

Our  
Lady's  
**Hospice  
& Care  
Services**

*Respite*  
*Rehabilitation*  
*Reassurance* Harold's Cross  
& Blackrock

# Palliative Care Services



*Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services – Harold's Cross*



*Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services – Blackrock*



# The Highest Standard of Palliative Care

Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services prides itself on offering world-class professional, loving and person-centred Palliative Care to people with advanced life-threatening illness who are approaching the end of life. This is provided in Harold's Cross, Blackrock and in patients' homes. Our ethos and mission is derived from our founders, the Religious Sisters of Charity, who opened up the first hospice in Ireland in 1879. We care for people across the full spectrum of society, irrespective of their religion or beliefs. Our philosophy of care is to reduce suffering and help people of all ages live well on their journey at the end of life and die well with dignity and peace of mind.

## **What is Palliative Care?**

At its simplest, Palliative Care is about improving quality of life for people living with advanced life-threatening illness. That means ensuring they have as much independence, comfort and support as possible.

We are here to help at what can be a difficult and frightening time. We relieve, and treat as early as possible, the symptoms of the disease and also provide any psychological, social, and spiritual supports needed. We also assist family and caregivers through this experience and work to bring solace to those grieving the death of a loved one.

# A Summary of Palliative Care

- Provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms
- Affirms life and accepts dying as a normal process
- Integrates the psychological and spiritual needs of patients and their families
- Helps patients live as actively as possible until death
- Helps families cope during the patient's illness and in their own bereavement
- Uses a team approach to provide holistic care.



Palliative Medicine is a medical speciality recognised by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and the Medical Council of Ireland. In Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services, our Specialist Palliative Care Service is led by consultants in Palliative Medicine. It is provided through a multi-disciplinary team, working in partnership with other community and hospital services.

## The Highest Standard of Palliative Care

### **Who is it for?**

Patients coping with many different conditions and illnesses need, or choose to avail of, Palliative Care. All Palliative Care patients have a life-limiting condition – an illness or disease which is progressive and cannot be cured. Many of our patients will have advanced cancer but there are many others who have non-cancer illnesses, such as motor neuron disease, or severe heart or lung disease.

Patients attend at different stages of their illness – some will have months or years to live while others may have only days or weeks. Many will also be attending hospital for other specialist treatments like chemotherapy or radiotherapy and may first meet one of our medical consultants there. Some attend because they have difficult-to-manage symptoms like pain or nausea. Other patients may be frail and need specialist support to care for themselves.

### **The Care Plan**

For us, best practice Palliative Care focuses on the person, not just the disease or illness. We deliver a wrap-around, multi-disciplinary care programme that meets the physical, practical, social, emotional and spiritual needs of patients, their carers and families. Given the involvement of so many specialties and the family, we believe it's vital that a co-ordinated care plan is put in place for each patient. We will provide that care wherever it is needed – as an inpatient in Harold's Cross or Blackrock facilities, or in the patient's home.

When a patient comes into our services we work as a team to draw up a personalised care plan, and establish care goals for the patient.

## The Highest Standard of Palliative Care Contd.

### **Symptom Control**

Very often, it's the symptoms of a condition that prevent people from being comfortable and at ease as they live out the last days or years of their life. So we focus on the symptoms the patient has, such as fatigue, nausea, breathlessness, pain, constipation, reduced mobility or anxiety. Of course, we try to treat the underlying cause of the problem but we also focus on the symptom itself, using medication or other therapies. This means the patient can get on with living as well as possible with their illness.

### **Pain Control**

Understandably, pain control is always a real worry for patients and families. It has become a highly specialised and skilled area. Pain elimination or control is central to good Palliative Care. A number of different approaches may be used, including medications and therapies. These often need to be fine-tuned based on effectiveness, side effects and depending on how the patient

responds. We liaise closely with hospital-based pain teams and radiotherapy colleagues if needed. We also offer non-medication methods of pain control such as holistic and therapy-based approaches.

