



## **Guidance for Applicants**

### **What is Voices4Care?**

Voices4Care is an initiative of All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care (AllHPC) - an all-island organisation working to improve palliative and end-of-life care for patients and their families.

Through Voices4Care, we (AllHPC) are committed to the meaningful involvement of people with a life-limiting illness/palliative care needs (service users), their carers and the wider community in palliative care education, research, policy and practice.

Palliative care is care which aims to meet the physical, practical, social, emotional and spiritual needs of patients and carers facing progressive illness that may limit or shorten their lives and includes bereavement support. This care can be provided at any stage following diagnosis and when it is clear there is little or no likelihood of cure of an illness. Palliative care is for people of all ages to help them live as well as possible and achieve the best quality of life as their illness progresses.

Voices4Care will consider palliative care for adults. We will explore different ways of hearing views on palliative care for children and young people.

### **Who will be members of Voices4Care?**

Members of Voices4Care will be living in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland and ideally the membership will reflect a diversity of people.

Voices4Care is a volunteer group with up to 50 members made up of:

- people living with a life-limiting illness / with palliative care needs (patients/service users),
- carers or former carers of adults with palliative care needs, (carers refers to those caring for a relative/loved one, rather than health and social care professionals), and
- people from the wider community interested in palliative care.

Some group members will have palliative care experience, some won't.

Working with Voices4Care, we explore how to involve people as best as possible and review on an ongoing basis methods for involvement. On the Expression of interest form in Section 3 please tick to indicate your availability and how you are able to be involved.

Voices4Care will share and discuss issues which will inform how best to care for people with an illness or condition which may limit or shorten their lives.

We advise that a person would wait at least 12 months following bereavement before considering applying for membership of Voices4Care.

### **What will Voices4Care members do?**

The views and experience of members of Voices4Care will be central to informing and influencing our work and the wider palliative care community.

Although we do not provide direct palliative care we work with a range of people in partner organisations involved in planning, providing, researching and educating around this care, to improve the quality of services to people who require palliative care. These partners include hospices, health and social care organisations and universities on the island of Ireland.

Patients, their families, carers and others bring unique and fresh insights about care which are invaluable for those providing or making decisions about palliative care.

Through Voices4Care these perspectives will inform the work of palliative care education, research, policy and practice.

Involvement could be:

- through face to face meetings and/or video-conferencing,
- by correspondence, for example, commenting on documents/reports,
- by telephone contact, and
- by electronic communication, where practical.

The sort of areas members of Voices4Care could be involved are:

- giving their views or participating in education programmes,
- identifying topics/areas for palliative care research and contributing to the research process,
- contributing to the development of public understanding and awareness around death, dying, loss and caring, and
- influencing and informing palliative care in the health and social care structures in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, through participation in service user/carer groups, consultation events.

Some members of Voices4Care may be involved in the Institute's governance structure and various groups.

## **How will Voices4Care members be supported to participate?**

We will support members of Voices4Care and on-going information and support needs will be addressed. We will coordinate arrangements for Voices4Care meetings, correspondence and so on.

## **What is required of a member of Voices4Care?**

We expect that members will:

- be willing to engage. Engagement may be through a range of methods including: giving your views by correspondence; attending meetings (up to three times per year) at venues across the island of Ireland, either in person or by video-conference/skype,
- be willing to be involved initially for a period of up to 24 months (we appreciate that it may not always be possible to be involved for the entire 24 month period),
- understand that this is a voluntary role (out of pocket expenses in relation to involvement will be paid, in line with established policies).

Members will be expected to:

- bring their experience and or skills to influence palliative care education, research, policy and practice,
- be involved through attendance and participation in Voices4Care meetings (either in person or through video-conferencing), discussions, and through other meetings, where required,
- be willing to comment on written material, for example, reports,
- prepare for meetings by reading papers received beforehand,
- be prepared to think beyond personal and local experience in order to consider the needs of the population,
- participate as an individual, not speaking on behalf of an organisation or interest group,
- interact sensitively and respect the input of all Voices4Care members,
- respect confidentiality of any personal matters discussed at Voices4Care meetings,
- take part in training to support involvement in Voices4Care, and
- take part in any evaluation of the role and or activities of Voices4Care.

## **How do I apply to become a member of Voices4Care?**

If you would like to be considered for membership of Voices4Care please complete an expression of interest form.

You can get this form by:

1. downloading it from our website: [www.aiihpc.org](http://www.aiihpc.org)
2. emailing: [bohara@aiihpc.org](mailto:bohara@aiihpc.org) or
3. calling: 00353 1 491 2948

## **What do I do when I have my expression of interest form completed?**

Please email or post your form through either of the contacts below.

**By email to:** [bohara@aiihpc.org](mailto:bohara@aiihpc.org)

**Or by post to:** Brendan O'Hara  
All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care  
Second Floor, Education & Research Centre  
Our Lady's Hospice  
Harold's Cross  
Dublin 6W

## **What happens after I submit an expression of interest form?**

All expression of interest forms will be considered.

We may need to follow up on some expressions of interest to clarify your expectations and ours. This may involve doing telephone interviews. If, after this process, there are more people eligible for membership of Voices 4 Care than there are places on it, potential members will be identified against the following criteria:

- balance of service users, carers and wider community members,
- geographical spread of members - across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland,
- balance across potential members' experience of illnesses/diseases, and
- balance of representation from the diversity of society.

We will write to all those who send us an expression of interest form.

We hope that you find this information clear and that it will be helpful in clarifying what will be involved in being a member of Voices4Care. If you have any further questions, please contact Brendan O'Hara at All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care on (00353) 1 491 2948 or email: [bohara@aiihpc.org](mailto:bohara@aiihpc.org)