

Supporting Scottish Grief & Bereavement Care Workstream

Annual report 2021-22



FOREWORD



FOREWORD

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Looking back on the foreword from last year's Annual Report it is noticeable that we reflected on a tough year but also hinted at some 'light at the end of the tunnel'. It would be fair to say that the tunnel was longer than we imagined and the light a lot fainter and, indeed, may have flickered out at times. It has been another difficult and challenging year. The vaccine programme has transformed the pandemic and there are definitely signs of hope, although world events are now dominating the headlines and bereavement remains a major part of this making most of us wonder when things will return to any semblance of normality.

The first year of the pandemic saw a horrendous number of individuals die from Covid but also, through restrictions and necessary guidance, an impact upon all people dying from any cause in any location. The inability to visit a loved one at the end of their life may cause longstanding harm to people who are bereaved and this, coupled with restrictions in funeral attendance, has contributed to a rise in bereavement-related issues. The staff who witness this upset have been affected too, and whilst these restrictions are now thankfully easing and life starts to return to normal we cannot underestimate the harm and moral injury that may last for many years to come.

As is evidenced from the report you are about to read, the Grief and Bereavement Team at NHS Education for Scotland (NES) have been working tirelessly over the past year to help support colleagues in health and social care. This support takes the form of educational tools, online forums, webinars, conferences and numerous other online meetings and resources.

One thing we recognised over the past year is that this has to stop being all about Covid. We therefore ensured that our webinar programme delivered seven, hour long, easily accessible resources with a wide range of topics from how to complete a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death to compassionate bereavement support. We also delivered our second (slightly delayed) bereavement conference which was online and had around 1,100 registrants. This again delivered a wide range of content and was extremely well received. We are in the process of planning another for later on this year so hold the date – 24th November 2022.

We have always been proud of our extensive suite of online resources available for those working in health and social care. We have been able to increase this with a number of new short videos covering topics such as Anticipatory Grief and the Bereavement Charter. We have also branched out into non-animated content with some powerful films capturing the experiences of an emergency department team and hearing from three of NHSScotland's Bereavement Leads.

A common theme even before the pandemic was that of staff wellbeing. This has become all the more relevant as the past two years have progressed. One specific area which has been highlighted to us is the death of a doctor in training and how that impacts upon many members of staff sometimes across numerous organisations. We are presently working on a four-nation project through COPMeD (Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans) to produce a range of content to help individuals and teams presented with this awful scenario. This issue obviously doesn't only affect doctors in training and we're currently working on the development of a broader range of resources that consider the death of all those working in health and social care.

We started this foreword saying that the light at the end of the tunnel was pretty faint last year. It is difficult to look around at the current world events and think that light is any brighter, but we think it is. The vaccine is a game changer and we no longer see anything like the number of deaths from Covid that we were seeing a year ago. Restrictions are being lifted and life will, as much as it can, return to normal. It may be a different normal, but we believe there is hope. When we read this report, even though it is about death and bereavement, we are filled with hope; there are so many good people out there working hard to help others, displaying compassion and kindness daily and making this world a better place. Thank you to you all and enjoy this report.

Dr Ken Donaldson

Dr Graham Whyte

**Associate Postgraduate Deans, NES Supporting
Scottish Grief & Bereavement Care Workstream**



PART A: ABOUT US



OUR VISION

To support the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care which is provided, before, at and after death, to those who are at the end of life and to those who are bereaved, within a culture of support for staff health and wellbeing.

WHAT DO WE DO?

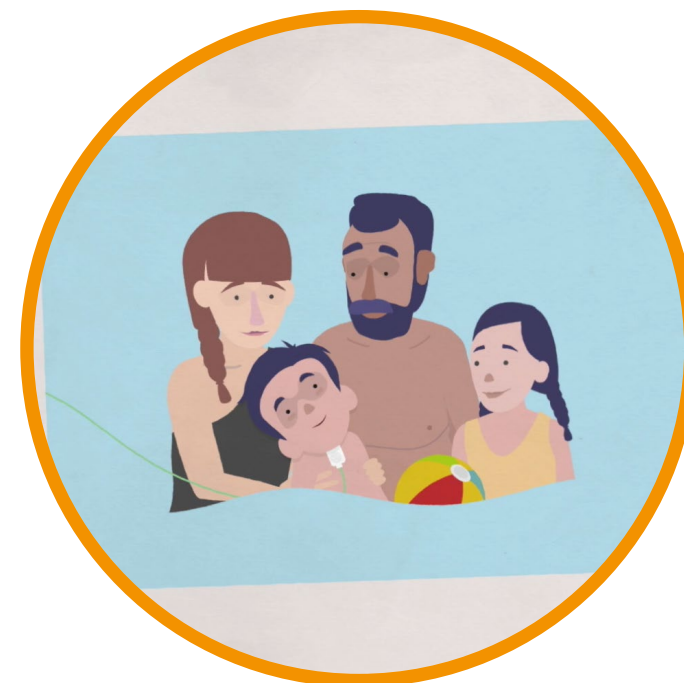
- + Deliver bereavement-related educational interventions and support to health and social care staff in Scotland in a constantly changing clinical environment
- + We aim to enhance health and social care professionals' preparedness to manage care and communication around the time of death and in bereavement

WHY DO WE DO IT?

Our work is founded upon acceptance that events leading up to and surrounding death, and patients and families experience of these, will significantly influence the nature of bereavement. Therefore, optimal handling of the preparation for, and support around all deaths (including those that are expected and unexpected) by health and social care professionals is an important part of improving bereavement care in Scotland.

WHO WE ARE

The Supporting Scottish Grief and Bereavement Care workstream is led and overseen by two Associate Postgraduate Deans, Dr Graham Whyte and Dr Ken Donaldson. They work closely with a team within NES, which includes Dr Clare Tucker, Dr Janice Turner, Lynne Innes, Rozanne Suarez, Philip Smith and Larissa McFadden.



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PART B: 2021-22 ACHIEVEMENTS



1. LEARNING EVENTS

Bereavement webinar programme

This year we built on the success of our webinar programme which was established in 2020-21, by hosting a further seven free one hour sessions. These were well received, with interest from professionals working in health and social care across Scotland. Registrations have also been noted from delegates who are based in other parts of the UK and internationally.

The webinars have seen us welcome speakers from a diverse range of organisations and professional backgrounds, together enabling us to feature coverage of a wide variety of topics. We have focussed on delivering an interactive and engaging session format with a combination of live discussions, presentation slides and video clips, and this year incorporating a more prominent feature of polls, word clouds and opportunities for audience questions.

Every webinar this year has been recorded, with each being made openly accessible to view afterwards, alongside additional resources, on our website's [Previous webinar page](#).

“The webinar was really efficient regarding the duration and the content. Helped building confidence in a simple way”

“Excellent webinar, thoroughly enjoyed it. Very informative.”

“This was a really useful, insightful and practical webinar which I found a pleasure to attend...”



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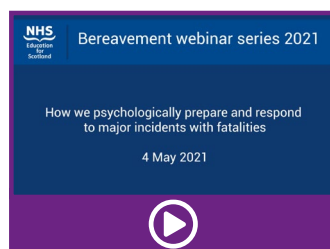
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SESSIONS HAVE INCLUDED:



+ Why grief gets stuck and how we can help



+ How we psychologically prepare and respond to major incidents with fatalities



+ Completing the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death



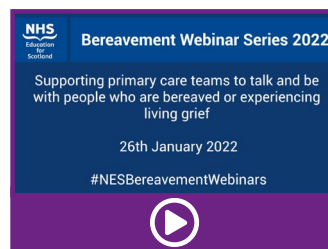
+ The compassionate space in bereavement support



+ Faith, spiritual care & mourning rituals: understanding how to support people around the time of death



+ Being homeless at the end of life



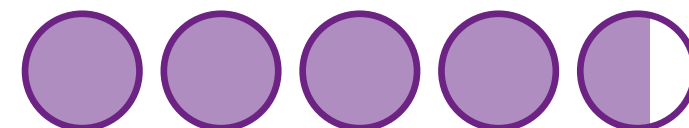
+ Supporting primary care teams to talk and be with people who are bereaved or experiencing living grief

Feedback from attendees has also played an important role in guiding us in the planning of future sessions. Looking ahead, we will be continuing with our webinar programme in 2022-23 and expect to cover topics including:

- + The Value of Listening - Spaces for Listening
- + Supporting people who have a learning disability who are bereaved
- + Dealing with the death of a child

Attendee feedback rated the content and delivery of our webinars an average of

4.6/5



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NES Bereavement Education Conference 2021

On 24th November 2021 we were delighted to host our second annual Bereavement Conference, as a one-day virtual event for health and social care professionals, '[The Changing Face of Bereavement: Providing care and maintaining our own wellbeing during the pandemic](#)', which explored a wide range of topics.