### **Rehabilitation**

If the patient has noticed changes in their ability to complete their typical daily routines we may be able to help. Rehabilitation in Palliative Care aims to address challenges they may be having as a result of their illness, or the treatment of their illness. At the core of this approach to rehabilitation is the patient's response to the following two important questions:

- 1) *What would you like to be able to do?*
- 2) *What are you able to do?*

### **Personal and spiritual support**

Palliative Care is not just about medical care – it's about ensuring quality of life and peace of mind for both patients and families at every stage of the disease, even

into the bereavement phase. End-of-life is a journey of constant change. As a person's physical health changes, so too does their mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. For many, different kinds of worries and concerns arise. But, if the right supports and understanding are available, as physical health declines, emotional and spiritual wellbeing can improve. We can also help with very practical matters such as providing advice and assistance in securing other services or entitlements.

**Some of the other services we offer:**

- Individual or group counselling.
- Advice and support in helping children and others cope.
- Support and guidance on how best to communicate and share difficult issues.
- Support for carers.
- Family meetings with those involved in the patient's care.



# How you can connect with our service

On our beautiful campus, your local hospital or in your own home

## **Calm and soothing grounds**

Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services has two truly special facilities, Harold's Cross and Blackrock Hospice, where specialist Palliative Care is delivered. The buildings have been sensitively designed and adapted over the years so that today the two facilities feature medical and therapeutic facilities alongside carefully designed, comfortable accommodation.

The campus in Harold's Cross includes a purpose built Education and Research Centre which houses the All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care.

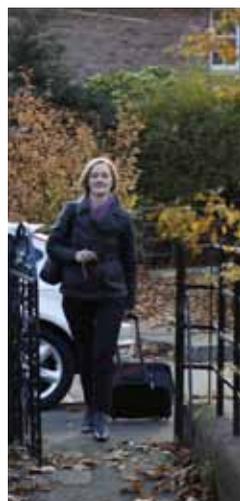
Outside, the grounds of both buildings comprise formal lawns, trees and shrubs, water features and contemplative spaces creating colour, texture and scent to be experienced throughout the year. We have specially designed sensory

gardens for patients, visitors and staff where they can spend private or contemplative time.

## **Community Palliative Care Service**

Our specialist community Palliative Care service is for people who wish to live at home or who can be treated by our specialist multi disciplinary team on an Outpatient basis. It is available to people with advanced illness who would benefit from specialist input. The Community Palliative Care Team (CPCT) delivers care in the following ways.

- Home visits
- Day Hospice Services
- Consultant Outpatient Clinic
- Advanced Nurse Practitioner Clinic
- Breathless Management Clinic
- Clinical Nurse Specialist Clinic





As a patient's needs change, they may move between different aspects of this service and our team will work closely with the patient's GP, public health nurse and social services, as well as their acute hospital team in navigating this journey.

### **Inpatient Palliative Care**

Patients come into our service as Inpatients for a variety of reasons, including symptom management, respite and end of life care.

Our Inpatient Palliative Care is provided in two special facilities in Harold's Cross and Blackrock Hospice.

### **Harold's Cross**

The Specialist Palliative Care unit is made up of two wards – each unit has 18 beds. There's a combination of single rooms and four-bedded bays – designated

male or female. The ward is on the ground floor, with easy access to the garden areas and open spaces.

Each ward area also includes a Day Room, where patients and family can spend time together. Our patients can easily access the other areas of the hospice, like the restaurant and shop, the gardens, the chapel, group activities and the physiotherapy gym.

Work is currently underway to redevelop and extend the Palliative Care Unit in Harold's Cross. This project has been designed to meet the changing needs of our community and will include a new Inpatient Palliative Care Unit.

## **Blackrock**

Blackrock Hospice (also known as the Blessed Louis and Zelig Martin Hospice) opened in 2003. It was built on the site of the old Carmelite convent. This beautiful, purpose-built facility in the heart of Blackrock, has become a vital part of the local community.

Facilities here include our Specialist Palliative Care Unit which has 12 single rooms. Each room is en-suite and has access to the garden area. Other areas that are easily accessible to patients are the hospice restaurant, chapel and physiotherapy gym.

