



Short Case Study

Hearts of Care

Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

A simple but effective innovation started at Helston Community Hospital looks set to become a standard strategy to support patients and families, particularly in the end-of-life care.

Helston Community Hospital made the most of having a member of the Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Patient Experience Team based in their setting. This role supported staff to develop new ways of enabling patients and their families to share messages and stay connected.

The daunting thought that relatives would not be able to be with their loved ones during this exceptional time put strain and emotion onto the shoulders of all the nursing staff who worked together to come up with different ways in which the team could help to keep patients and their loved ones as close as possible at the end of that patient's journey.

The 'Hearts Project' was launched, and staff, plus members of the public who wanted to knitted, sewed or crocheted pairs of matching hearts to connect patient's physically to their relative. A heart would be placed with the patient and a matching heart given or sent to the family to connect them, along with sentiments or bereavement support information. They made them as personal as possible and they became part of everyday connection, along with phones and iPads.

Something special was wanted for Helston and there was internal fundraising which enabled a local person to create a heart mural to improve the experience for family members as well as the team. There were many positive comments about the project and it will continue.

Benefits for patients:

- Patients felt connected to their families.

Benefits for staff:

- Staff felt they were providing the best care in difficult circumstances.

Benefits for the Trust:

- Staff felt supported and enabled to problem-solve creatively.

Next steps:

- The Hearts scheme is currently being used with end of life care patients and will be an ongoing option even as they move back to full capacity visiting.

What we have learnt:

- Maintaining the personal, sensitive touch with people outside the hospital was vital to patients and families.
- It's a simple thing but effective.



Contact



Lynda McHale
 MATRON OF HELSTON COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
lyndamchale@nhs.net

