

Supporting Scottish Grief & Bereavement Care Workstream

Annual report 2020-21



FOREWORD

This has been a year like no other and has brought to the forefront the importance of health and social care professionals being prepared to support people around death, dying and bereavement. Over the past 12 months staff have witnessed first-hand the devastating effects of COVID-19 and the impact of the pandemic is something we are going to have to deal with for years to come.

Sadly, many people have been exposed to far more death and dying than they would be in their normal practice and this has often been under challenging circumstances, for example, if a person's family or close friends have been unable to see them before they die or sit with them at the time of death. Having to have a lot of difficult conversations virtually via video or telephone has added another layer of complexity which many staff have found very traumatic.

There have also unfortunately been a number of situations where health and social care professionals have experienced the death of a colleague and restrictions put in place due to COVID-19 have prevented people from being able to gather and support each other as they normally would.

In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic we recognised as a team that we needed to quickly adapt not only the type of learning resources we were producing but also in the way we were delivering education. This included significant achievements such as the development of a Bereavement webinar series covering a range of topics which has been well attended and evaluated. It has been inspiring to see the collaborative efforts of so many colleagues around Scotland, devoting their time whilst working under a lot of other pressures, to help develop such a range of valuable resources and this is greatly appreciated.



To help manage the breadth and complexity of the work being delivered in response to COVID-19, our team has expanded to enable us to continue creating and delivering high quality learning materials for a growing number of health and social care professionals. We had also hoped this year to be able to build on the success of our inaugural National Bereavement Education Conference in 2019. Sadly, we have had to take the difficult decision to postpone this on two occasions but are hopeful we can rearrange this for later in the year and this will still allow people to learn and reflect from the excellent range of speakers we have planned.

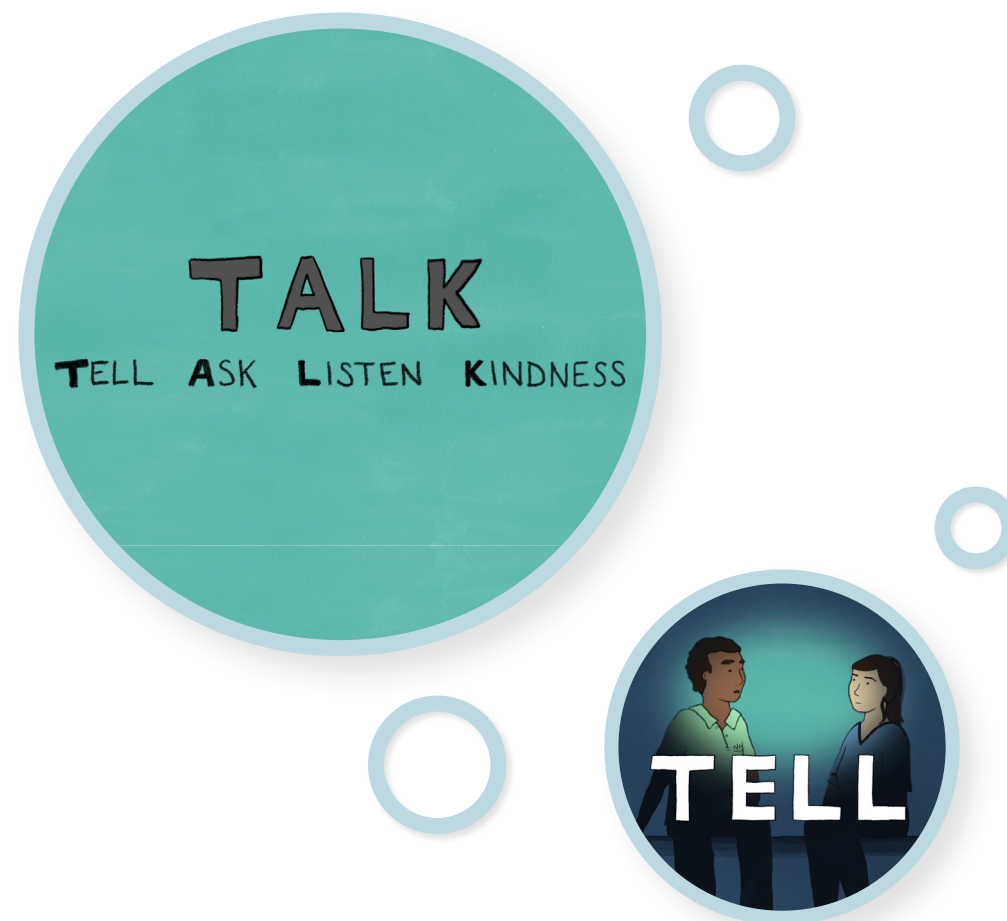
Finally, we would like to re-emphasize the importance of staff support and wellbeing. The need to recognise and acknowledge this when dealing with some of the difficult situations colleagues have had to face over the past 12 months cannot be underestimated, and this is an area we have prioritised as a team. We have launched resources including an animated film based on a new acronym 'TALK' which is designed to encourage staff to Tell colleagues how they are feeling, Ask for help and support, Listen to one another and perhaps most importantly be Kind to yourself and others.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present many challenges but hopefully there is some light at the end of the tunnel and this report highlights how important it is, that preparing and supporting health and social care professionals to provide high quality bereavement care remains part of the conversation.

