

# SWAN model of care in the last days of life

End of life

Produced: September 2024

Information for Relatives

Review: September 2027

Leaflet number: 1528 Version: 1



## Introduction

We know that this is a difficult time for you and those close to you.

This SWAN information pack contains leaflets and information about how we can help.

Please ask us if you have any questions. Use the back page of this leaflet if you need to make a note of any questions that you have.

## What is SWAN care?

SWAN means **S**igns **W**ords **A**ctions and **N**eeds. It is a standard of care used in many UK hospitals. It supports and guides ward teams to offer excellent, personalised care in the last days of life and first days of bereavement to dying patients and those close to them.

It is important to us to care for your relative / friend at the end of their life as well as possible. We will:

- Ask about their wishes and preferences for their care.
- Offer support to you during this difficult time. Please let us know what is important to you and what you need.
- Answer any questions you have, no matter how small.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## What does SWAN care mean for you?

### Signs

- We use a SWAN sign on doors and curtains. This lets all ward staff know that your relative/ friend is dying and that you may need support.

### Words

- We will talk to you and your relative / friend openly, honestly and sensitively.

### Actions

- We will work with your relative/ friend to understand and meet their care needs sensitively.
- We will create a personalised plan of care to help us look after your relative/ friend in the best way for them.
- Our Chaplaincy team, including a non-religious chaplain, offer religious, spiritual, emotional and pastoral care to all patients and visitors. You do not need to be religious to talk to the chaplain.
- We will do our best to try and make sure any specific wishes your relative/ friend has can be met in these final days. Please let the ward teams know if you have any requests.
- If needed, we will arrange for an interpreter to help your relative/ friend talk to the ward team.
- Everyone should have the chance to say where they would like to be cared for when they are dying. It may be in hospital, at home, a nursing home, community hospital or hospice. We may not always be able to meet every wish but we will do our best to try and make sure that your relative / friend is cared for in the setting that they prefer.

### Needs

- Where possible we will offer open visiting and for a relative/ friend to stay overnight.
- If you are staying in the hospital with your relative /friend for long periods of time, we may be able to offer you food and drink or complimentary meal vouchers for the hospital restaurants. Please ask the ward team about this.
- We will make sure you know where to find the different facilities within the hospital.
- There are a number of people in the hospital who may offer support to you and your relative/ friend at this time. These include doctors, nurses, therapists, chaplains, discharge nurses and the bereavement care team. Please ask us if there is someone that you would like to talk to.
- For patients and families with more complex needs in the last days of life, the hospital Specialist Palliative Care team are available to give advice to the ward teams.

## Feedback

It is always good to know when we are getting things right. We would also like to know if you think we could be giving a better service so we can improve the care that we deliver. Please share your experience with us. There are 3 ways you can do this:

### 1. To the ward teams looking after you

It is important that we know as soon as possible if we need to do things differently. Please ask to speak to the nurse in charge or ward manager if we need to change things. If you want to raise a concern out of hours please ask to speak to the on call manager.

### 2. Routine bereavement feedback

In the days after the death, a Medical Examiner will phone the next of kin. They will answer any questions you may have around the cause of death. They will offer a first opportunity to discuss any concerns or compliments about the hospital care.

About 6 weeks after the death, one of the hospital bereavement nurses will phone the next of kin. They will offer support and talk informally about any concerns or compliments about the care in hospital.

Leicester's Hospitals take part in the National Audit for Care at the End of Life (NACEL). This includes a feedback survey that is sent to bereaved relatives. It is optional to complete and lets you give anonymous feedback.

### 3. Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have concerns that have not been addressed or you do not feel able to speak directly with staff, you can contact the PALS team. They are open Monday to Friday (not bank holidays), from 9am to 3pm.

For confidential support and advice and information speak to PALS on 0808 178 8337 or [pals@uhl-tr.nhs](mailto:pals@uhl-tr.nhs)

## Extra information

If there is an other information that you think would be useful for us to include in this information pack, please write it in the space on the 'Information pack contents list' in this folder.