The unit also has a Day Room with a cornered-off area for children to play. We also have a Quiet Room where patients can take a break from the busier areas of the ward.

## **Other facilities**

Both locations have convenient facilities such as the coffee shop and hairdressing. There is a good bus service from the city centre and free car parking.



# Your Specialist Team

The delivery of world-class palliative care requires a caring and enthusiastic team of highly-skilled compassionate professionals all working in harmony to meet the needs of each individual patient. Here in Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services we believe that we have assembled the best of the best in each specialty area.

## **The Doctor/Consultant**

Our team of consultants and doctors work in the inpatient units and in our community teams and are specially trained in pain management and symptom control. The consultant oversees and directs patient care. Working alongside them are junior and senior doctors who are training in Palliative Medicine.

## **Nurse**

Our nursing team is made up of Care Assistants, Registered Nurses (staff nurse), and Specialist Nurses. Care Assistants work closely with our nursing colleagues in providing the nursing care. They assist patients with bathing, grooming, dressing and at meals. Our staff nurses' focus is on providing individualised quality care. We understand how much 'the details' matter. Specialist nurses have a high level of experience and training

in Palliative Care. They will guide your plan of care and can represent your values and decisions to other health care workers and service providers.

## **Physiotherapist**

The physiotherapy team is committed to helping the patient to maximise their movement potential and enhance their quality of life. They do this by addressing physical challenges such as pain, weakness, breathlessness, lymphedema and fatigue, caused by illness and the treatment of illness. Our physiotherapists work closely with patients using physical approaches such as therapeutic exercise (gym and hydrotherapy-pool based) and mobilisation techniques to help them achieve their movement and functional goals.



### **Occupational Therapist**

The occupational therapists in Palliative Care support patients' independence and quality of life by helping the patient to set meaningful life goals. They offer education and practical advice on managing symptoms including breathlessness, fatigue, anxiety and pain to enable them to continue to engage in their daily activities. They also support patients to access areas and events off-site, such as places in their local community and their home, where possible.

### **Pharmacist**

Palliative Care pharmacists visit the wards regularly to advise the doctors and nurses on prescribing and administering medicines. They are also available to discuss medicines with patients and families. The pharmacy team ensures that medicines are safely available to patients while they are inpatients and after they return home.

### **Social Worker**

Our social workers offer counselling and psychosocial support to assist with social, emotional, bereavement and practical issues. This may include facilitating family meetings, guidance on how to talk to children about serious illness, talking through worries arising from the illness, providing information on entitlements or advocating on the patient's behalf.

### **Complementary Therapist**

Through the use of holistic body and mind therapies such as massage, reflexology, aromatherapy, music and art therapies, Palliative Care patients can experience physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual wellness, thus enhancing their quality of life. These therapies are person centred; the patient can participate in whatever way they feel best suits their needs and goals.

## Your Specialist Team contd.

### **Psychologist**

A serious illness affects not just your body but also has an impact on your mind. Everyone gradually adapts to the shock and distress but some people have difficulties, bad dreams, feel tense and anxious or very down. Talking helps, and the Palliative Care team has a dedicated psychologist with experience helping people find the words to express their distress and manage their thoughts and feelings in difficult circumstances.

### **The Chaplain**

Being admitted as a patient can be an anxious time for patients and families. The chaplain is there to support people of faith – and of no faith – providing spiritual guidance and support. The role offers a safe space for sharing worries and concerns, a listening ear, moments of prayer, sacraments, blessings and rituals.

### **Students**

We are leaders in what we do; many people come to Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services to learn from us. We are a teaching hospice with links with Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin and other universities. Many healthcare students from different disciplines come to us on placement to train in the area of specialist Palliative Care and are active throughout our service.

### **Volunteers**

Our volunteers are a supportive group of people, who freely give their time to contribute to the smooth running of the organisation. They help in several areas of patient care including transporting patients, helping at mealtimes and providing companionship.



# Dr Stephen Higgins - Palliative Care Consultant

Over the last few years we have seen a huge increase in demand for our service. We've had an annual increase of almost 10% in patient referrals every year for the past six years. I think it shows how much faith people have in our Palliative Care team and the services we offer.

