

Terms of Reference (ToR)- Specialist Palliative Care Communications Professionals Community of Practice (CoP)

Introduction

As Communications Professionals working in the area of palliative care, we have an essential role in information sharing across a range of audiences - health and social care professionals in Specialist Palliative Care (SPC), in general healthcare settings, policymakers and all involved in the development and provision of services. We also communicate with the public. In this role, good practice is essential to supporting those who provide high quality palliative care across the island of Ireland. We also need to continue to learn new skills, to stay up to date with new tools of delivering good communications and ways to connect with those who are living with life-limiting conditions and have palliative care needs now and in the future, and their families.

Purpose

To provide a network for support, learning and practice development for Communications Professionals working in Specialist Palliative Care settings on the Island of Ireland. The Community of Practice (CoP) will seek to collaborate, share, network and act as critical friends, staying up to date with developments and challenges which impact the day-to-day work of CoP members.

Key Responsibilities of the Community of Practice

- to share best practice
- to provide updates on developments in communications, i.e. new tools/methods/platforms, etc.
- to create a space to share challenges, discuss solutions and support one another.

Chairperson

The role of the co-chair of the CoP will rotate on an annual basis across members in the CoP.

The co-chairs for 2026 are:
Donna Reddy (St Francis Hospice)
Sheila Duffy (Foyle Hospice)

Responsibilities of the co-chairs:

- Liaise with the Communications Manager (AIIHPC) to develop a rotation system of presenting organisations
- Support members to present at meetings if/as required
- Follow up with member organisations if/as required
- Liaise with key stakeholders and external contributors when required
- Be familiar with the process of presenting and share relevant information/ process documentation with presenters

Membership

Membership of the Communications CoP shall include Communications Professionals who are working Specialist Palliative Care settings.

Responsibilities of the members:

- Attend scheduled CoP meetings via Zoom
- Facilitate the two-way exchange of relevant information between members of the CoP and their own organisations
- Actively engage in the CoP area on the Learning Platform and utilise it as a platform for sharing information with other network members
- Take responsibility for presenting at CoP meetings when agreed
- Inform AIIHPC of colleague's details if they would like to be added to the wider mailing list and area on the Learning Platform.
- Appoint two co-chairs to serve for a one-year period, where possible one from Northern Ireland and one from Republic of Ireland
- Annually when the role of co-chair becomes vacant, members who are interested, may offer to take over the role of chair

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Responsibilities for AIIHPC:

- Organise a calendar of meetings in consultations with co-chairs and provide notice of meetings to members
- Support the co-chairs to determine a rotation system for presenting organisations who will be responsible for identifying a topic, individual to present and communicate this to members
- Support members to host online workshops/ talks
- Establish and maintain a database of members of the CoP with contact details
- Support members to access the Palliative Hub – Learning Platform
- Manage CoP area on the Learning Platform including recording and uploading presentations and relevant materials.

Frequency of Meeting

The SPC Communications CoP will meet quarterly.
Dates for 2026:

- 5 March
- 14 May
- 1 September
- 19 November (potential to move to January)

Reporting/Communication
An annual review of the CoP including evaluation will be undertaken and a report provided to CoP members, funders and Council of Members.

Review of ToR
Will be undertaken annually, this is next due March 2027**.**