Dr Graham Whyte

Dr Ken Donaldson

Associate Postgraduate Deans NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Grief and Bereavement Workstream



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OUR VISION

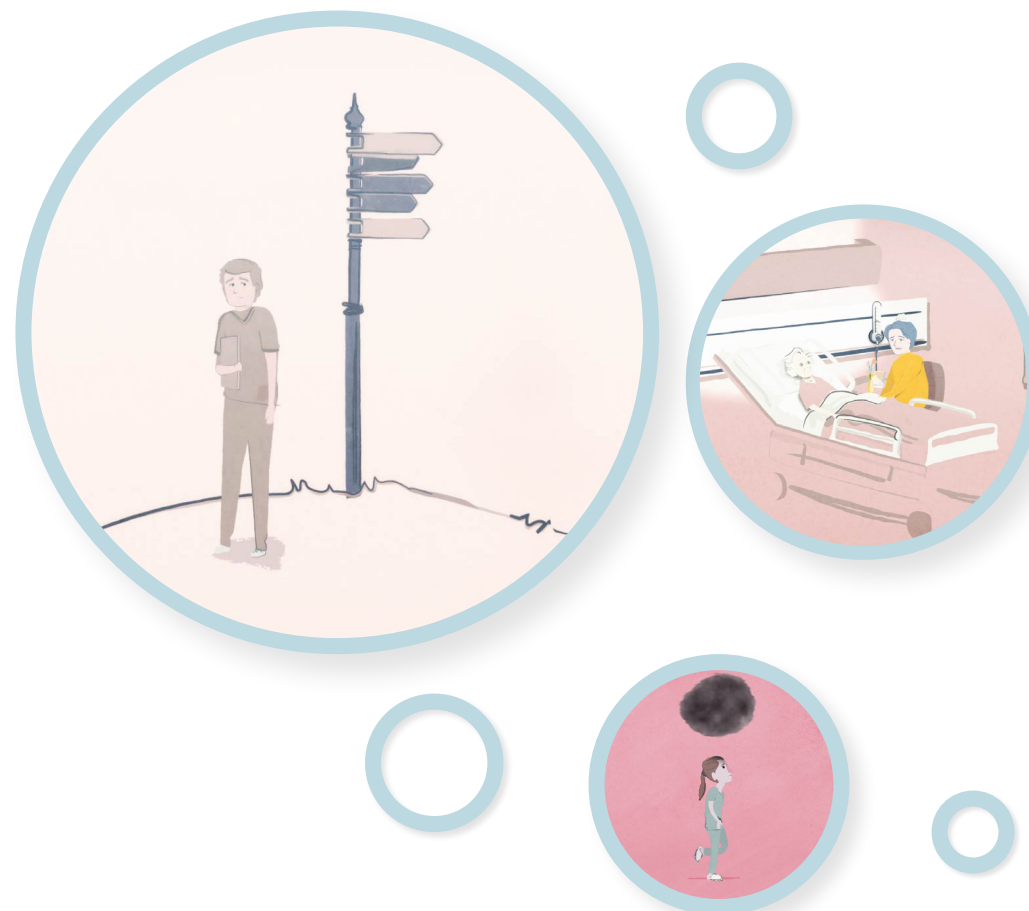
To support the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care which is provided, before, at and after death, to those who are at the end of life and to the bereaved, within a culture of support for staff health, wellbeing and resilience.

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 professionals' preparedness to manage care and communication around the time of death and in bereavement
- + We have historically had a particular focus on the needs of medical staff but are increasingly broadening out this remit to consider all those who work within health and / or social care

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. This has been particularly pertinent in 2020-21 as the clinical and care landscape has changed dramatically with the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitations, pressures and new ways of working that this has brought.



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Responding to COVID-19

We have created and produced a variety of educational resources and learning opportunities to support health and social care professionals to deliver the best care possible and support those who are bereaved during the challenges of the last year.

We responded swiftly to emerging needs early in the pandemic, working in collaboration with NES colleagues and multi-professional subject experts from a diverse range of health and social care backgrounds to develop resources across a range of topics.

Emphasis was put on the development of concise, easily accessible and digital materials suitable for frontline health & social care staff working in a rapidly changing environment.



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Caring for people who are dying and those close to them amidst COVID-19 visiting restrictions – Things to consider for health and social care professionals

We launched this resource in May 2020 to provide practical advice, guidance and support to staff in situations where a person's family or close friends are unable to see them before they die or to sit with them at the time of death. It aims to help frontline health and social care professionals feel more prepared and confident to do the best that they can during challenging and upsetting circumstances. It covers:

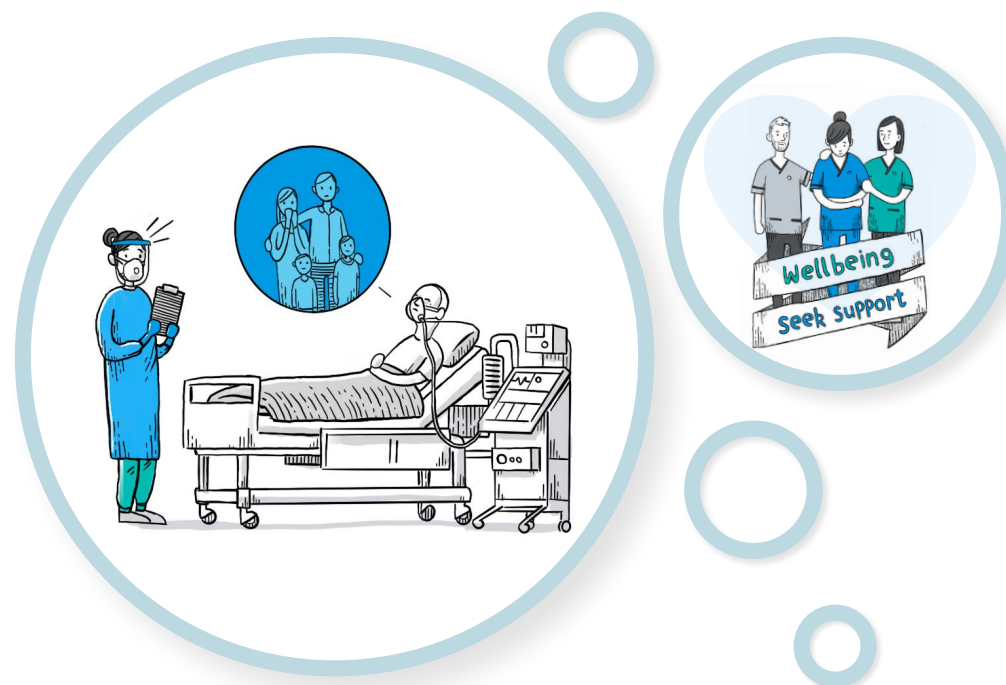
- + Principles and approaches to keeping in touch with families
- + Managing phone and video calls
- + The importance of cultural traditions or faith rituals and practices
- + Ways to help families maintain feelings of connection
- + A focus on staff wellbeing and support for team members

