

HOPE HOUSE CHILDREN'S HOSPICES

Evaluation of Bereavement Support Service 2013

This report relates to the bereavement support service provided to families across the catchment area with no previous association with the hospices, usually following sudden and unexpected death. The support provided ranged from formal counselling to less formal befriending; this may have been provided on a 1 to 1 basis, or as couples or families. Between January and December 2013, 56 evaluation forms were given to families who had come to the end of their bereavement support programme. A response rate of 41% was achieved.

Who received support?

Mother	31%
Daughter	21%
Sibling	17%
Father	14%
Son	14%
Extended family	3%

Ages

Under 10	18%
11-16	36%
17-20	5%
21-35	18%
36-50	14%
51-65	9%

Number of People per Family who Accessed Support

1	52%
2	19%
3	29%

Access

Respondents had heard about the Bereavement Support Service through a variety of means as follows:

Family/friend	39%
Health/social care professional	35%
School	22%
Police	4%

Many of the respondents (40%) had contacted the service through a professional; however 23% made contact through family/friends, 14% via school and the remaining 23% made contact themselves.

The majority of people (59%) had an assessment visit less than 2 weeks from the date of the first contact with the service. An assessment visit was undertaken in less than 3 weeks for 18% of respondents and in less than 1 month for a further 9%. 14% were unsure about how long they had waited.

Following the assessment visit, families had their first appointment with their support worker:

Within 2 weeks	67%
Within 3 weeks	19%
Within 4 weeks	5%
Can't remember	9%

Support had been provided at the hospice/counselling centre for 18% of clients, at home for 35%, in hospital for 4% and the remaining 43% had been seen at school.

Quantity

Respondents varied in how long they had been accessing bereavement support. Some of the respondents had had less than 10 sessions and some had had as many as 50. The majority of respondents attended sessions on a weekly basis, others received support fortnightly or monthly and some had varied intervals between sessions.

All respondents felt the number of sessions they had received was adequate and 100% felt the sessions were the right length.

Quality

100% of respondents scored the support they received as being extremely valuable.

Suggestions for Improvement

The following comments were made when suggestions for improvements in the service were asked for:

- Ensuring greater awareness of the service so that all families that need this support can benefit from it.
This valuable point has been raised in previous surveys and we are fully committed to an awareness raising campaign. However the current demand on the bereavement support service means that we would be unable to cope if there was a sharp rise in referrals. As soon as resources allow, information will be sent out to relevant agencies such as GPs, schools, Accident and Emergency Departments and the Police.
- Could the service be expanded to all family members?
We are happy to offer support to close family members in most circumstances but we do need to make sure each referral is appropriate for our service due to already stretched

resources.

- Could the sessions be held at my home sometimes?

We always try to encourage people to come to the counselling centre/hospice when possible as we know we can provide an appropriate environment for support there. It also helps us to make the maximum use of staff's time if they are not required to travel.

However if anyone really needs support at home, we will always endeavour to provide this.

Trends in the provision of bereavement support

The number of families unconnected to the hospices who have received bereaved support following sudden and traumatic death continues to rise. In September 2012, **92** families were accessing this support and in September 2013 **122** families were supported.

A similar evaluation exercise was undertaken 18 months prior to this survey. Noticeable differences and what we can infer from these changes are shown in the table below.

What the surveys told us	May 2012	Dec 2013	Comments
Children and young people aged 11 – 16 who received support	15%	36%	Significant rise in school aged children referred for bereavement support. This may be due to a reduction in services provided by other organisations.
Assessment visit undertaken less than 2 weeks from first contact with service	83%	59%	These figures reflect the increasing demand placed on the service. Every effort is made to undertake an initial assessment visit within 2 weeks but this is becoming more difficult to achieve.
First appointment with support worker made within 2 weeks of assessment visit	81%	67%	As above
Place where support was provided	Hospice 50% School 25%	Hospice 18% School 43%	This reflects the rise in number of 11-16 year olds supported.
Respondents who scored the support as being extremely useful	88%	100%	The quality of the service remains very high.

General Comments

At the end of the survey respondents were invited to offer any further comments and most used this section to give positive feedback and explain how important the service had been for them. There was no negative feedback given. Some examples of the comments provided are:

- *I don't think my support could have been any better and I'm really glad that I had your support;*
- *Your services have been invaluable to me and my daughter has found great comfort with her counsellor;*
- *The support xxxx gave me helped me to understand some of my feelings and make a little sense of what had happened to me and I will always be grateful to her and Hope House for the help when I was finding things so hard to cope with;*
- *This service has helped my children deal with their feelings about their Dad's death;*
- *I worked with xxxx, she was amazing and helped me through a lot, I wouldn't be where I am without her;*
- *I cannot recommend highly enough the help received from the hospice and especially xxxx, to whom I will be forever grateful.*

Action Plan

The results of this survey will be discussed at length with all staff who provide the bereavement support service. As soon as resources allow, we will undertake an awareness raising campaign so that all families who need this type of support are able to access it. This report will be published to the organisation's website.

We are sincerely grateful to everyone who took the time to complete this survey. We value all feedback and suggestions very highly and will use your views to help us make improvements wherever possible.

Kath Jones
Director of Care
December 2013