A high level of interest was seen ahead of the conference, with registration numbers rising to nearly 1,100, with extremely positive feedback being received in response to the event, from delegates and speakers alike.



1,100 registered



The conference provided a wonderful platform for learning with a fantastic array of topics both current and relevant during the pandemic. It offered a perfect mix of knowledge, learning and practical experience from those delivering workshops and facilitating the day. It was powerful and emotive but also heart-warming to hear about the amazing work that is ongoing supporting bereavement across Scotland. It was a pleasure to be part of

Donna Hastings,
Child & Families Lead, St Columba's Hospice Care



An excellent informative day. Not only information and learning wise but it touched on a level emotionally that I hadn't expected to take from the day

Delegate



NHS Education for Scotland | **Bereavement Education Conference 2021**
Wednesday 24 November 2021

The changing face of bereavement: providing care and maintaining our own wellbeing during the pandemic
NHS Education for Scotland's 2nd national bereavement education conference.
Wednesday 24 November 2021
Full day virtual event
Cost: Free | CPD credits: TBC

Who should attend?
Health and social care professionals.

Why attend?
Delegates will have the opportunity to hear from a range of speakers on COVID and non-COVID related bereavement topics which are relevant to those working across health and social care.

Opening plenary
Dr Donald Macaskill, Chief Executive of Scottish Care will open the day with his talk:
The deepest wound: healing and hope in the midst of hurt – grief and bereavement in a pandemic age

Visit the conference website to:

- Register
- View the programme
- Read about poster abstract submission

[Conference webpage](#)

Topics covered will include e.g.

- Bereavement support after critical illness
- What happens to digital assets after you die?
- Managing legal processes after a death
- Child bereavement
- Psychological perspectives on bereavement
- Spiritual care, faith and mourning rituals

#NESBereavement2021

- events.nes.scot.nhs.uk/
- events@nes.scot.nhs.uk
- [@NES_Bereavement](https://twitter.com/NES_Bereavement)

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CONFERENCE AIMS

- 1.** To improve knowledge and understanding of good practice regarding communication around the time of death with those who are bereaved thereby reducing unnecessary harm
- 2.** To provide professionals working with people in times of death, dying and bereavement with a learning and networking opportunity, which will improve their knowledge and understanding of topical issues and provide them with practical information on current mechanisms of support
- 3.** To provide delegates with an opportunity to reflect on the effects of the COVID pandemic thereby enhancing coping mechanisms when dealing with bereavement related situations in order to stay well at work

PROGRAMME

The programme was developed to cater to the learning needs of as broad a range of health and social care professionals as possible. Sessions were delivered in plenary and workshop formats, with delegates benefitting from the use of 'chat' functionality on the virtual platform to interact with other attendees and speakers throughout the day.

The event was approved by the Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom for five CPD credits.



[View the full programme here](#)

Dr Donald Macaskill opened the conference with his presentation 'The Deepest Wound: Healing and Hope in the Midst of Hurt - Grief and Bereavement in a Pandemic Age' which received extremely positive feedback.



A lovely start to the day, encompassing how people had experienced grief during the pandemic and ways of approaching bereavement



Excellent opening and emotional talk, really engaging



Similarly, the closing plenary 'A Doctor at the heart of the pandemic: What I learned about death, bereavement and wellbeing' from Dr Matthew Walton appeared to resonate well with delegates.



Fantastic presentation and a great way to conclude an excellent conference



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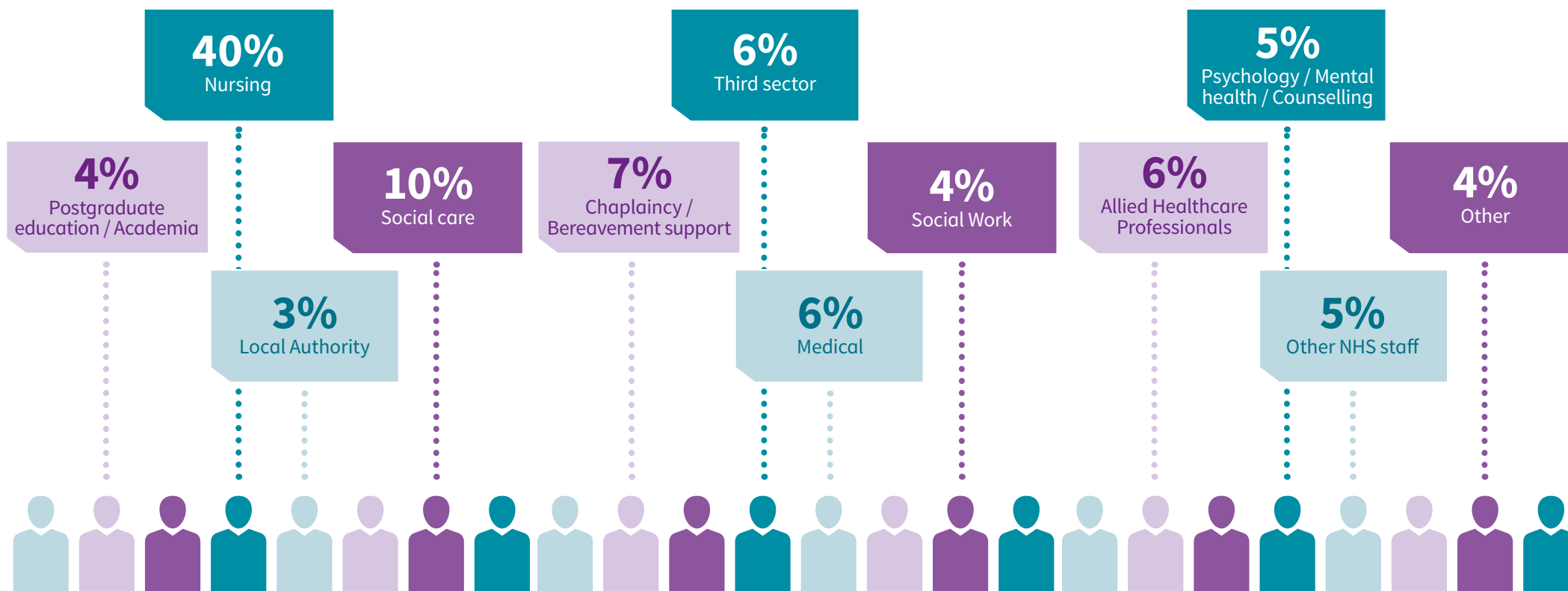
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CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

Analysis of registrations in the run up to the event saw delegates planning to attend from a diverse range of professional groups



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CONFERENCE POSTERS

We received a number of high-quality poster abstract submissions, which were invited to cover any aspect of innovation and creativity leading to improved outcomes for those who are bereaved. These could include e.g. aspects of education, service delivery and quality improvement. Of the posters that were presented on the day, two were awarded prizes:

+ **Winner:** Enabling emotional and psychological wellbeing in care home staff in Perth and Kinross, Jane Andrew², Lynn Blair³, Moyra Gill¹, Anne Kelly², Leigh Must¹, Alison Rowlands², Carolyn Wilson¹ (¹Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership, ²NHS Tayside, ³Scottish Care)

+ **Highly commended:** “You aren’t expected to do this on your own” An exploration of virtual loss, grief and bereavement training for education and health staff during a pandemic, Lisa Forsyth¹, Mary-Kate Harte², Donna Hastings³, Marion Lang⁴ (¹Glasgow Psychological Services, ²NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, ³St. Columba’s Hospice Care in partnership with Child Bereavement UK, ⁴Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice)

Enabling emotional and psychological wellbeing in care home staff in Perth and Kinross

Authors: Jane Andrew², Lynn Blair³, Moyra Gill¹, Anne Kelly², Leigh Must¹, Alison Rowlands², Carolyn Wilson¹
¹ Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership, ² NHS Tayside, ³ Scottish Care

Introduction

The impact of the pandemic on the care home workforce is still unfolding. During the pandemic the Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership worked closely with local care homes and became aware of the effects on staff of the additional emotional and psychological demands faced in caring for vulnerable residents and dealing with excessive loss.