“

Concise, practical, realistic and highly relevant

Professor Alan Dennison,
Dean of Postgraduate Medicine, NHS Education for Scotland

”



[Click here to access the resource](#)

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Supporting the spiritual care needs of those who are nearing the end of life – Key points for health and social care staff during the Coronavirus pandemic

In June 2020 we launched guidance, in response to restrictions that may have prevented families, representatives of the belief communities or local chaplains from offering usual forms of spiritual care support to those who are sick or dying. This resource development benefitted from input from spiritual care and chaplaincy colleagues from across a number of NHS Health Boards.

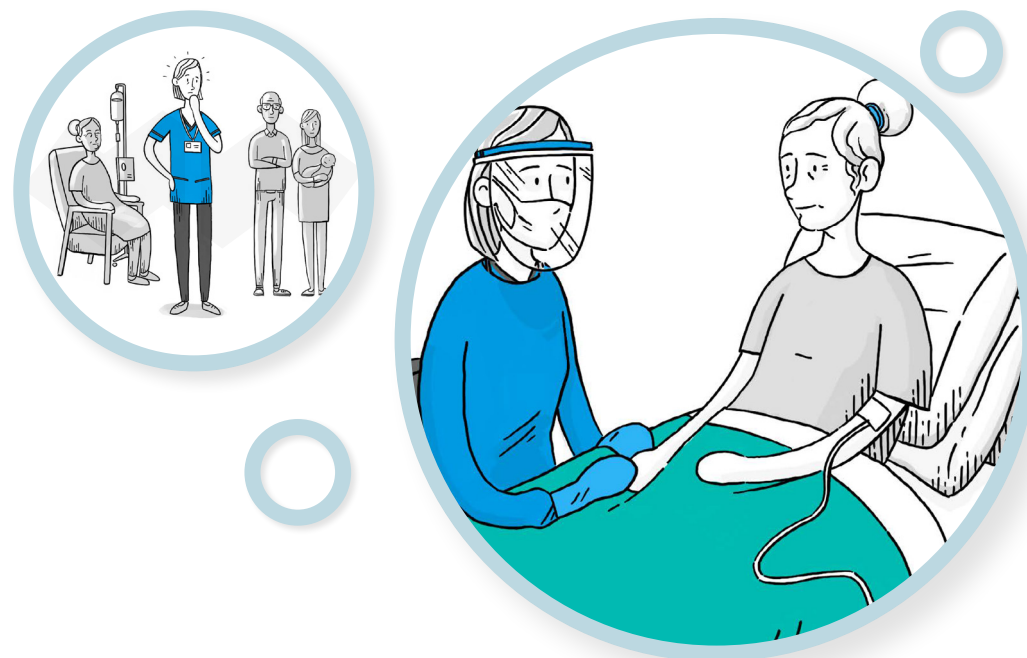
It offers health and social care staff key points and general principles to help equip them for conversations with those who are approaching the end of life.

“

By its very nature, Spiritual Care can be elusive and difficult to describe or explain. Yet our spirituality, our values and our beliefs, are core to who we are; they shape and inform our very being. At the end of life, Spiritual Care affirms that tears and laughter, sorrow and joy, the known and unknown are all normal parts of human experience. This resource offers to health and social care staff easy to use guidance on how to support the spiritual needs of the dying, the bereaved and staff.

Mark Evans,
Head of Spiritual Care & Bereavement Lead, NHS Fife

”



[Click here to access the resource](#)

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Dealing with bereavement in the workplace

This year we developed a package of resources aimed at supporting line managers and teams around situations of bereavement; helping them to identify responses and actions to support employees and colleagues who are bereaved in the workplace. Although these were created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic the materials include key points that are applicable and helpful in all situations.

- + [Employees who are bereaved – Key points for line managers in health and social care during the Coronavirus pandemic](#)
- + [Experiencing the death of a colleague – Key points for staff, teams and managers in health and social care](#)



[Our resources and materials on this theme can be found here](#)



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NES Bereavement Events

Bereavement webinar programme

A particular focus this year has been placed on expanding our range of virtual learning events for health and social care staff across Scotland. We have established a monthly bereavement webinar series which has been very well received, with interest noted from across the UK and internationally.



