Shelley's story

The Primary Care Workforce project supported Shelley to develop her skills in palliative medicine. This is her story.

The Primary Care Workforce project is focused on the expansion, development and support of the primary care workforce in central Bradford medical practices to improve patient care, particularly around long-term conditions.

The project provides opportunities for staff to attend specific training in the management of long-term conditions, as well as providing sponsorship to support the development of more Practitioners with Extended Roles (PwERS), apprenticeships and funding for primary care nurses and HCA development.

Shelley is an Advanced Nurse Practioner working in central Bradford, she said: "After over 10 years of experience on the hospital wards looking after palliative patients, I came to work in the community and felt there was a gap in my knowledge and skills. Things are done differently in the community setting and knew I could offer more to provide better enhanced quality end of life care to patients in their homes.

"The Primary Care Workforce project enabled me to study Palliative Msc which has provided me with a wealth of skills and abilities. In addition to greater conceptual understanding of current subject knowledge, issues, and methods; the application of evidence-based medicine and in dealing with complex issues systematically and creatively has been passed on to patients. It has also helped me develop my problem-solving and decision-making abilities by providing opportunities for me to utilise evidence effectively and communicate important concepts to colleagues, patients, and their families/carers.

"As a team we decided to utilise the CLICS service and develop a palliative cohort, the cohort does not just involve cancer patients it also includes anything that is deemed palliative, this can be heart failure, dementia, respiratory illness etc. We found that some patients were not used to being asked 'what matters the most to you' or being given choices, so having a CLICS End of life cohort enabled this.

"Bradford is a culturally diverse city. Many people don't feel comfortable talking about end of life, but when encouraged and supported they open up, and are happy that somebody has taken the time to have sensitive discussions, and this has resulted in lots of positive experiences. CLICS and the primary care workforce project has reinforced my palliative care skills, increased patient trust, made me more aware of the differences in death and dying in different ethnic cultures. This has

empowered good communications between teams and enabled patients to be seen in a timely manner, with patients receiving good quality care early on.

The project has given Shelley time to devote to patients who are end of life, a time when they and their families need it the most. Unfortunately, time constraints before the CLICS project resulted in patients not getting a proper holistic assessment and a more focused tailored plan of care in a timely manner. The cohort has also been successful in 'capturing' patients that perhaps we didn't even know needed our support.

Shelley said: "I can pass on the skills and knowledge that I have learnt to patients and their families/carers and it has made me more curious about how we can improve things even further for patients. As a practice we feel that end of life care is being enhanced and we are delivering a more efficient service. CLICS has enabled us more time to have sensitive discussions, reducing inequality and is helping to reduce the emotional and financial burden on caregivers.

Shelley said that she can see a difference in the work she is doing: "We are getting good feedback, the patients, families, and carers tell me they feel supported and well looked after. I find we are coordinating and collaborating better with wider teams like the proactive care team, as we share more information.

"We are improving the quality of care of our palliative patients in Bradford, there is still more work to do and with the continuation of CLICS this will facilitate us to do better."

Thank you, Shelley, for sharing your story. You can learn more about the RIC programme on our partnership website.