[Read more](#)

“You aren't expected to do this on your own”

An exploration of virtual loss, grief and bereavement training for education and health staff during a pandemic

Lisa Forsyth¹, Mary-Kate Harte², Donna Hastings³, Marion Lang⁴
¹Glasgow Psychological Services, ²NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, ³St. Columba's Hospice Care in partnership with Child Bereavement UK, ⁴Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice

Abbreviated abstract: In response to lockdown restrictions and suspension of face-to-face training, loss, grief and bereavement sessions were delivered virtually across Edinburgh, East Lothian and Glasgow City to education and healthcare staff. Sessions aimed to build confidence in supporting Children and Young People (CYP) returning to education after experiencing loss. Participants reported being able to link personal experiences to course content and utilise practical resources in their roles. Virtual delivery provided a proactive response to identified needs.

Related publications:

Read more



All the other posters presented are available to view on our [website's 2021 Conference page](#)

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EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Following the conference, delegates were asked to complete an online survey to give their thoughts and reflections on all aspects of the event, covering everything from practicalities such as the registration process and the usability of the virtual platform to feedback on each workshop and plenary session.

The data gathered will be used to inform our approach to future events to ensure that we offer the best possible experience for delegates and contributors alike. The information garnered was overwhelmingly positive, with:



95% of delegates

satisfied that that the three aims of the event had been achieved



94% approval rating

For the three main plenary speakers



82% of delegates

giving the highest rating possible for their experience with the virtual platform



99% of delegates

rating the registration process as 'good' (the highest rating possible)



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SESSION RECORDINGS

The virtual format of this year's event not only allowed for a significantly higher number of delegates to attend and ease of access for those in remote, rural and island settings, but it also enabled us to record sessions more easily.

Recordings of almost all plenary and workshop sessions have been edited and made available for health and social care professionals to view, regardless of whether they registered to attend the event.



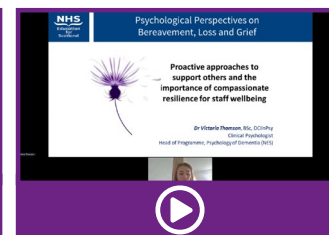
+ The Deepest Wound: Healing and Hope in the Midst of Hurt - Grief and Bereavement in a Pandemic Age



+ Bereavement During COVID-19: The Experiences of those Bereaved and the Voluntary Sector Services Supporting them



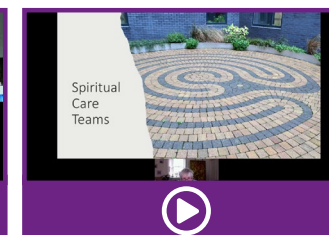
+ Stories and Experiences During the Pandemic - Including Speakers from Social Care, Intensive Care and a Funeral Director



+ Psychological Perspectives on Bereavement, Loss and Grief



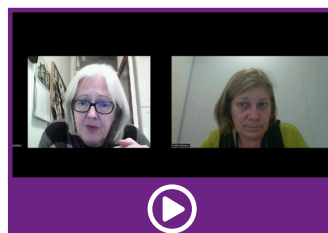
+ Palliative Care Patients with Children: Supporting the Family



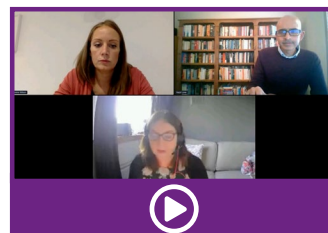
+ Spiritual Care, Faith and Mourning Rituals: Understanding how to Support People around the Time of Death



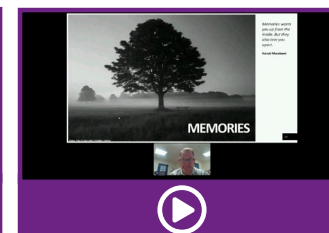
+ The Impact of Structural Inequalities on Mortality Rates of Ethnic Minorities during the COVID-19 Pandemic



+ Bereavement Matters in Kinship Care



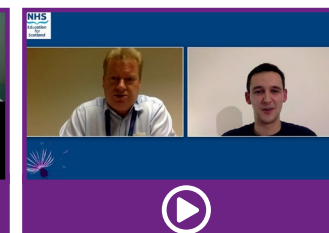
+ Bereavement Support for Families after Critical Illness



+ Rituals, Memories and Preparing for Death: Exploring Good Practice and Barriers



+ Managing Legal Processes Following a Death



+ A Doctor at the Heart of the Pandemic: What I Learned about Death, Bereavement and Wellbeing

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LOOKING TO 2022 – SAVE THE DATE!

We're delighted to already be underway in planning the NES Bereavement 2022 conference which will again be a free, one-day, virtual event.

Health and social care professionals are invited to save the date: Thursday 24th November 2022, with more details to be released in Spring / Summer 2022 about the programme and registration process.



[Explore #NESBereavement2022](#)



2. TOOLKIT OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

This year we have continued to build on our range of bereavement-related training resources for health and social care professionals by working on the development and launch of new educational materials and the updating of others.

The topics covered aim to enhance the preparedness of those involved in care and communication around the time of a bereavement, as well as considering themes related to staff wellbeing.

The majority of those which have now launched are available to view on our [Support around Death \(SAD\) website](#).



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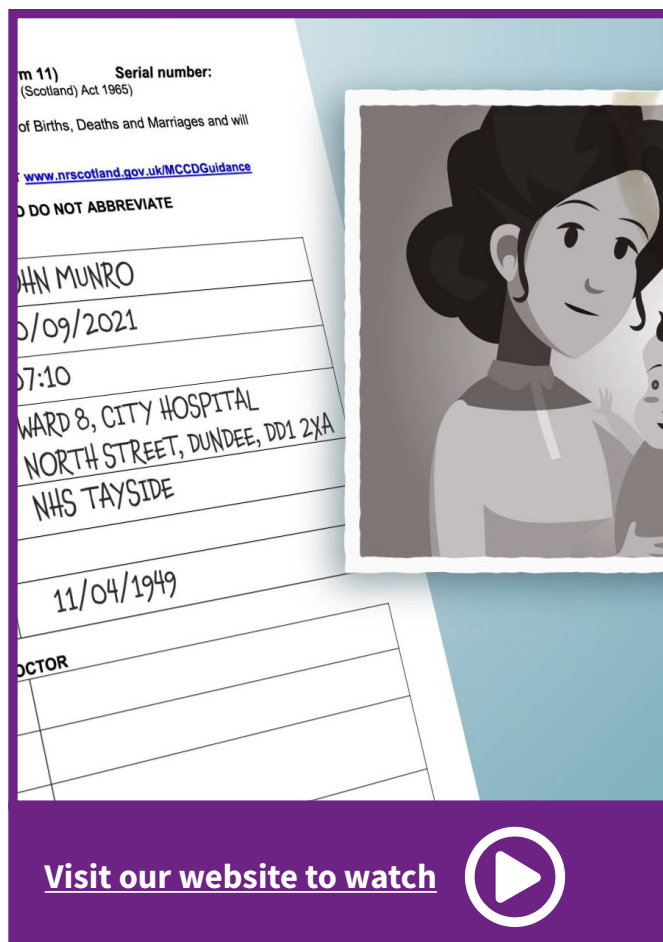
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Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD)

We continue to work closely with the Death Certification Review Service (DCRS), ensuring that current educational resources remain accurate and updated, and to collaborate on the development of new materials.

NEW FILM: HOW TO COMPLETE A PAPER-BASED MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF CAUSE OF DEATH FORM IN SCOTLAND

This short-animated film, aimed particularly at junior medical staff, guides the viewer through the process for completing an MCCD. It highlights the importance of doing this accurately, for the purposes of capturing better quality information about causes of death and to avoid upset to those who are bereaved.



MCCD E-LEARNING MODULES

This year we have begun the process of updating two previously developed [online modules](#) – ‘Certification of Deaths in the Community’ and ‘Death Certification: Identifying Common Mistakes’, by adding new clinical content and working to enhance interactivity.

These refreshed modules will relaunch in 2022-23, potentially alongside an additional third module, which may feature the new animation embedded within it.

The two existing modules are designed to support certifying doctors to complete MCCDs and we continue to see these being utilised by learners from the vast majority of Health Boards from across Scotland.



Certification of Deaths in the Community:

1462 individuals completed to date



Death Certification: Identifying Common Mistakes:

398 individuals completed to date

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COVID-19

This year we have supported the DCRS with design work on two COVID-19-related resources which aim to help support certifying staff with Medical Certification of Cause of Death during the pandemic.

- + Deaths from COVID-19 disease in Scotland: Scenarios to support accurate death certification and reporting to Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service
- + Does COVID-19 constitute a hazard in the deceased person?

Visit the DCRS page on the [Healthcare Improvement Scotland website](#) to view these two resources.



ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

We are working with the DCRS and the Scottish Government to support documentation of Antimicrobial Resistance in relation to death certification.



As previously, totally brilliant assistance from NES where the collaborative approach adopted has resulted in truly exceptional joint educational material which has exceeded our expectations. DCRS has had such a constructive experience with these combined ventures that our team are delighted to participate in any future projects. The feedback from certifying doctors has been universally positive and has helped us fulfil one of our primary aims in providing training for the profession

Dr C George Fernie
Senior Medical Reviewer & Caldicott Guardian, Healthcare Improvement Scotland Death Certification Review Service



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Anticipatory grief

This year we launched a new resource which aims to increase awareness of anticipatory, or 'living' grief amongst health and social care professionals. It also highlights how people can be supported when they experience feelings of grief before a person dies.

The short film was developed with input from subject experts representing organisations including tide (Together in Dementia Everyday), CHAS (Children's Hospices Across Scotland), St Columba's Hospice Care and a number of Boards across NHSScotland.

The animation has gathered a significant number of views since it launched, and feedback from frontline staff and educators has been positive on the value of the resource.

It is also being featured as a case study in NES' Year in Review.



“

A very sensitive story of how to accompany people in the journey of grief, which will encourage everyone in how to offer this kind of spiritual care

”

“

Lots of very helpful suggestions around what to say and do for those supporting people experiencing feelings of loss before someone has died...

”



Over 1,500 views to date

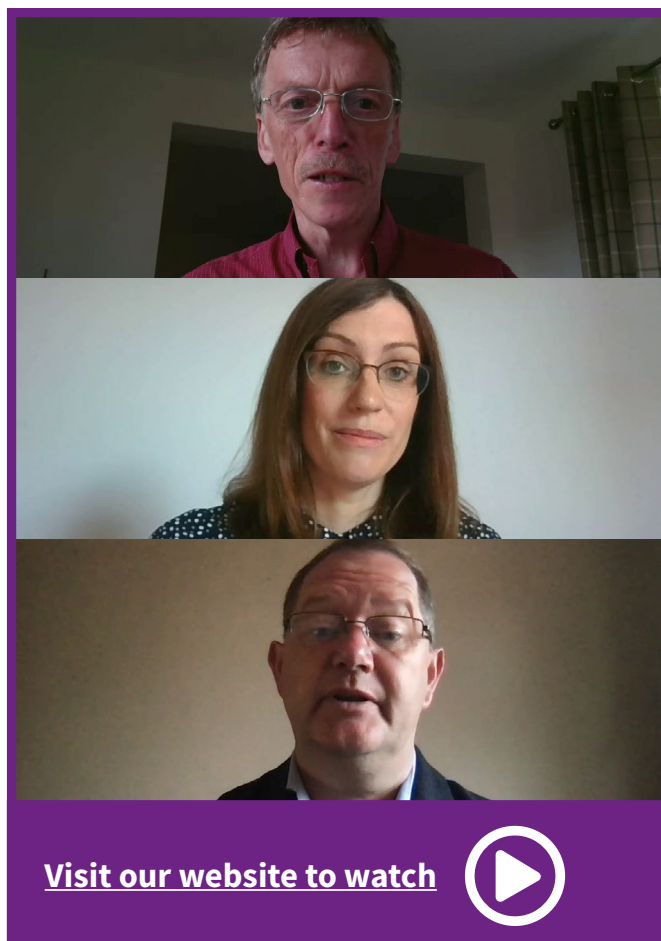
Interview-style films

We have for the first time this year utilised a remote filming approach to complete two other new educational film projects which focus on an interview or documentary-based style.

RIPPLES OF GRIEF: TIPS FOR LOOKING AFTER THOSE WHO ARE BEREAVED AND YOUR OWN WELLBEING

This film features three Bereavement Strategic Leads and Coordinators from different Health Boards across Scotland. Together, Mark Evans (NHS Fife), Caroline Pretty (NHS Lothian) and Derek Brown (NHS Highland) share their insights into ways in which healthcare professionals can support and care for those who are bereaved, whilst also identifying factors that can enhance their own, and their colleagues' wellbeing.

The resource is structured around ten practical key points, and uses cutaway footage for illustrative purposes.



1. Consider everyone, including your colleagues and yourself
2. Acknowledge your feelings
3. Take time for yourself
4. Support each other
5. Keep caring after the time of death
6. Speak honestly
7. Help with the practicalities
8. Signpost to other support
9. Think about other patients
10. Be yourself

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DEALING WITH DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT AT WORK: PERSPECTIVES FROM AN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TEAM

This film highlights the experiences of both clinical and non-clinical staff in an NHSScotland Emergency Department, as they share their perspectives on dealing with death and dying at work.

We were grateful to colleagues from NHS Grampian for their involvement in the development of this film, which captures the thoughts of a Receptionist, Porter, Nurse, Physician's Assistant and Specialist Registrar.

Key messages include the importance of recognising that the whole multidisciplinary team can be affected by bereavement in an Emergency Department and discussion about ways in which staff can be supported, including the role of debrief and psychological first aid.

The film also makes reference to the acronym [TALK \(Tell, Ask, Listen, Kindness\)](#) which we developed and launched in the animation '[Coping with death and bereavement as a health and social care professional](#)' last year. It encourages staff to support each other with simple strategies such as talking to colleagues, asking the team how they are doing, listening to each another and showing kindness to yourself and others.



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Bereavement Charter for Children & Adults in Scotland

This year we also launched a new film: ‘Bereavement Charter for Children & Adults in Scotland: What does it mean for health and social care professionals?’.

More information on the making of this, and the aim of the film can be found later in this report within the [Bereavement Charter section](#).



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Bereavement in the workplace

This year we have built on work that we did in 2020-21 which saw the development of two resources on '[Experiencing the death of a colleague](#)' and '[Employees who are bereaved](#)', both of which had a COVID-19 focus, with the establishment of a number of pieces of work on the topic of bereavement in the workplace.



DEALING WITH THE SUDDEN DEATH OF A DOCTOR IN TRAINING

The Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans (COPMeD) has asked us to lead on a four-nation piece of work to deliver training resources to support deanery teams and educators across the UK to respond to the sudden death of a doctor or dentist in training. Collaborative working is underway to identify gaps, needs and priorities, and from this a training package of educational resources is now in development.

Input from a multi-professional Expert Advisory Group is helping to inform the work which is being overseen by an established Development Group.

The training package will include a variety of resources including films, written materials, a training session outline and potentially an e-learning module. To date we have undertaken a literature review to ensure that the materials developed are informed by the available evidence base and we have developed a number of film-based case studies and an animation script.

Case studies

We have worked in collaboration with representatives from across the UK who have been involved in dealing with the sudden death of a doctor in training, to hear their stories and develop six case studies which share their experience and potential learning points for other deanery teams and educators. To protect anonymity and confidentiality, identifying details have been changed and actors have been used to deliver these stories in short films.

Animations

We have developed a film script for what will likely be the first of three short animations, that will form part of the package of available resources. The working title is 'Responding to the sudden death of a doctor or dentist in training: Supporting deanery teams and educators with initial communication and practical tasks'. Animation work will continue through the coming year ahead of a launch in Autumn 2022.

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BROADER MULTI-PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

Sadly, many health and social care professionals, may at some point be affected by a personal bereavement, and some may also experience the death of a colleague. These situations can be challenging for individuals, managers, teams and organisations.

Whilst the COPMeD work focuses on the sudden death of a doctor or dentist in training, it is closely aligned to a broader piece of work which we are leading within NES on bereavement in the workplace, which relates to a wider multi-professional audience.

This will consider the potential development of resources for:

- + Educators in Scotland who are involved in responding to the sudden death of other postgraduate trainees within NES programmes, e.g. within pharmacy, psychology and optometry. This could cover e.g. undertaking administrative tasks, sharing the news, supporting the wider trainee community and dealing with the trainee's programme.
- + Line managers, teams and colleagues across NES / NHSScotland who are involved in supporting employees who are bereaved or responding to the death of a colleague. This could cover e.g. listening skills, how to talk to people who are bereaved, staff support including when returning to work and psychological first aid.



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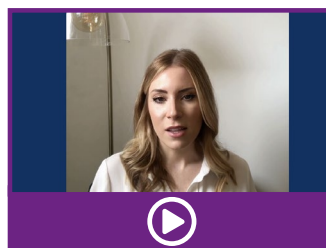
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Grieving as well as possible during a pandemic crisis

This year we were pleased to launch a two-part podcast on 'Grieving as well as possible during a pandemic crisis' which was based on popular webinars we ran in 2020.