“
Excellent presentations and very topical...
”

“
Well paced, relevant, credible, thank you...
”

“
Good balance of theoretical research info and practical responses...
”

“
The content was informative and useful and was presented well by the speakers...
”

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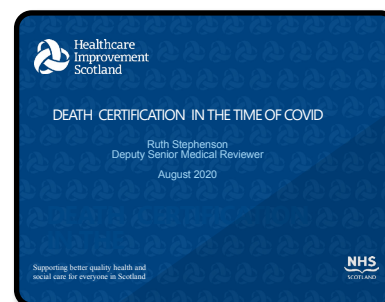
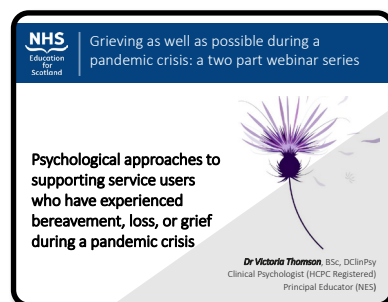
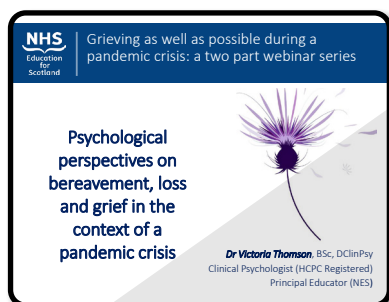
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We have hosted nine subject experts from a diverse range of professional backgrounds and organisations, who have together enabled us to deliver a total of seven engaging and interactive webinars to date.



[Psychological perspectives on bereavement, loss and grief in the context of a pandemic crisis](#)

[Psychological approaches to supporting service users who have experienced bereavement, loss, or grief during a pandemic crisis](#)

[Death Certification in the time of COVID](#)

[Managing bereavement in the workplace](#)



[Supporting children who are bereaved during and after the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

[Dealing with bereavement as a health and social care worker in remote and rural communities](#)

[Bereavement following substance use](#)



We have recorded and edited video and podcast recordings from many of the sessions which are openly accessible on our [website](#), along with a selection of PowerPoint slides and additional resources.

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Webinar speakers have represented organisations including Healthcare Improvement Scotland, St Columba's Hospice and Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs, as well as coming from a number of NHSScotland Boards (NES, NHS Fife, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, NHS Golden Jubilee and NHS Highland).

Whilst these free, one-hour webinars were initially established in response to COVID-19, the themes covered have broadened to include bereavement-related topics that aren't purely related to the pandemic. Our planning of future sessions has been heavily informed by feedback from webinar participants and learning needs reported by frontline staff.

LOOKING AHEAD

We have committed to continuing the [webinar series into 2021-22](#) in response to its success this year. Session planning is underway and will likely see coverage of topics including:

- + Supporting LGBT+ people around death and bereavement
- + Complicated or prolonged grief reactions
- + Psychological and social responses to bereavement from major incidents
- + Medical Certification of Cause of Death



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NES Bereavement Education conference 2021:

The Changing Face of Bereavement: Providing care and maintaining our own wellbeing during the pandemic

This year we have built on the enormous success of the [inaugural NES Bereavement Education conference](#) which took place on 11 November 2019 at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and which was hugely oversubscribed, by planning a second national event.

PROGRAMME

This has been planned to cater to the learning needs of a broad a range of health and social care professionals. We will explore a range of bereavement-related topics, with a strong focus on case scenarios, attention to how the pandemic has changed ways of working, and sharing of best practice examples. We have also ensured that themes around staff wellbeing are brought to the fore, acknowledging the challenging experiences that those working in frontline settings may have faced over the course of the pandemic.



[Find out more about the NES Bereavement conference 2021](#)

Through a mixture of plenary and breakout sessions, the 2021 programme will cover topics including:

- + The Deepest Wound: Healing and Hope in the Midst of Hurt - Grief and Bereavement in a Pandemic Age
- + Stories and Experiences during the Pandemic – Including Perspectives from Social Care and Intensive Care
- + Ritual, Memories and Preparing for Death: Exploring Good Practice and Barriers
- + What Happens to your Digital Assets after you Die and How do you Plan for a Digital Legacy?
- + Psychological Perspectives on Bereavement, Loss and Grief: Proactive Approaches to Support others and the Importance of Compassionate Resilience for Staff Wellbeing
- + Bereavement Support for Families after Critical Illness
- + Bereavement and Kinship Care
- + Supporting Palliative Care Patients and their Children
- + A Doctor at the Heart of the Pandemic: What I Learned About Death, Bereavement and Wellbeing

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We are grateful to the individuals and organisations who have indicated their willingness to be involved in speaking or leading sessions at the event and we look forward to welcoming them, alongside delegates, to what should be a highly engaging and thought-provoking conference later next year.

CONFERENCE DATE

Due to the pressures of COVID-19 a decision was taken to postpone the conference until later in 2021 to enable more delegates to attend, but we remain committed to hosting the event.

We're pleased to have already received a great deal of interest in the event from potential delegates.



Explore [#NESBereavement2021](#)

LAST YEAR'S DELEGATES SAID:

“

I had the chance to learn from passionate people at the top of their game and at the cutting edge of the Bereavement revolution.

”

“

Powerful in all cases to hear real life stories from various perspectives.

”

“

All excellent presentations highlighting death on different areas of healthcare and the impact this can have on everyone involved.

”

“

A strong reminder of how our colleagues can [be] affected by very sad situations at work. They may not talk about them, but it would be worth asking if they are OK.

”

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Toolkit of Educational Resources

This year we have continued to build on our range of bereavement-related training materials for health and social care professionals by developing new ones and updating others, with a particular focus on COVID-19-related resources (see section 1).

The majority of these are available on our [Support around Death \(SAD\) website](#).