As a result of growing healthcare awareness and increased access to information, patients and their families have higher expectations. They want more involvement in the decisions that are being made and more information about their treatments. I'd be the same.

We've also seen a major change in the type of conditions our patients present with. Ten years ago nearly everyone we treated had cancer. That has changed and we now see patients based on what their needs are – not based on their diagnosis. The Hospice is not just for people with cancer. We also tend to see patients a lot earlier in their illness – this lets us build a relationship with the patients and their family. What's more, it's now known that some patients with cancer will live longer if Palliative Care is involved early in their care.

This always felt like it was true but the research is now there to prove it.

In recent years Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services has moved to the forefront in the area of Palliative Care research. We have several projects underway in the areas of symptom control, pain management and the integration of cutting edge technology in patient care. Also we are the largest training centre in Ireland for doctors specialising in palliative medicine. We have a long tradition as a teaching centre and constantly have students from a number of disciplines with us.

While much has changed in what we do, what hasn't changed is that the hospice still offers an attention to detail and a quality and warmth of care that is rarely equaled in the wider health system. It's the product of a thousand tiny things and readily apparent to those we care for but still hard to explain. I felt it myself when my own father was cared for by the Hospice 15 years ago and I know that it's still there.



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Stephen Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

# Frequently Asked Questions



## **How can I be referred?**

Referrals can be made to the Palliative Care service by an individual's GP or hospital consultant. For many people with life-limiting conditions, Palliative Care delivered by their usual treating team is sufficient, and they don't need specialist Palliative Care. If you feel that you, or your loved one, would benefit from specialist Palliative Care services, ask your GP or hospital consultant whether they think a referral to Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services would be appropriate.

## **How do I know which service is best for me?**

Once the patient has been referred into our service they will be assessed by one of our team to see if they would benefit from our specialist Palliative Care service and which part of our service best fits with their needs at this time. When we meet the patient, we will provide them with contact details for the service, and always have an agreed follow-up plan made.

## **Does it matter where I live?**

Our services are available to all patients living in any part of Dublin that is south of the Liffey. Blackrock Hospice also covers Co. Wicklow. The Blackrock hospice services also cover Co Wicklow. Because we are a large specialist centre, on occasion we work with our Palliative Care colleagues in other parts of the country to help patients with particularly complex needs, who may need admission to our Specialist Palliative Care Unit.

## **Are there any costs to me?**

One of the things people often worry about is the cost of the care they receive. There is no charge for any of our Specialist Community Palliative Care services. If you require admission, we have a mixture of private, semi-private and public beds. If you are a Public Patient and do not have a Medical Card there is a set Government inpatient charge that has a maximum amount in any 12 months (provided this has not already been paid to another facility). If you have Private Health

Insurance the Insurance Company is billed. We are happy to discuss this further with you.

### **Can I come and see the hospice?**

Yes, you would be very welcome to do this. You can arrange to visit the hospice by contacting the Admissions Offices in **Harold's Cross (01) 406 8790** or **Blackrock Hospice (01) 206 4000**.

### **What are the visiting hours?**

- There are no set visiting hours and our doors are always open to welcome family and close friends, though visitors are reminded to respect the privacy and needs of others.
- Children are always welcome, but must not be left unsupervised.
- Home pets are welcome to visit!

## Our Links

Our Specialist Palliative Care is carried out by our multi-disciplinary team in partnership with other community and hospital services. These include:

Close links to hospital services in

- St James' Hospital
- St Vincent's University Hospital
- Tallaght Hospital
- St Michael's Hospital
- St Columcille's Hospital

Close links to radiotherapy services in St Luke's Hospital and St James' Hospital.

Close links with interventional pain services through several acute hospitals.

## Additional Services

- Support for family (including children) and carers.
- Specialist respite care admissions.
- X-ray facilities
- 24 hour telephone support for community-based patients and their carers.
- Provision of information, support, education and training to carers, where it is needed.

# Bereavement services

## **Grieving is adjusting to change**

Grieving is a journey rather than a destination. Many people believe that they should go through specific stages but in reality most people go in and out of grief as they adjust to life without their loved one. This can be one of the most momentous changes in a person's life. It takes a great deal of energy so most people find it tiring and hard work.