Dr Victoria Thompson (Principal Educator, Psychology, NES) hosted and delivered these two sessions which are accessible via the SAD website, alongside additional reading materials:



+ Psychological perspectives on bereavement, loss and grief in the context of a pandemic crisis



+ Psychological approaches to supporting services users who have experienced bereavement, loss, or grief during a pandemic crisis



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Catalogue of film resources

The video resources that we have launched join our suite of other animation and film-based materials which we have been developing over recent years. They aim to support practitioners in conversations around death, dying and bereavement, as well as feature themes related to staff wellbeing. We continue to promote these educational materials to educators and learners across health and social care.

The purpose of our animations is to provide scenario-based resources which are openly accessible and quick to view, with coverage of topics that are perhaps particularly challenging, or not so commonly addressed within pre-existing educational resources.



[View our catalogue of films on our SAD website's video wall](#)



[Delivering the news of a death by telephone](#)



[Talking and being with people who are bereaved](#)



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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The majority of our animated resources are accompanied by a downloadable pdf leaflet of key learning points and in some cases, a guide as to how a film can be used in a group teaching scenario. Over 125 professionals have acted as script reviewers in the process of producing our animations to date.



FILM USAGE AND FEEDBACK

We continue to receive extremely positive feedback on our educational film resources, with requests for permission to use these within teaching and training having been received from across the UK and internationally.

“

Another great resource from the team @NES_Bereavement...

”

“

We use your videos a lot - they are so useful!

”

VIEWING FIGURES

Viewing figures also provide further evidence of the value of these materials for front line health and social care professionals.



Collectively, our films have been viewed **over 90,000 times**



35.5% increase on the overall total views in the last 12 months

‘Coping with death and bereavement as a health and social care professional’ has now been viewed



over 2400 times, an 145% increase on views recorded at the same time last year

Educational resources in development

In addition to the educational materials that we have seen the launch of this year, several other projects are well underway to develop other new resources, in response to identified gaps and feedback from a range of stakeholders.

It is our expectation that these will reach completion in the year ahead. Some examples of topics and resources include:

- + **Organ and Tissue Donation** – Communicating with families: film resources in development with colleagues from NHS National Services Scotland
- + **Bereavement following suicide** – including how to support and talk to those who are bereaved. Scoping work (including the hosting of a stakeholder workshop) has begun to inform the development of educational resources on this topic



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Other collaborative projects

NES BEREAVEMENT INTRANET PAGE

We have also inputted into the formation of content for a new bereavement focussed intranet page for NES staff which includes information on e.g. sources of support and dealing with bereavement in the workplace.

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY ACROSS NES DIRECTORATES

In recognition of the experience that our team has gathered regarding the development of animated educational films, we have contributed to a multidisciplinary NES-wide group which has been working with representatives from the Scottish Cooling Group, the Perinatal Clinical Network and PEEPS, on the development of resources to help support the implementation of the Scottish Neuroprotection Care Pathway for Infants with Hypoxic-Ischaemic Encephalopathy. These resources are scheduled for launch at the NES Annual Conference 2022.



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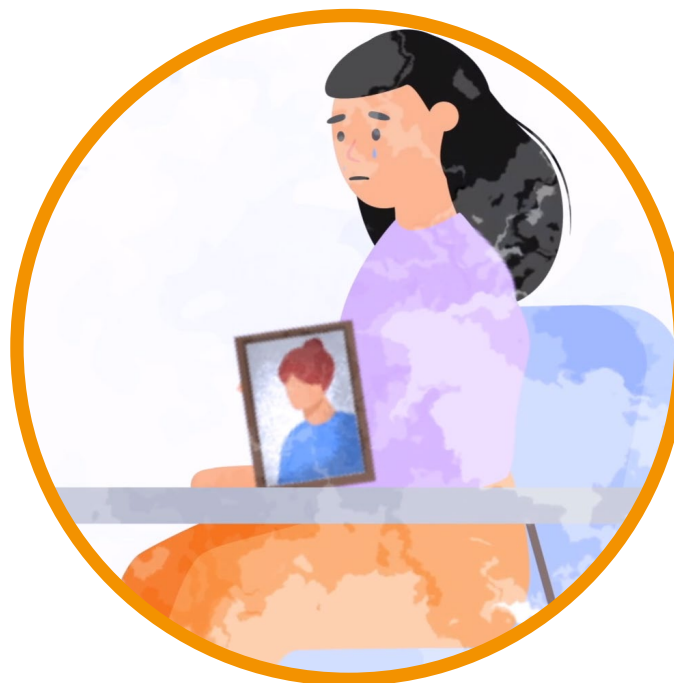
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3. SUPPORTING A NATIONAL BEREAVEMENT AGENDA

Bereavement Charter for Children and Adults in Scotland


Scotland's first Bereavement Charter for Children and Adults was launched in April 2020. The Charter contains 13 statements that describe what the best bereavement care and support should look like in Scotland.

In 2021 we worked with members of the Charter Development Group to lead on the development of a short animation which gives an overview of the Charter and what it means for health and social care professionals. It paints a picture of how our society can become better at supporting people experiencing grief and bereavement, acknowledging that although bereavement is everyone's business, health and social care professionals have a key role in supporting those who are bereaved.



[Read more about the Charter here](#)

A Bereavement Charter for Children and Adults in Scotland



This Charter provides a set of statements which describe how in Scotland we can support a person or a group of people experiencing bereavement. Good bereavement care is a human right. This Charter is underpinned by a desire to make sure that in Scotland, we can do all that we can to support people who might be experiencing difficulties following the death of someone they know or somebody in their community. It is the responsibility of everyone within Scotland to ensure that this is achieved. These are our statements:

IN SCOTLAND, PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN BEREAVED SHOULD:


- be treated with compassion, empathy and kindness
- have their wishes, choices and beliefs listened to, considered and respected by all

SCOTLAND SHOULD BE A PLACE WHERE:

- grief, bereavement and death are recognised as a natural part of life
- there is an open culture which is supportive of people having the opportunity to grieve
- accessing support (including emotional, practical, financial, social, and spiritual) is seen as a right
- efforts are made to ensure that adequate bereavement support is accessible for everyone
- people have space and time to grieve
- it is recognised that bereavement might affect all aspects of a person's life (e.g. relationships, school, workplace)

IN SCOTLAND, PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTIVE OF FRIENDS, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN BEREAVED, WHICH MEANS THAT:

- people's needs and grief reactions are recognised and acknowledged as being different at different times
- grief and bereavement can begin before death and can be lifelong
- people who have been bereaved should feel supported to talk about the person who has died if they wish to
- bereavement and grieving can be experienced by the whole community and not just by individuals
- there is help to know where to refer or signpost people to for additional support



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IN 2021-22 WE ALSO WORKED WITH THE CHARTER DEVELOPMENT GROUP ON THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF ACTIVITY:

- + Contributing as a speaker to the second in a series of Charter webinars called '[Building Compassionate Connections - A webinar on bereavement](#)' which attracted registrations from 120 attendees
- + As part of a subgroup that has been tasked with overseeing the strategic direction for the ongoing development of the Charter, and to agree a future work programme, to ensure it remains current and as far reaching as possible
- + Supported awareness raising, including hosting social media campaigns, and facilitating meetings with MSPs regarding the use of the Charter in Scotland
- + Led on a bi-annual update of the Charter Guidance Notes, to ensure accuracy of existing sections, and to work with a wide group of subject experts to create and include new sections (e.g. on suicide postvention and sudden and traumatic death). [View the updated Guidance Notes here.](#)
- + As part of a working group tasked with standardising endorsement of the use of the Charter mark. This is being supported by the development of a set of draft criteria that is currently being piloted in Inverclyde. The results and further information from the pilot will be available later this year on the [Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief website](#)
- + Led on the development of educational resources for health and social care professionals with the wider Charter Development Group subsequently taking a key role in extending an educational approach to all organisations, agencies and the general public



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Representing the NES Bereavement workstream

We continue to represent NES on nationally aligned pieces of work, having team representation on e.g. the Death Certification Review Service Management Board and the Bereavement Charter for Children & Adults in Scotland Development Group.



4. SUPPORTING NHS HEALTH BOARDS

NHS Board Bereavement Strategic Leads & Coordinators Network

We continue to support this network which is composed of one or two individuals from each Scottish NHS Health Board who have a role as a Bereavement Strategic Lead or Coordinator. It is a multidisciplinary group with individuals having a variety of backgrounds e.g. spiritual care, palliative care, nursing and allied healthcare professionals. Members are typically experienced in terms of bereavement care, staff support and wellbeing.

EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS

We have listened and responded to the views of network members to ensure that we are facilitating meetings as effectively as possible and with the appropriate frequency, as the needs of the group evolve, taking into account the changing demands on Health Boards in recent times.

We have developed a new way for network members to connect, by incorporating catch-up sessions within the virtual quarterly educational meetings that we host. Following feedback from the group the more frequent catch-up meetings that had been established earlier on in the COVID-19 pandemic have been discontinued.

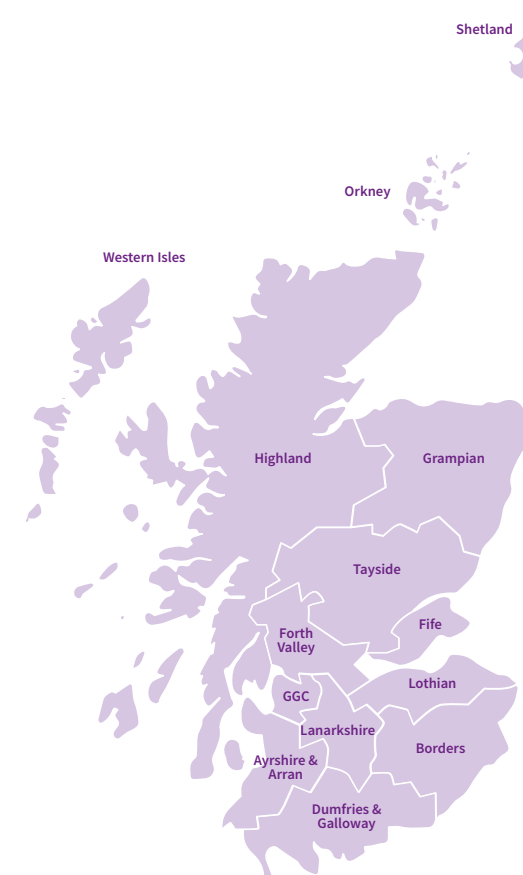
The current virtual meeting format has allowed those within remote, rural and island Health Boards to attend more easily and potentially more frequently. Regular quarterly meetings continue to be well attended and provide a valuable opportunity for:

- + sharing learning, challenges, queries, ideas and experiences

- + disseminating best practice information or policy updates

- + highlighting newly created educational resources, support services or events

- + raising questions regarding bereavement-related care or practice and the seeking of support on possible solutions



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Meetings have seen speakers attend from a wide variety of organisations. Examples of topics covered include e.g.

- + [The work of the Death Certification Review Service](#)
- + [A national service to support people bereaved by suicide](#)
- + [The work of the UK Bereavement Commission](#)
- + [Mental health aspects of bereavement](#)
- + [Covid Community Memorial Programme](#)

NETWORK MEMBER GUIDE

This year we developed a new guidance pack for group members, to raise awareness about the NES Supporting Scottish Grief & Bereavement Care workstream, how it supports the Network and its wider aims in supporting the health and social care workforce to deliver the best possible bereavement care Scotland-wide.

The guide aims to familiarise members with the support that NES can provide for them within their bereavement roles and the wider work of the group. It covers areas such as meetings, governance, communication, funding opportunities, and use of the thistle image on bereavement resources at local Health Board level.

For more information on the thistle image [see page 37](#).



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Funding opportunities for NHS Health Boards

A short-term development funding award scheme which we launched in 2018-19, continues to give NHS Health Boards in Scotland the opportunity to apply for finance to support small projects and pieces of work around grief and bereavement care.

NHS Board Strategic Lead and Bereavement Coordinator Network members also continue to be able to apply for funding, to support their attendance at educational and development events relevant to their bereavement role. Other Board Leads may then benefit from information gathered when learning and key points are disseminated via presentations delivered at quarterly Network meetings.



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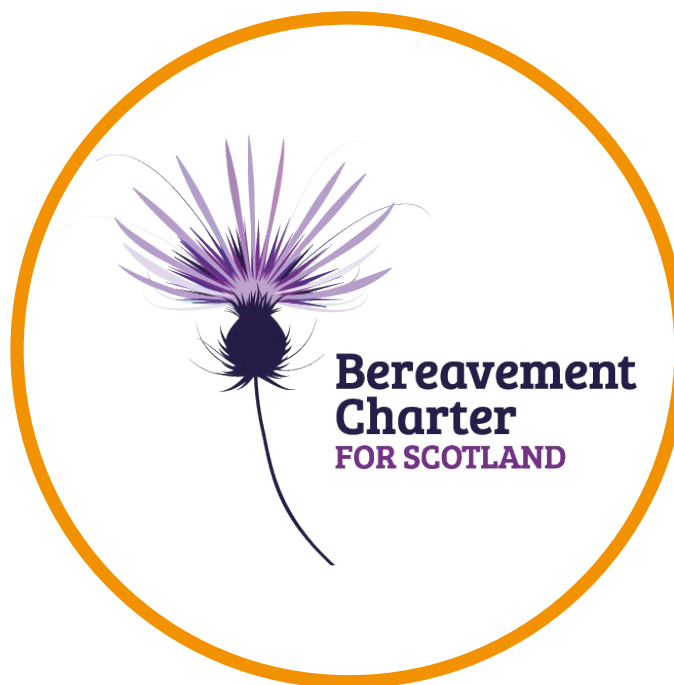
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Thistle image

In conjunction with the NHS Board Bereavement Strategic Leads & Coordinators Network, we were previously involved in the development of this image, which is now increasingly being used to identify bereavement-related materials across Scotland.

It was originally produced for use by the Scottish Government on their booklet and folder for people who have been bereaved: 'When Someone Has Died'.

More recently it has been used as a basis for the branding and logo of the Bereavement Charter for Children and Adults in Scotland. We aim to monitor and keep a track of how and where the thistle image is being used.



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5. STAFF WELLBEING

We continue to recognise the importance of considering how our workstream can help to support health and social care professionals' wellbeing, recognising particularly how experiencing bereavement in the course of one's work can have negative impact.

As such, a number of our educational resources have included coverage of topics related to wellbeing. This theme has also been woven through a lot of our webinar events and annual conference programme.

SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- + Launch of new film resources on e.g. 'Ripples of grief: Tips for looking after those who are bereaved and your own wellbeing' and 'Dealing with death and bereavement at work: perspectives from an Emergency Department team'
- + The development of work around the theme of bereavement in the workplace
- + Launch of podcasts on 'Grieving as well as possible during a pandemic crisis'
- + Hosting of webinar sessions e.g. 'The compassionate space in bereavement support'

We are also collaborating with colleagues across NES to explore how pastoral and other support offerings, for example listening support, might be made available for those working within NES.

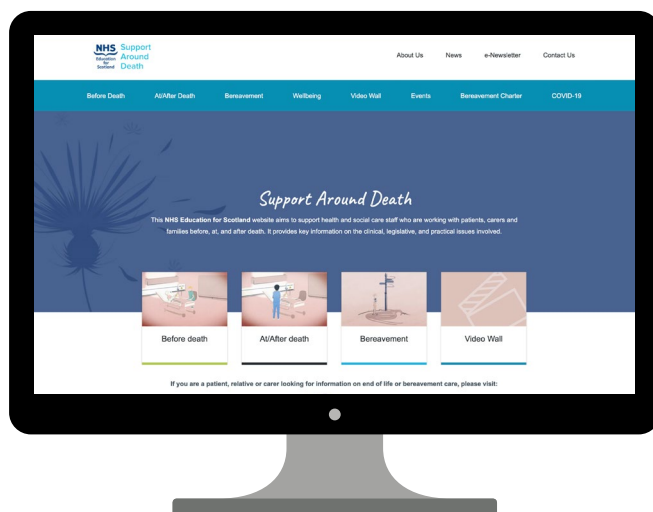
More information on these areas of work and links to the available resources can be found earlier in this report, e.g. at pages 8-9, 21-22 and 24-26.



[Visit the SAD website page on Wellbeing for other information, links and resources](#)

6. DIGITAL

Support Around Death Website



In tandem with the day-to-day oversight and maintenance of the Support Around Death (SAD) website, we have continued the work of developing new content and reviewing existing material, to ensure that all information provided for health and social care professionals is as accurate, relevant, and up to date as possible.