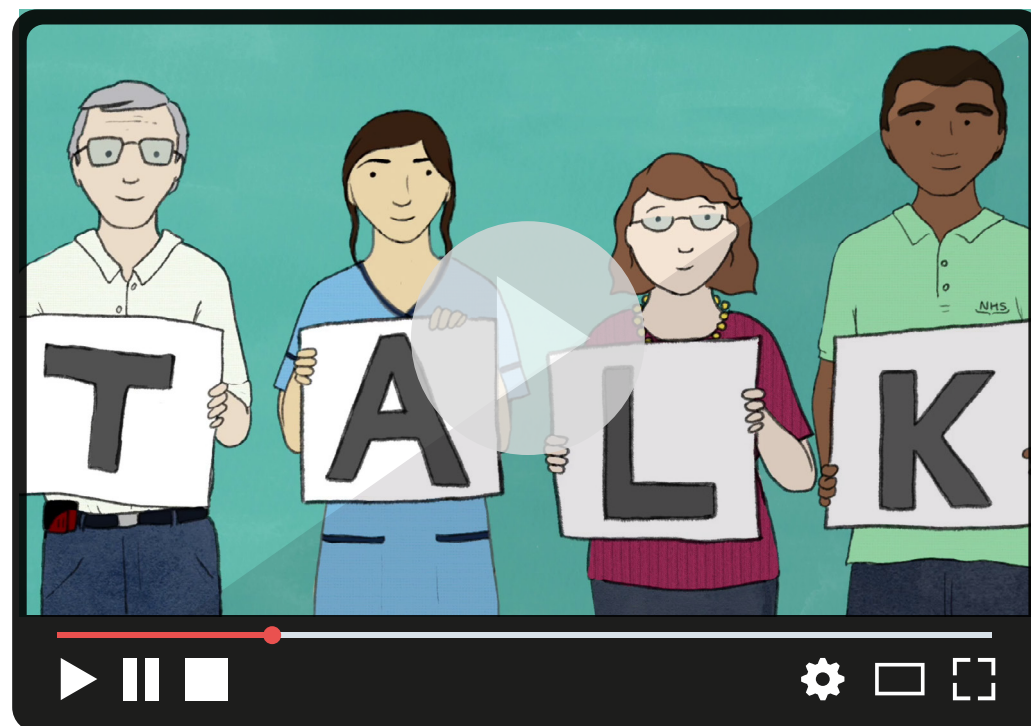
Animated films

We have maintained a focus on developing film materials that are short in length and scenario-based, which aim to enhance learning and relevance within already busy clinical and educational environments. Our suite of animations which support practitioners in conversations around death, dying and bereavement can all be accessed via our [website](#).

We remain committed to considering accessibility e.g. with the addition of closed caption subtitles, provision of a transcript and a focus on appropriate font sizing and form across our range of films.

NEW ANIMATION LAUNCHED

This year we launched a new animation '[Coping with death and bereavement as a health and social care professional](#)'. It introduces an acronym TALK (Tell, Ask, Listen, Kindness) which 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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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The majority of our animations are accompanied by a leaflet of key learning points and in some cases, a guide on how the film can be used in a group teaching scenario.



Over 120 experts have provided input to develop our suite of animations

FILM USAGE AND FEEDBACK

We continue to receive extremely positive feedback on our growing number of animated educational film resources. Requests for permission to use these within teaching courses and programmes have been received from across the UK and internationally, including from Australia, Russia, Ireland and India.



The animated films NES provides around challenging and unexpected bereavement have helped clarify my thoughts around communication with the bereaved. Particularly working in acute hospitals through COVID-19 it was so useful to have accessible resources to make deeply difficult conversations more manageable. I hope more people use them going forward

Dr Rachel Manners,
Scottish Clinical Leadership Fellow, NHS Education for Scotland



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

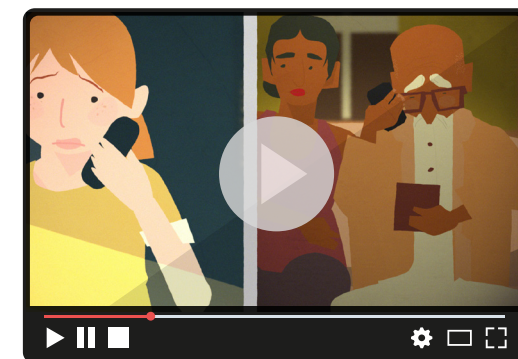


Collectively, our films have been viewed over 65,000 times



This steadily rises month on month, and is a 73% increase on the overall total views compared to the previous year

One film which has sadly been particularly relevant during the pandemic has been [‘Delivering the news of a death by telephone’](#) which has now been viewed over 5,200 times; and which represents a 303% increase on the number of views which had been noted a year previously.



This reflects the impact that COVID-19 has had on how health and social care staff communicate with patients and families at the end of life, and indicates that our resources are providing much-needed support at a time when ways of working are changing dramatically.

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Organ and Tissue Donation – Communicating with families

This year we have collaborated with colleagues from NHS National Services Scotland to produce two films for those working in health and social care regarding conversations with families about organ and tissue donation.

These complement other educational materials which cover information regarding the new Scottish legislation regarding organ donation policy.



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Medical Certification of Cause of Death

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

These include [two online modules](#) – ‘Certification of Deaths in the Community’ and ‘Death Certification: Identifying Common Mistakes’, [the death certification pages on the SAD website](#), and [the FAQ resource for non-medical staff](#).

The modules are designed to support certifying doctors to complete Medical Certificates of Cause of Death (MCCDs) and the numbers of doctors completing the two e-learning modules has continued to rise across all Health Boards this year.



Certification of deaths in the Community:

337 individuals completed to date



Death Certification: Identifying Common Mistakes:

1301 individuals completed to date

A new short animation, developed jointly with the DCRS around ‘top tips’ for certifying doctors is due for release in Spring 2021 and we are also continuing to work with DCRS on ways to support certifying staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Once again, DCRS has received amazingly helpful support from NES where the innovative approaches taken have helped get our message across both on COVID-19 related subjects and also on maintaining the improved ‘not-in-order’ rate achieved in the first five years our service has been in existence. Ensuring public confidence in the quality and accuracy of Medical Certificates of Cause of Death has assumed particular importance during the pandemic and without this help, I am sure the value of our work would not have properly been appreciated.

