

Hospice UK briefing on challenges facing hospices in Northern Ireland and the need for support – May 2023

Key points:

- Rising costs, from energy and food prices to staff costs required to meet expected NHS pay rises, mean **hospices across the UK are collectively budgeting for a deficit of £186 million this year.**
- Hospices urgently need financial support to continue to offer their essential services. This should consist of:
 - **£30 million of Government funding for UK hospices to off-set the cost of increased energy bills** in the year ahead. This support needs to go beyond what is provided by the Energy Bill Discount Scheme.
 - **Additional funding for hospices from the Department of Health in Northern Ireland to reflect the impact of the wider cost of living crisis, including increasing staff costs.**
- The funding of hospice care is unsustainable, with hospices having to fundraise on average two thirds of their income as donations plummet and the need for, and complexity of, care increases.

The impact of the cost of living crisis on hospices:

- By the end of this year, **86% of hospices will be impacted** by increasing energy prices. For hospices, reducing energy consumption is not an option. They need to keep medical machines running and their inpatient units warm for those in their care.
- **71% of hospice expenditure is spent on staff.** Hospices are determined to pay their brilliant staff a fair wage but they are struggling to find the funding to respond to the NHS pay deal.
- Hospice UK conducted a survey of 101 UK hospices between 28 February and 6 March. Of these:
 - **7 in 10 agreed that cost of living pressures are highly likely to result in reduced support being available to the wider system**, such as hospitals or care homes.
 - **7 in 10 agreed that cost of living pressures are highly likely to result in having to reduce the volume of certain services.**
 - Nearly half of those with in-patient units agreed that cost of living pressures are highly likely to **result in one or more in-patient bed(s) being temporarily or permanently unavailable.**

The value and sustainability of the hospice sector:

- On average, **two thirds of adults hospice income and four fifths of children's hospice income is raised through fundraising**, such as bake sales, charity shops and marathons.
- **Rising costs are coming at a time when local communities, who usually give so generously, will be struggling themselves.** This means the cost of living crisis is squeezing donations whilst hospices' own costs spiral.
- Hospices are a critical part of the health and care system. **They provide care and support to 300,000 people a year across the UK.** In Northern Ireland they work across the system to reduce pressure on the HSC, and help train and support health and care workers
- The need for the sector's services is greater than ever before. There are more deaths in 2023 so far than five-year averages and growing numbers of people dying in areas where hospices offer the most support
- Over the next 20 years, the number of people living in Northern Ireland aged over 75 is expected to increase by 100,000. It is expected that, each year, more people will need palliative care and the complexity of the care needed is also increasing.

We would like to encourage you to reach out to hospices delivering services in your constituency to ask them what issues they would like you to raise in Parliament.

For more information, please contact policy@hospiceuk.org.