The website enables users to:

- + Access information and educational resources on bereavement and care around the time of death
- + Identify bereavement-related learning events e.g. conferences and webinars
- + Learn about best practice guidelines and research

Since it has been several years since the website originally launched, this year has seen us embark on the early stages of reviewing its branding and functionality, looking at how we can ensure the site's purpose is as clear and transparent as possible, and tailored to its target audience of health and social care professionals. This process is likely to involve:

- + the reformatting of pages to enhance clarity and ease of use
- + a new, more clear and more accessible font
- + an improved search function
- + consideration of a new title and branding
- + an expansion and reformatting of our Events section
- + redevelopment and relaunch of our Learning & Resources page - focusing on how the information can be presented and catalogued in a way that makes it as easy as possible for professionals to access relevant material to support their learning



Visit the [Support Around Death website](#)

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Usage data demonstrates that the SAD website is an increasingly well-used resource for health and social care staff across Scotland and abroad.

This year the website has seen:

 **31,000 users**

 **81,000 page views**

 **Users from 142 countries**

 **Users viewing an average of 2 pages per visit**

As part of our quality assurance processes, we have developed a robust system to ensure a regular cycle of review for all website pages as well as our digitally hosted resources. Where appropriate, input from subject matter experts is sought to support this. A regular digital audit is also integral to this, ensuring that all resources are compatible with current web browsers and accessibility standards, allowing users the best functionality.



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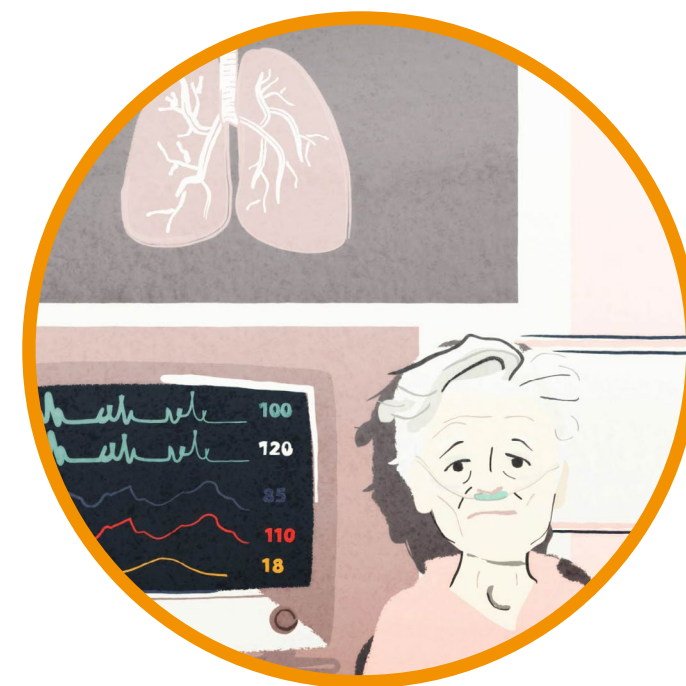
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Turas Learn

We have continued to maintain and expand our content on Turas Learn (NES' platform for learning and support resources) this year, including the material on our [Death, Dying and Bereavement pages](#). These pages provide users with a flavour of the wider range of information and educational resources which are hosted on our [SAD website](#).

Work is currently underway to refresh the layout and structure of our landing page and to re-catalogue the resources hosted here to ensure that health and social care professionals can swiftly and easily locate the most appropriate and useful learning resource for their specific requirements.

We have also maintained our presence on the [Scotland Deanery Website](#).



Accessibility

We remain committed to considering the accessibility of all our resources where possible.

Examples include:

- + the availability of closed caption subtitles and / or a transcript within our newly developed (and most of our older) film resources
- + a focus on appropriate font sizing and form across our resources
- + maintaining adherence to NES Design and Branding guidelines on accessible visual layouts within our webpages and written materials



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7. COMMUNICATIONS

Publicity and promotion

We continue to try and publicise the availability of our educational resources and events to the widest possible audience of interested health and social care professionals across Scotland. We utilise various different methods of communication to help support this, including social media, an e-newsletter, our SAD website, attendance at conferences and events, and the dissemination of information via particular groups and networks e.g. NHS Health Board Bereavement Leads.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Since the recent implementation of a structured programme of regular posts, covering all aspects of our work and output, we are delighted to report a 12.5% growth in Twitter followers to our [@NES_Bereavement](#) account. We also receive support from the corporate NES social media accounts to help in the promotion of our work.



At present we have over 1,800 followers

E-NEWSLETTER

In 2021 we overhauled the design of our quarterly Bereavement Update e-Newsletter, moving to a standard, visually engaging, bold and colourful image-based format in the hope that this would direct readers quickly to the material that is relevant to their learning needs.

We continue to look for ways to promote the circulation, e.g. via Twitter and our website, and share information on how health and social care professionals who are interested to subscribe can do so.



[Sign up to our e-newsletter](#)



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Conferences and events

POSTERS

This year we had poster abstracts accepted for presentation at the following conferences / events:

- + **NES Annual Virtual Conference, May 2021** – ‘Helping no-one to die alone; Supporting staff in the absence of families and Spiritual care provision during the pandemic’.

This poster showcased two online educational resources for frontline health and social care professionals: ‘[Supporting the spiritual care needs of those who are nearing the end of life](#)’ and ‘[Caring for people who are dying and those close to them amidst COVID-19 visiting restrictions](#)’.

NHS
Education for Scotland

Helping no-one to die alone

Supporting staff in the absence of families and spiritual care provision during the pandemic

Dr Clare Tucker, Dr Janice Turner, Dr Graham Whyte and Dr Ken Donaldson (NHS Education for Scotland)

Rationale

COVID-19 has caused some people who are dying to have found themselves isolated from those close to them and their usual networks of support. This has led to health and social care staff struggling to fill the void. There is evidence to support that these distressing and challenging situations have had a significant and detrimental impact on peoples' experience of bereavement – both for families and those caring for their relatives at the end of life.^{1,2}

Methods and Results

We identified an immediate need to support frontline staff and, in collaboration with subject experts, we promptly developed and launched two online educational resources. These are quick to read, openly accessible on any device (also produced in a printable format) and are reflective of the pandemic situation e.g. depictions of personal protective equipment.

- **Supporting the spiritual care needs of those who are nearing the end of life**
Not knowing what to say, or the fear of saying the wrong thing, could lead professionals to avoid conversations about spiritual care which may contribute to a person's sense of isolation and distress, and also be upsetting for their family, potentially later adding to their grief if they feel that their relative's needs were not met.
- **Caring for people who are dying and those close to them amidst COVID-19 visiting restrictions**
This provides practical advice and support in situations where a person's family or friends are unable to be with them around the time of death. It includes advice about means of virtual communication to maintain connection with and between families.

Conclusions

These resources help frontline health and social care staff feel more prepared and confident to do the best that they can during challenging and upsetting circumstances, by improving communication and care and supporting their own and their colleagues' wellbeing. They are part of a suite of bereavement-related educational materials for health and social care staff which are available on www.sad.scot.nhs.uk.

In the 12 month period up to March 2021:

- Over 33,000 website users have totalled over 94,000 page views
- Over 68% increase in website users versus those seen in the previous year
- The website has been accessed from 142 countries and users view on average 2.10 pages per visit

References

¹ Hurrell S, Farnell D, Lango M, Goss S, Sutton F, Seddon K, Nelson A, Byrne A, Selman L E. Supporting people bereaved during COVID-19. *Study Report 2*, 27 November 2020. www.nhs.uk and the University of Bristol

² Pearce C, Honey JE, Lovick K, et al. A silent epidemic of grief: a survey of bereavement care provision in the UK and Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMC Open* 2021;11:046872. [doi:10.1186/s12916-020-04687-2](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-020-04687-2)

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For more information
✉ supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk
🌐 www.sad.scot.nhs.uk
🐦 @NES_Bereavement

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View the poster

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+ **Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care Autumn 2021 Virtual Poster Exhibition – ‘Anticipatory Grief: A New Educational Resource for Health & Social Care Staff’.**

Anticipatory Grief: A New Educational Resource for Health & Social Care Staff

Cameron Herbert, Ken Donaldson, Graham Whyte, Janice Turner, Clare Tucker, Rosanne Suarez
NHS Education for Scotland (NES)

Abbreviated abstract: Anticipatory or 'living' grief, is when someone experiences feelings of loss before the time of a death. This is often found following a diagnosis such as dementia, a terminal condition, or in families of children with a life-limiting, or life-altering condition. We explore the development of a new short animated video resource for health and social care professionals on anticipatory grief with advice on how to support those experiencing this.

