

Kentown Programme Extends Ground-breaking Children's Community Palliative Care Support in Lancashire and South Cumbria

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Children's community palliative care has long faced gaps in provision, leaving many families without the joined-up support they deserve. Research in the North West has highlighted shortfalls in children's palliative care services – from a lack of social care for children and family members, community nursing support and limited access to appropriate information and advice. The Kentown model bridges that gap, ensuring families experience compassionate, coordinated care wherever and whenever it's needed.

The goal of Kentown Support is to improve the provision of community palliative care for children and families across the UK. By linking to and collaborating with professionals, other organisations and Integrated Care Boards, Kentown Support ensures its model provides children and their families with the right care at the right time in their own home. This is a unique, UK-wide model working with local services to create a more coordinated, accessible and family-focused approach.

Launched as a pilot in 2022, and funded by The Kentown Wizard Foundation, the Lancashire and South Cumbria Kentown project set out to improve nursing, respite and social care by working alongside and complementing existing services.

The pilot team included six Palliative Care Community Nurse Specialists (employed by five different acute trusts), six Family Support Workers (employed by Rainbow Trust Children's Charity), and three Family Coordinators (employed by Together for Short Lives).

To continue this vital work, and extend it across the UK, in 2025 the Foundation set up and funded Kentown Support as an independent not-for-profit organisation. From September 2025, Kentown Support will continue to fund its charity partners, Together for Short Lives and Rainbow Trust Children's Charity, for a further two years, who will continue to work with the Kentown nurses based in the five acute NHS trusts across Lancashire and South Cumbria enabling them to deliver an integrated package of community children's palliative care.

The Kentown Children's Palliative Care Programme Impact Evaluation led by Edge Hill University is due shortly and will explore the difference the programme has made from immediate benefits to families as well as the longer-term impact to children with life-limiting conditions and their families.

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