Dr George Fernie,
Senior Medical Reviewer, Death Certification Review Service,
Healthcare Improvement Scotland



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Fatal Accident Inquiry

We are working with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) to update the NES Fatal Accident Inquiry (FAI) guidance resource for NHS staff.

This document explains the process, outlines what happens in court and provides advice on how staff can prepare and debrief. An FAI is a legal process that seeks to explain why someone died. FAIs are held into deaths that are sudden, suspicious, unexpected, accidental or unexplained or which have occurred in circumstances that may give rise to public concern.

Taking part in an FAI can be stressful. Staff can find their actions questioned and challenged in an environment that can feel alien and sometimes hostile. Making sure all staff understand what is involved in advance will not only reduce anxiety, but also help staff prepare and learn from the experience.



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Educational resource development work underway

In addition to the new materials that we have launched this year, we have also undertaken preparatory work to scope out the development of educational resources on a number of other topics, in response to identified gaps.

This work is well underway and is likely to culminate in an expansion of our film and some other educational resources with the launch of further outputs on the following topics early in 2021-22:

- + Anticipatory grief

- + Bereavement following suicide – including:
 - supporting someone who is bereaved

 - the procedural / practical actions required after a death

 - how to look after oneself / your team



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Additional collaborative projects

CONFIRMATION OF DEATH

This year we contributed to the development of a [set of national learning resources](#) on confirmation of death, including a [short film](#). This work, which was led by the NES Clinical Skills team, looks at the essential clinical examination procedure required to confirm death in Scotland as well as the responsibilities of the practitioner in relation to communication, documentation and referral.

SCOTTISH MULTIDISCIPLINARY RURAL ADVANCED PRACTICE CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

We have supported the development of this framework by providing input on capability statements and content that relate to themes of death, dying and bereavement. This work is being overseen by [NES' Remote and Rural Healthcare Education Alliance](#) which coordinates healthcare education and training for all the remote, rural and island areas of Scotland.



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Supporting NHS Health Boards

In addition to the production of educational resources, we have continued to support NHS Health Boards with regards to bereavement care in a number of other ways.

NHS Board Bereavement Strategic Leads & Coordinators Network

HOSTING OF REGULAR MEETINGS IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

We established regular (initially two-weekly) virtual catch up meetings for the network via Microsoft Teams. These have provided a vital source of support and information for NHS Board Bereavement Leads during 2020-21.



19 network catch ups hosted in 2020-21

A Teams channel has also been set up to enable members of this group to quickly and easily access peer communication and support.

These media provide a valuable opportunity for NHS Board Bereavement Leads to disseminate information nationally, share challenges, queries, best practice, ideas and experiences during a time when contact with / support from colleagues, particularly for those in more remote, rural and island locations, has been more important than ever.



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QUARTERLY EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS

The hosting of quarterly learning events has continued during 2020-21, initially face-to-face and latterly moving to a virtual format.

These meetings have garnered good attendance and engagement, and provide a regular opportunity for network members to:

- + share learning, best practice information or policy updates – information which can then be disseminated within geographic Health Boards
- + highlight newly created resources, support services or events of relevance
- + raise questions regarding bereavement-related care or practice and seek support on possible solutions



A variety of organisations were represented by speakers, including Children's Health Scotland, The Scottish Cot Death Trust, University of Dundee, University of Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, Includem, Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership, Children's Hospices Across Scotland, Child Bereavement UK and a range of NHSScotland Health Boards.

Topics explored during these events have included:

- + National Childhood Bereavement Project
- + Bereavement support needs of kinship carers
- + Using comics to support children and young people affected by bereavement
- + Virtual mourning and supporting those bereaved remotely
- + Supporting people through bereavement and reducing isolation
- + Meeting the bereavement needs of people during COVID-19
- + Perspectives on the pandemic from a Funeral Director
- + Bereavement following suicide

Short term development funding award for NHS Boards

Following the success of this scheme which has run for the last two years, we have again made available small grant funding to Boards who are interested to undertake bereavement-related projects.

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Information for those who are bereaved

This year we have supported the Scottish Government in coordinating the distribution of the [‘When Someone has Died’](#) leaflet and folder pack to Health Boards across Scotland.

This pack, given out to those who are bereaved, helps to support the delivery of consistent information on a national basis.



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Supporting a National Bereavement Agenda

Launch of a Bereavement Charter for Children and Adults in Scotland

Scotland's first Bereavement Charter for Children and Adults was launched in April 2020. It has been developed by a coalition of individuals and organisations, of which we have been a key part. The Charter, which contains 13 statements that describe what the best bereavement care and support should look like, has been developed to support individuals and communities who struggle with the death of someone they know or someone in their community.

The Charter is accompanied by a set of [Guidance Notes](#) that both provides guidance on its use and details some specific information relating to bereavement in different circumstances, e.g. children and people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. We facilitate the editing of the Guidance Notes on a bi-annual basis to ensure accuracy, currency and relevancy, with five new sections being added in December 2020 (e.g. bereavement relating to substance use, care workers and children and young people in contact with the justice system). There is also a set of [FAQs](#) to provide further contextual detail.

In July 2020, we facilitated a webinar with Derek Feeley, former CEO of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and NHS Scotland, as a guest speaker. The webinar was well attended and supported the motion that Scotland should have the infrastructure to meet demand for bereavement support in all its forms (both for children & adults).



[Download the Bereavement Charter for Scotland](#)



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In addition, in order to raise awareness of the Charter we facilitated a rolling social media campaign [#becausegriefmatters](#) between September and December 2020, where each week a different one of the Charter's statements was promoted by an organisation from the Charter Development Group.