Adjusting to loss may require learning new skills or taking on new tasks and responsibilities for example, cooking, managing finances, living alone, sole decision making.

## **Seeking help**

Most people cope with grief with the support of family and friends and some benefit from meeting other bereaved people.

Many people however, find that it helps to talk with someone who is not part of their family or close circle of friends. Some people find that at first they do not want support but then later change their mind.

## **Our Lady's Hospice & Care Services offers a range of services to meet the needs of those bereaved:**

- Information booklets
- Invitation to evening of remembrance three to five months post bereavement.
- Individual bereavement support
- Individual bereavement counselling
- Individual counselling for children and young people
- Children's and young people's bereavement group. (aged 5 – 16, over a weekend)
- Psycho-educational group for parents over one day which runs concurrently with children's group



# What our service users say

**Robert:** I come to Day Hospice in Harold's Cross every Thursday and it's fantastic. It has given me security and built my confidence. They never give up on us here, even though some of us might have given up on ourselves.

**Derek:** I can't speak highly enough of the care my mother is receiving from these gifted people, not forgetting the valuable work the volunteers do.

**Vera:** I was so happy to come here. The staff, they're the absolute best. Even though I'm sure they're too busy, the doctors and nurses here will always make sure to spend a few minutes talking with me. And listening.

**Anne:** The visits from the team have meant so much to me. I'm a very independent person but I still need support. And it gives my daughter a break which I'm so grateful for.



# Contact us

Referral Queries – (01) 406 8790

Bereavement Queries – (01) 206 4035

St Catherine's Ward – (01) 406 8796

St Gabriel's Ward – (01) 406 8772

Blackrock Hospice – (01) 206 4000

Specialist Community Palliative Care Team –  
(01) 406 8760

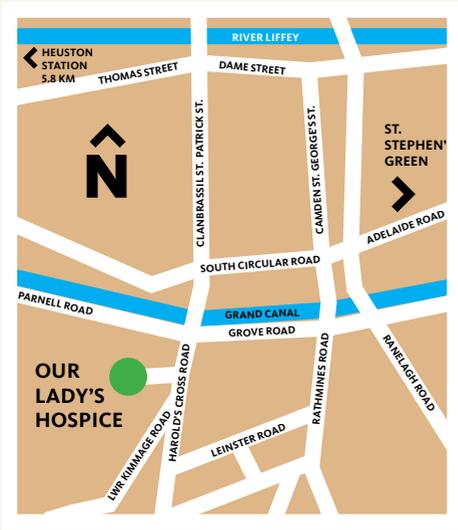
*9am-5pm, Monday to Friday. If you have queries outside of these times please call our General Queries number listed below.*

General queries – (01) 406 8700

*Visit our website for more information about any of the services featured in this booklet: [www.olh.ie](http://www.olh.ie)*



# Where we are

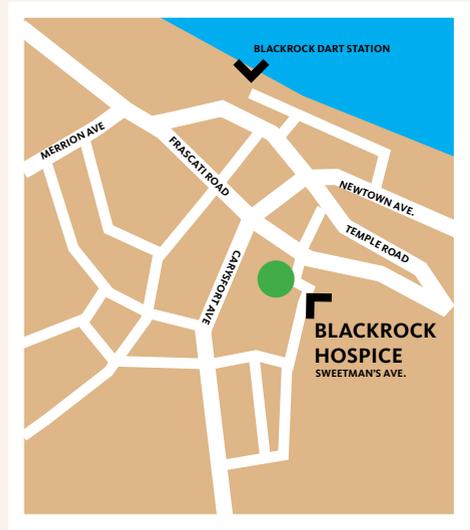


## Harold's Cross, Dublin 6w

GPS Coordinates (latitude, longitude):

53.3246346, -6.2784901 N53° 19.4781',

W006° 16.7094'



## Sweetmans' Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

GPS Coordinates (latitude, longitude):

53.2985992, -6.1771584 N53° 17.916',

W006° 10.6295'



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