
	IP developed to be licensed including expertise.							

Definitions

Palliative care

Palliative care is the active, holistic care of people with advanced progressive illness, involving management of pain and other symptoms and the provision of psychological, social and spiritual support. Palliative care aims to ensure the best possible quality of life for individuals at end of life or with advanced illness, and for their families.

Palliative care is traditionally associated with a range of principles of care including the view of dying as a natural process, while at the same time affirming life, and of acting neither to hasten nor postpone death. It is applicable early in the course of illness, in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to prolong life, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy, as well as in terminal care, and includes those investigations needed to better understand and manage distressing clinical complications.

End-of-life care

Palliative care can have application in any situation where someone is experiencing distress associated with serious illness for which there is no potential cure. End-of-life care, with which palliative care can often be confused, refers specifically to care provided in the last phase of life. This is often defined as approximately the last year, but end-of-life care can also sometimes be used to refer to the last weeks or even days of life and, for carers, can include care into bereavement.

Specialist palliative care

Specialist palliative care is provided by multi-disciplinary teams that can include consultants in palliative medicine, nurse specialists, specialist social workers and experts in psychological care. Such staff are specifically trained to provide, and advise on, symptom control and pain relief and other forms of psycho-social and spiritual support. Specialist palliative care services include: inpatient units, voluntary sector-run and NHS; hospital-based services including hospital support and outpatients; home care services; day care services and bereavement support.

Generalist palliative care

General palliative care is provided by the usual professional carers of the patient and family, such as GPs, district nurses, hospital doctors, ward nurses, allied health professionals, staff in care homes, social care staff, social workers, chaplains and others. These professionals have not received accredited levels of training in palliative care provision and thus are not deemed specialists, but routinely provide care for people with advanced illness, including those at the end of their lives.

Equity in the Provision of Palliative Care in the UK: Review of Evidence, 2015