Finally, organisations who want to show their support for the Charter can now do so using a newly produced Charter Mark to demonstrate their endorsement. It is available to [download from the Scottish Care website](#). News and discussion on the Charter can be followed on Twitter via the hashtag [#becausegriefmatters](#).



“

Scotland's first Bereavement Charter for adults and children was launched in April 2020. The fruit of a wide collaboration, it seeks to establish the right to bereavement support at the heart of our nation. Never has such an aspiration been more important and worth working for than in the shadow of the Covid pandemic.

I am pleased to lead the Working Group whose continued aim is to make the sentiments the Charter real and meaningful and not just another piece of paper with words which will disappear into inaction. Over the coming months we will be working to make its aspirations influence all those who are standing for election so that in the next Parliamentary session we can continue to build communities where the right and the ability to grieve is achieved.

Dr Donald Macaskill,
Chief Executive, Scottish Care

”

Representing the NES Bereavement workstream on relevant groups

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 Remote & Rural Healthcare Education Alliance Centre of Excellence Education & Training Subgroup.

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Staff Health & Wellbeing

Following themes discussed at our inaugural Bereavement Education Conference, and brought to the fore in 2020-21 with COVID-19, we are continuing to focus on how professionals caring for those at the end of life or those who are bereaved can themselves be impacted by these experiences, and what support might benefit them to stay well and provide the best care possible.

Staff health and wellbeing has always been an important focus of ours when creating materials or collaborating on projects, and this year we have built on this with the development of one new film resource in particular.

In the film, clinical and non-clinical staff working in a Scottish Emergency Department share what helps them cope with the demands of their role and how they and their colleagues stay healthy in the face of often extreme emotional demands. This aims to help support others working in similar departments to deal with the potentially distressing and demanding experiences they may face on a daily basis in this fast-moving and unpredictable clinical setting.



[Visit the Resilience pages of the SAD website](#)



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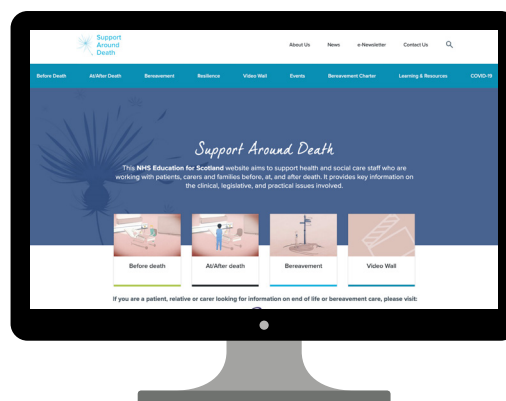
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Digital

Support Around Death (SAD) Website

We continue to oversee the day to day management of the SAD website. This year we have developed new content and undertaken various updates. The website provides a range of information for health and social care professionals. It is openly accessible, relevant, up-to-date and utilises a layout that is easy to navigate.



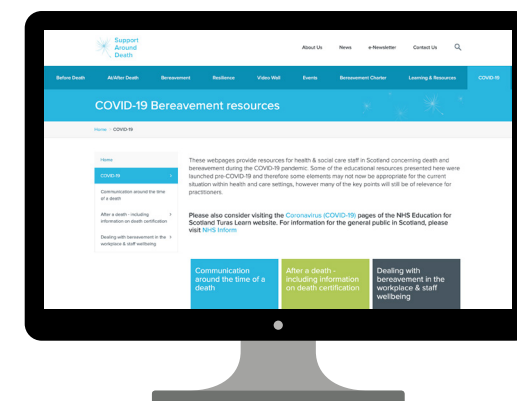
Our website enables users to:

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



[Visit the Support Around Death Website](#)

In light of the changes to ways of working and challenges brought about by COVID-19, we developed a dedicated area to [host additional information and newly created resources](#) specifically tailored to these situations, particularly focusing on:



- + Communication around the time of a death – including managing visiting restrictions, spiritual care conversations and delivering the news of a death by telephone
- + Care after a death – including death certification and registration of death
- + Bereavement in the workplace and staff wellbeing

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Additionally, we have expanded our [Events section](#) and have been working on the re-development of our Learning & Resources page which will re-launch early next year. We are focusing on how the information can best be presented, in order to enable users to easily identify relevant resources that support their learning requirement.

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



Over 31,000 website users have totalled over 90,000 page views



Over 59% increase in website users versus those seen in the previous year 2019-20



The website has been accessed from 142 countries and users view on average 2.10 pages per visit



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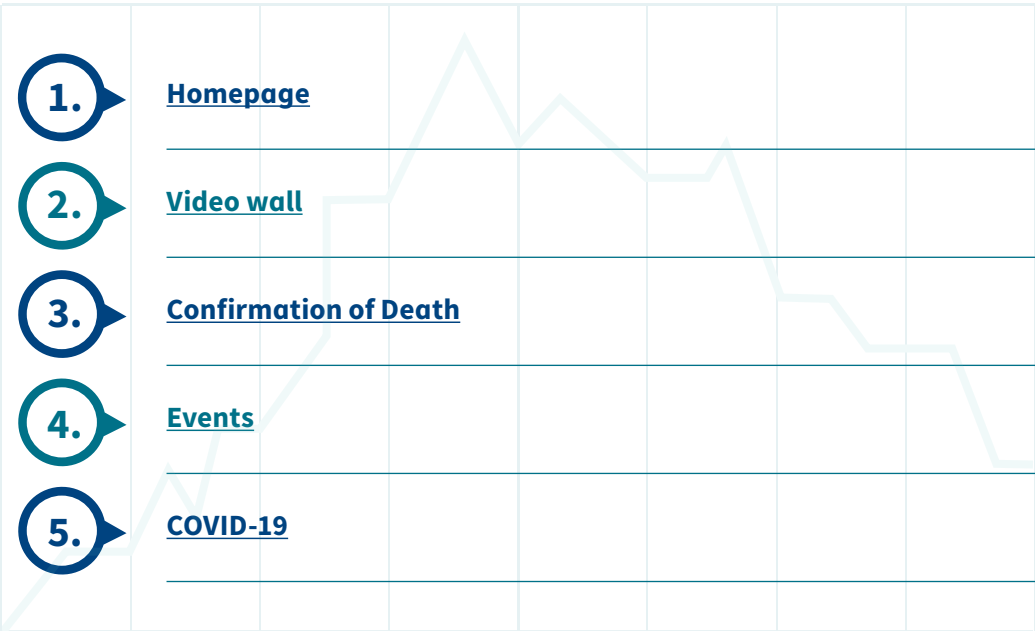
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TOP 5 MOST POPULAR PAGES (TOTAL VIEWS THIS YEAR)



