Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust and Kentown Support Launch Specialist Palliative Care Partnership

Monday 2 November, 2026

A three-year collaboration will strengthen the skills and confidence of Kentown Children's Palliative Care Community Nurse Specialists across Greater Manchester.

Alder Hey's Specialist Palliative Care Team (SPCT), and Kentown Support have launched a collaborative project offering professional development and specialist support to Kentown Children's Palliative Care Community Nurse Specialists working across Greater Manchester.

The partnership reflects national priorities for more coordinated children's palliative care. NHS England's 2023 service specification sets out a model for specialist palliative care from identification of need through to end of life. The National Child Mortality Database's July 2025 thematic report calls for commissioning arrangements that ensure access to 24-hour advice and for named medical specialists to receive and complete appropriate training. The Alder Hey and Kentown Support collaboration supports these priorities by connecting community nurses with specialist supervision, professional development and clinical advice.

The partnership will help ensure Kentown Support's community-based offer is underpinned by trusted clinical expertise. Alder Hey's SPCT is a highly skilled team of specialist palliative care nurses and doctors supporting babies, children and young people at Alder Hey, across Cheshire and Merseyside, and more widely across the North West.

A three-year development programme

The project brings together three complementary forms of clinical development and support:

- **Clinical rotation:** Each Kentown nurse will spend up to six months embedded within Alder Hey's SPCT. With an honorary contract, nurses will take part in clinical aspects of the service and develop their palliative care competencies in line with their individual knowledge and skills.
- **Clinical supervision:** Every two months, the Lead Nurse for Palliative Care will facilitate group supervision, providing a safe and confidential space for nurses to reflect on complex clinical situations.
- **Specialist advice:** Kentown nurses will be able to seek guidance from SPCT nurses and doctors by telephone or through Microsoft Teams when additional expertise would add value in challenging clinical scenarios.

"The Specialist Palliative Care Team is looking forward to collaborating on this project. We hope it will help more families access high-quality palliative care nursing support and play a part in reducing inequalities in palliative care delivery," said Adrienne Rushton, Lead Nurse for Palliative and Bereavement Care at Alder Hey.

Joanne Hough, Kentown Children's Palliative Care Community Nurse Specialist for Wigan, has begun her rotation at Alder Hey. During the placement, she aims to deepen her knowledge of symptom management and strengthen her approach to supporting children with life-shortening conditions and their families. She comments, 'I am looking forward to enhancing my skills and experience in paediatric palliative care and taking this learning back to my role as a Kentown Children's Palliative Care Community Nurse Specialist to benefit the children and families the programme supports.'

The collaboration forms part of Kentown Support's wider model for children's community palliative care. By improving access to education, shared learning and specialist development opportunities, the programme aims to address fragmented knowledge-sharing while building the confidence, competence and skills of Kentown nurses. The learning gained through the rotations can also be shared with wider community nursing teams, extending the benefits of specialist training across local services.

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