

Caring about dying

New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) has published a new guide for donors and grant-makers seeking to understand and address the problem of care for the dying in the UK. The report – *Caring about dying* – is based on six months of research, which included interviews with charities, umbrella bodies, academics, government bodies and a variety of practitioners. The research provides detailed context and background information on the sector and, importantly, an analysis of the outcomes of the various voluntary sector interventions in order to help guide funding decisions. It also examines the appropriate role for the voluntary sector and the need for private funding.

NPC's **Plum Lomax** outlines some of the report's findings.

600,000 people die each year in the UK, many of them from conditions which would benefit from palliative care. But such care is only available to part of the population. 80% of us would like to die at home or in a hospice, yet only 24% of deaths take place in these settings. Most deaths take place in hospitals and nursing homes where palliative care is not universally applied, although, ironically, it does not necessarily cost more to care for someone at home rather than in hospital.



A 'good death' is determined by quality of care, place of death and support for carers. There are several groups who are disadvantaged in receiving the necessary care and support to achieve a good death – non-cancer sufferers, black and minority ethnic patients and those from deprived communities are particularly badly catered for. For example, although cancer accounts for 25% of all deaths per year, cancer patients constitute 96% of hospice places. In addition, considerable resources are invested by both the government and the voluntary sector in catering for cancer patients' needs. Palliative care is far less advanced in application

to non-malignant conditions, such as organ failure, neurological problems and the multiple pathologies (including dementia) surrounding old age.

Voluntary sector's role

The voluntary sector plays a crucial role in providing palliative care services across all groups of society, funding over half of the services provided, helping to innovate services and practices, disseminating good practice and influencing government

policy. Close to £600 million per annum is currently spent on palliative care services (about £1,000 per death) of which £370 million comes from the voluntary sector. Without this contribution, and despite the hard work and dedication

of NHS professionals in the field, palliative care provision would grind to a halt. The voluntary sector has historically trail-blazed developments and frequently works closely with the NHS to deliver and improve services so that its activities are complementary rather than duplicative.

The state is arguably contributing less than it should for the services provided by hospices and voluntary sector nursing services. However the efforts of the voluntary sector and some dedicated NHS professionals are encouraging the government to take its responsibilities more seriously, and to allocate resources

more effectively so as to improve care. Indeed the government has already committed several tranches of extra funding to the area (around £54 million per annum), and is also keen to ensure that practices of excellence are extended to as many settings as possible.

Areas where private funding is needed are plentiful. On the one hand, regular funding of direct service provision by hospices and nursing services is vital. On the other, the strategic funding of research, education, umbrella bodies and national charities can have enormous impact on care and policy. Other areas of voluntary sector provision include addressing the issue of carers of the terminally ill, and services specifically aimed at children with terminal illnesses.

The report provides a range of interesting options for donors seeking to improve care for a large number of those dying. Many initiatives are outlined in the report as examples of funding which are likely to help achieve better outcomes for those experiencing terminal illness.

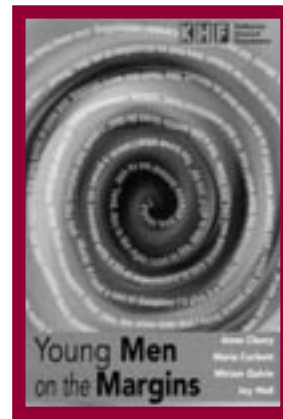
The report presents a compelling case for increased philanthropic funding in the sector, illustrating how relatively small sums can have a substantial impact. NPC also provides a series of complementary reports into individual organisations delivering effective services and producing change in the sector, and would be very happy to present their recommendations and findings to interested grant-makers and donors.

For more information on New Philanthropy Capital or to obtain a copy of their reports see www.philanthropycapital.org

Young men on the margins

Considerable numbers of men, mostly young men, have little or no participation in family life, community life, or employment. Typically they have benefited little from the education system, are unskilled and unemployed. Some are fathers, and some not. Increasing numbers, living in both urban and rural areas, are becoming socially excluded. There is growing concern about the numbers of such men addicted to alcohol or drugs, involved in crime, becoming homeless or resorting to suicide. New research funded

Although there is no shortage of opinions about the reasons for this problem, careful enquiry by the Foundation indicated that very little serious research seemed to have been done to identify the origins and the processes that lead to men finding themselves in this situation. The Foundation believes that research into why particular social problems arise, the impact they have



on individuals and communities, and how they might be overcome or prevented in the first place, can provide invaluable material to help policy makers target and respond to social need. With this in mind the Foundation, assisted by an Advisory Group, sought proposals from researchers, aimed at discovering how such men become marginalised. The subtitle of our brief to researchers was *'Unskilled, uneducated, unemployed and socially excluded men – what went wrong? – present help and future prevention'*. The work was carried out in the Social Science Research Centre at University College Dublin.

Current initiatives

In the last few years, there were a number of efforts and initiatives to meet some of these men's