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Turas Learn

We have continued to maintain and expand our [Death, Dying and Bereavement pages on Turas Learn](#), NES' platform for learning and support resources. This provides Turas Learn 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 care professionals can swiftly and easily locate the most appropriate and useful learning resource for their specific requirements.

In addition to this we have overseen the [development of bereavement-related educational content](#) for health and social care professionals in a [new section on Turas Learn](#) which was specifically developed in response to COVID-19. We have also maintained our presence on the [Scotland Deanery Website](#).



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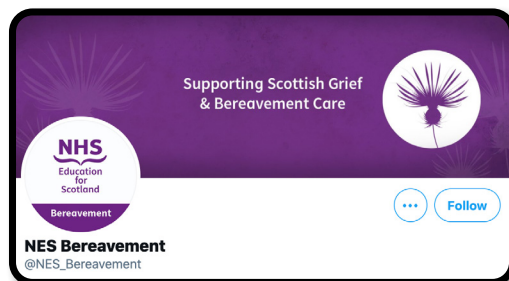
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Communications

Social Media

Through our [@NES Bereavement](#) Twitter account and the corporate NES social media accounts we regularly share information about our work and educational resource creation. We have been pleased to see a 25% increase in our followers on Twitter since the end of last year.



At present we have over 1,500 followers

e-Newsletter

Our quarterly e-Newsletters continue to be well received.

These circulations enable us to share information on bereavement-related education and training, events and publications.

In 2020-21, subscriber numbers have risen to approaching

1,200 people



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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 our website or via our SupportAroundDeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk mailbox.

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 to other sources of information and support if it is not our primary area of focus.



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Publications

This year we have been pleased to see our work featured in a number of articles and reports, including:

- + [Navigating Unchartered Waters When There is a Storm at Sea](#), Dr Victoria Thomson, Scottish Pharmacy Review, Issue 128 - August 2020, p22 – this addressed the importance and challenges of supporting the health and social care workforce to stay healthy and resilient during a pandemic crisis.
- + The Chief Medical Officer’s Annual Report 2020-21 [Recover, Restore, Renew](#) which gave an outline of the NES Bereavement Workstream’s response to COVID-19. This included reference to the range of educational initiatives that we have overseen to support staff working across health and social care, to care for those who are at the end of life, those who are bereaved and to help them to look after their own wellbeing.
- + [2021-2025 NES Equality and Diversity Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Report and Priorities](#) with a piece on “Mainstreaming the equality duty into educational workstreams: a case study” which highlighted how our bereavement-related projects and events have addressed the diverse needs of all communities that we support.

Conferences & Events

Embracing new ways of virtual working brought about COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions, we have welcomed the opportunity to be an exhibitor at the Association for Palliative Medicine’s March 2021 Palliative Care Congress. This allowed us to share information about NES’ bereavement work with delegates attending this online event.

We are also looking forward to presenting a poster at the 10th National Scottish Medical Education Virtual Conference in May 2021 having had an abstract accepted on the topic of “Helping no-one to die alone: Supporting staff in the absence of families and Spiritual Care provision during the pandemic”.

This showcases two of our resources which support health and social care staff in providing the best end of life care when families cannot be present due to restrictions brought about by the pandemic.

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PART C: LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021-22

We plan to continue to strive to influence the national strategic agenda on death, dying and bereavement education for health and social care professionals by:

- + Launching a bereavement national training framework for medical staff to support doctors in conversations with patients and families around the time of death and in bereavement, with a view to enhancing existing medical curricula
- + Continuing to develop educational resources to build a toolkit of materials to support the implementation of this framework, including a mobile app to support bereavement related communications, films to focus on anticipatory grief and the needs of staff who are exposed to death and bereavement at work, resources to support those bereaved following suicide, an e-module on “Bereavement Basics” to create a concise, up-to-date virtual resource for all frontline staff, and training simulations in discrete areas within bereavement
- + Building on existing work with the DCRS to refresh information and learning materials on the Medical Certification of Cause of Death (in particular around COVID-19) and by refreshing Fatal Accident Inquiry resources and information
- + Hosting an ongoing webinar programme and another annual conference to support the delivery of high-quality bereavement-related educational initiatives and encourage networking, shared learning and ultimately increase the profile of bereavement care in Scotland



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- + Continuing to work with multi-sector partners (including third sector, NHS and social care) on the promotion of the Bereavement Charter for Children and Adults in Scotland
- + Developing the evidence base to demonstrate the need for improvements to bereavement education
- + Facilitating national learning networks for sharing of best practice in bereavement care
- + Producing quarterly e-newsletters and managing an active social media account
- + Continuing to expand and develop our online presence in order to provide openly accessible information and educational resources with materials hosted on the SAD website and Turas Learn



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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