

Following a review of the use of the respite care bed at St Clare's Hospice, we are announcing some changes to how we organise respite care.

The changes are designed to make the best possible use of the facilities we have, ensuring we can continue to provide services to as many local people as possible. The following information will explain what will change and why we have decided to make the changes.

Is St Clare's still offering respite care?

Yes. St Clare's Hospice remains fully committed to providing respite care for people in South Tyneside with life-limiting conditions. We know how valuable a respite break can be not only for the person staying with us, but also for their family, friends and carers. We will continue to offer respite care, we are just changing the way we organise it.

What is changing?

We are removing the ring fencing around the one bed in the in-patient unit that has been reserved for respite care only. This means that all 8 beds in the unit will be available for use for symptom control, end of life care and respite care.

Referrers will no longer be able to book respite care for specific dates. Instead, we will be asking that referrals for respite care are made in the same way as all other in-patient unit referrals and will be discussed each morning (Monday-Friday) at the allocation meeting.

When will it be changing?

The changes will be implemented from the 1st February 2018.

Why is it changing?

Last year, our figures show that the respite bed was only occupied for 48% of the year. We want to maximise the use of this bed and we believe that changing the way we organise respite care will allow us to do this.

We believe that the changes will widen access to respite care. The system we have been running requires patients using the respite bed to be medically stable, to ensure that they are well enough to go home at the end of their planned stay. We know that people who use the Hospice have conditions that aren't always stable. The new system will allow wider access to respite care for people whose conditions are less stable and will also allow us to be more responsive to any changing needs during their stay at the Hospice.

How do I make a referral for a respite admission?

Healthcare professionals can continue to refer by completing a referral for the in-patient unit online on our website or by faxing a referral form to the Hospice on 0191 5297110. Please also ring to discuss any urgent referrals.

Will there be a review of the changes?

Yes. As with any change, we regularly review how things are working. If you use the respite bed, we would welcome your feedback on the new system.

If you have any queries about these changes, please do get in touch with Vicky Bracey (Clinical Nurse Manager) or Lucy Tierney (Hospice Physician).

Lucy Tierney
Hospice Physician