References:

- A Bereavement Charter for Adults and Children in Scotland. (2020) <https://scotlandbereavement.org/bereavement/>
- A. Coello et al. Current Opinions in Supportive and Palliative Care 12(1):52-57(2018)

supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk

www.sad.scot.nhs.uk

View the poster

+ **NES Bereavement Education Conference November 2021 – ‘Anticipatory Grief: A New Educational Resource for Health & Social Care Staff’.**

Anticipatory Grief: A New Educational Resource for Health & Social Care Staff

Cameron Herbert, Ken Donaldson, Graham Whyte, Janice Turner, Clare Tucker, Rosanne Suarez, NHS Education for Scotland (NES)

Abbreviated abstract: Anticipatory or 'living' grief, is when someone experiences feelings of loss before the time of a death. This is often found following a diagnosis such as dementia, other terminal conditions, or in families of children with a life-limiting, or life-altering condition. We explore the development of a new short animated video resource for health and social care professionals on anticipatory grief with advice on how to support those experiencing this.

References:

- A Bereavement Charter for Adults and Children in Scotland. (2020) <https://scotlandbereavement.org/bereavement/>
- A. Coello et al. Current Opinions in Supportive and Palliative Care 12(1):52-57(2018)

supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk @NES_Bereavement www.sad.scot.nhs.uk

View the poster

We also produced a new promotional poster intended for display on the NES exhibition stand at the Developing Excellence in Medical Education conference, December 2021, which signposted to, and highlighted our suite of bereavement-related animated film resources.

NHS Education for Scotland

Death, dying and bereavement
Educational resources for healthcare professionals

Since 2014, NHS Education for Scotland has led on work that aims to enhance health and social care professionals' preparedness to manage safe and effective care and communication around the time of death and in bereavement. This work is predominantly through the development of educational resources, based on a Scottish context but used throughout the UK and internationally.

The resources are available via the Support around Death website - www.sad.scot.nhs.uk

Anticipatory grief

Discussing dying

Withdrawal of Active Treatment in an Intensive Care Setting

Supporting Families around the Resuscitation of a Baby or Child

Supporting Families around the Resuscitation of an Adult Family Member

Delivering the news of a death by telephone

Talking and being with people who are bereaved

Talking to children who are bereaved

Stories for Education: Living with Death

Coping with death and bereavement as a health and social care professional

Breaking the news of intrauterine death

Dealing with unsuccessful neonatal resuscitation

Discussing Authorised (Hospital) Post Mortem Examination After Stillbirth or Neonatal Death

Discussing Adult Authorised (Hospital) Post Mortem Examination

Understanding the processes following a sudden or unexplained death

Bereavement Charter for Children & Adults in Scotland: What does it mean for health and social care professionals?

"Fantastic videos. Use them regularly for teaching."
"Great training resource that would be helpful to many different health and social care professionals."

supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk www.sad.scot.nhs.uk @NES_Bereavement

View the poster

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SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

We are pleased to have been confirmed as speakers to lead the following sessions later in 2022:

- 1. NES Annual Virtual Conference, April 2022 –**
Seminar: 'Supporting Health and Social Care staff with Grief and Bereavement: Lessons from the Pandemic'
- 2. The Remote and Rural Scottish Centre of Excellence Festival of Learning, September 2022 –**
Workshop: 'Because Grief Matters – Recognising the Need for Education around Death and Bereavement'



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Publications and awards

We have been pleased to see our work on the development of the [Anticipatory Grief animation](#) featured as a case study in the NES Year in Review.

Our workstream was also recognised as highly commended within NES' 8th Medical Directorate Awards in the category of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, announced at the NES Annual Conference in May 2021. This is given in recognition of achievement and commitment to supporting diverse and inclusive practices in a medical education context. Examples of our educational resources in this area include [‘Supporting the spiritual care needs of those who are nearing the end of life’](#) and [‘Supporting LGBT+ people around death and bereavement’](#).



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Presentations

We have welcomed the opportunity to speak about our work to a number of different groups and at various meetings and events.

These have included, e.g.

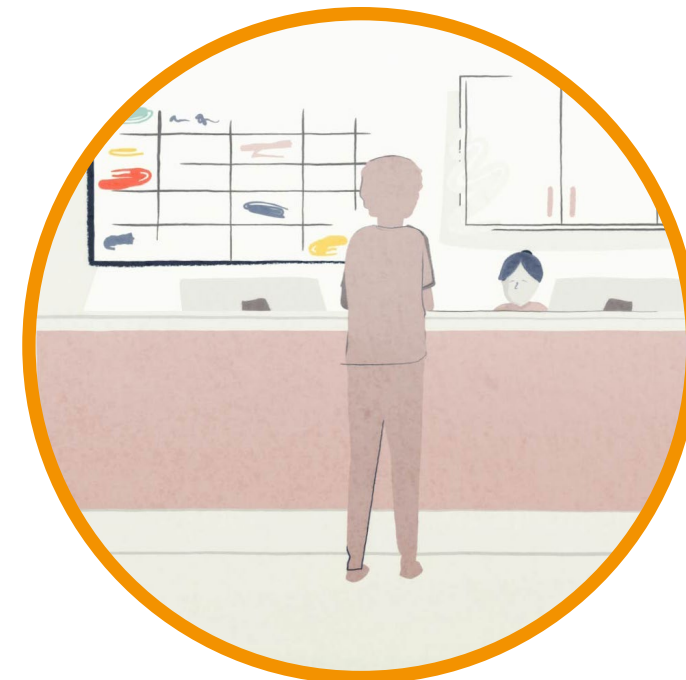
- + A presentation to the Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care Partners 'Palliative Care Education in Scotland' Meeting, April 2021
- + 'Because Grief Matters – Recognising the need for good bereavement care' – presentation as part of the Postgraduate MSc in Palliative Care course at the University of Glasgow, May 2021
- + Various presentations delivered to Training Programme Management teams within the Scotland Deanery who are involved in overseeing medical training



Responding to requests for support and information

As part of providing ongoing support to health and social care professionals on their learning and development requirements around bereavement, we manage all queries submitted to us via the 'Contact us' form on the SAD website and also respond to emails received at our mailbox (SupportAroundDeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk). Some of this correspondence has been sent from other parts of the UK and internationally.

We regularly receive a wide range of queries, a large number of which involve health and social care professionals searching for education / resources on topics relevant to death, dying and bereavement. In addition to this, we are increasingly fielding queries from those not looking for educational materials, including those who are bereaved seeking out further guidance and support. Whatever the query, we endeavour to respond to all communications in a timely fashion and redirect appropriately / signpost onwards to other sources of information and support if it is not our primary area of focus.



PART C: LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022-23



In 2022-23 we are looking forward to building on the achievements of this year as we continue to work to support health and social care professionals' feelings of preparedness to manage bereavement-related situations, as well as consider their own wellbeing.

We will continue to host a webinar programme and will deliver another annual conference in November 2022, to support the availability of high-quality bereavement-related educational initiatives and to encourage networking, shared learning and ultimately increase the profile of bereavement care in Scotland. We will also continue to facilitate national learning networks for the sharing of best practice in bereavement care and disseminate information about our, and other relevant educational materials and learning opportunities, through the production of a quarterly e-newsletter and the management of an active social media account.

In the year ahead we will also add to our toolkit of educational resources, work on a rolling programme of updates for those that may require a refresh and further expand and develop our online presence with materials hosted on the SAD website and Turas Learn. Regarding death certification specifically, we will continue to build on existing work with the DCRS to refresh information and develop new learning materials. Fatal Accident Inquiry resources will be updated and refreshed.

FOCUS WILL BE GIVEN IN THE YEAR TO COME TO PROGRESSING VARIOUS OTHER INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES INCLUDING:

- + the creation of new educational resources around the theme of dealing with bereavement in the workplace, including following the sudden death of a doctor or dentist in training, the death of a trainee in another discipline and materials for teams and line managers
- + the development of an educational resource for medical staff on body donation
- + the ways in which we can encourage the inclusion of bereavement themes and topics within undergraduate curricula
- + the launch of a new 'Bereavement Basics' e-learning module, with applicability to all across health and social care
- + consideration of the role that simulation can play in a bereavement education context including the potential development of scenario-based film clips featuring actors in simulated conversations / consultations
- + exploring the potential development of a bereavement training course



Want to know more?

If you are a health or social care professional in Scotland and would like to be kept up to date with our future activities and developments, you may wish to sign up to receive the [NES quarterly Bereavement Update e-Newsletter](#) or follow us on Twitter [@NES_Bereavement](#)

This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please contact us on **0131 656 3200** or email **altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk** to discuss how we can best meet your requirements.



NHS Education for Scotland
Westport 102
West Port
Edinburgh
EH3 9DN

www.nes.scot.nhs.uk

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