Frontline Insights: The CNC Experience of the Children's End of Life Discharge Checklist

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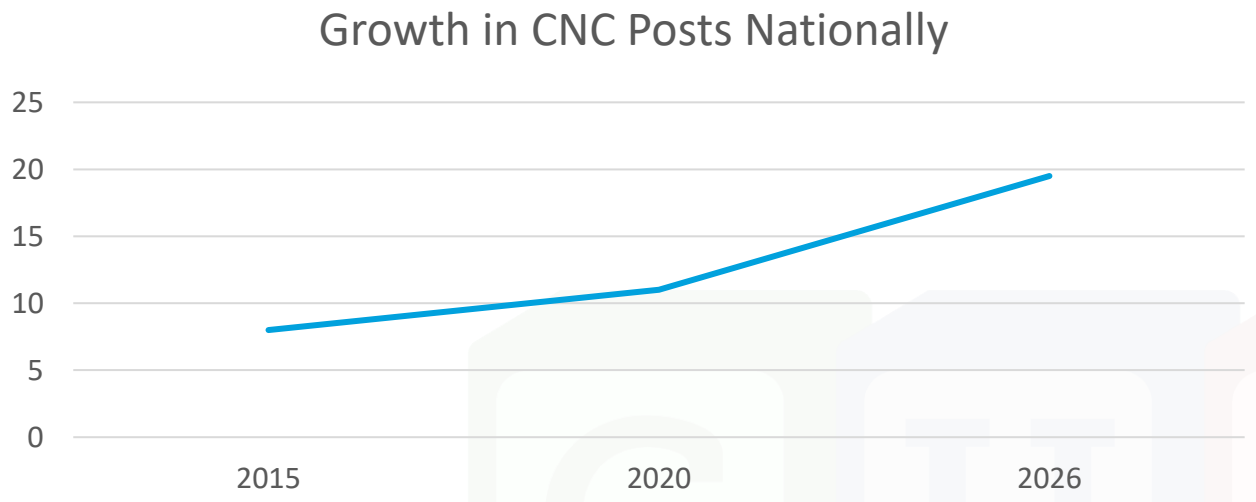
Progression of CNC service:

- **The national CNC service has expanded significantly from 8 CNC's in 2015 to 19.5 in 2026**



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The CNC Role in Coordinating End-of-Life Discharge:

- The "**Bee Wee" report (**2020) highlighted the particularly important role of the CNC when a child's condition becomes unstable or when a child is approaching end of life.
- While coordination of care and support for families of children with Life Limiting Conditions is central to our daily role, **this aspect of our role is where it becomes particularly impactful**.
- The focus of the role shifts to the **facilitating a safe and coordinated transition from hospital to the community for end of life care.**
- The CNC plays **a pivotal role in accessing and coordinating additional services**, alongside those already in place, to ensure the child and family are supported at home.

Why a National Discharge Checklist was Introduced:

- Coordinating discharge is a **pivotal aspect of the CNC role**, and the discharge checklist supports this.
- The **discharge process can be complex, emotionally charged and time-pressured**.
- As CNC's, our aim is to **ensure a safe and seamless transition home** with minimal disruption to the child and family.
- **Increasing clinical complexity and care needs** have made discharge planning more challenging.
- The national discharge checklist **provides a structured tool to** support safe and coordinated transitions.

What was in place previously?

- **Multiple discharge checklists** across hospitals
- **Lack of a standardised national document**
- Challenges for CNC's **working outside the tertiary centres**
- **Many transitions coordinated remotely**

Benefits for the wider team:

Planning

- Early prompt for discharge planning
- Strengthens anticipatory preparation

Coordination

- Structures the discharge process
- Clarifies roles and responsibilities across the MDT

Safety

- Enables earlier identification of needs and barriers
- Reduced last minute delays

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Further Benefits of the Checklist:

- **Provides clarity and formalises the discharge process**
- **Reduces assumptions** by requiring full completion prior to discharge
- **Acknowledges the complexity** of end of life discharges
- **Clarifies professionals roles and responsibilities**
- **Supports receiving teams** with accessible, structured information
- **Includes a safety pause** to minimises risk of omissions

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The Value of the Checklist for the CNC role:

The checklist supports CNC practise by enabling us to:

- **Initiate** discharge planning earlier
- **Ask** critical questions proactively
- **Identify** and **mitigate** risks
- **Escalate** concerns in a timely manner
- **Advocate** for the child and family
- **Ensure** key practical elements are in place

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Challenges and considerations:

- **Time pressures** when a child's condition is deteriorating
- **Timely completion required** by all relevant professionals
- The checklist **does not lessen the emotional weight** of end-of-life care
- Need to **balance documentation requirements with time supporting the child and family**
- **Coordination required across regions and services**

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CNC Feedback and Reflections

A short survey was conducted among CNC colleagues:

- **91%** have used the document to date
- **91%** of those who have used it **strongly agreed** that it supports safer discharge planning for children transitioning home for end-of-life care

- One colleague reflected:

> *"The checklist was fool-proof, especially when you haven't met the family before and will be the first face they see when they arrive home. Nothing is left out and you can just continue on the care instead of starting all over again."*

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Supporting safe transitions:

The discharge document:

- Provides **structure during times of uncertainty**
- Supports **earlier, anticipatory discharge planning**
- Enables **coordinated and compassionate discharge**
- Keeps **the child and family at the centre of care**

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Thanks for listening!

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