



A Note About These Guidelines:

These are unprecedented times. There is no roadmap yet. We are facing situations that we never expected or wanted to. Working together we can make it through with empathy, compassion and sense of service intact.

These guidelines have been rapidly assembled and should be seen as an acute response to a fast-moving pandemic. The situation is fluid, and best practice is likely to need to change quickly. As we learn more about the specific needs of people dying with COVID-19, these guidelines will be constantly updated, and we welcome your input and experience in helping to keep these as useful and relevant as possible.

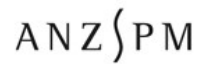
Guide to Collaboration to Support Children Requiring Palliative Care during Covid-19 Pandemic

The purpose of this guideline is to promote collaboration between local paediatric services and adult palliative care/hospice services to provide palliative and end of life care (“palliative care”) and bereavement support to children/adolescents and their families/whānau (“children and families”) during the Covid-19 pandemic by combining their skills and knowledge. This guideline is supported by the Ministry of Health “Guidance for Integrated Paediatric Palliative Care Services in New Zealand” [1] and a Memorandum of Understanding between Hospice NZ and the Paediatric Palliative Care (PPC) Clinical Network [2].

This guideline recognises the unique differences required for the palliative care of children and families as well as identifying that for the majority of DHB’s the necessary resources, skills and knowledge to deliver this support exists despite the absence of a Specialist PPC Service or specifically trained health professionals; this knowledge being found across the local Paediatric Service and the Adult Palliative Care/Hospice Service. It also acknowledges the consultative role of the Starship Specialist PPC Service in being available, as needed, for further advice, guidance, and support.

The essential planning and preparation by New Zealand’s health services for the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the pre-existing vulnerability for service delivery to certain populations. One such population is children with serious illnesses which would benefit from receiving palliative care, this being most evident at the end of life. To maximise care to this susceptible group of children and families the following pragmatic approach is recommended for Paediatric Services and Adult Palliative Care/Hospice Services to develop and advance their working relationship and combine their resources to achieve this end. These resources can be further assisted by making use of current guidelines on end of life care for children [3] and transitioning the adolescent and young adult receiving palliative care from paediatric to adult services [4].

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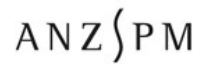
Recommendations:

- 1) Clinical and Management Leads of each Service to meet to discuss how they can most effectively collaborate to support children requiring palliative, end of life and bereavement care
 - a. Establish core partnership values based on early consultation and collaborative decision-making
 - b. Identify key responsibilities of Paediatric Service
 - c. Identify key responsibilities of Adult Palliative Care/Hospice Service
 - d. Establish simple information sharing platform compatible with existing systems
- 2) Each Service to assign Clinical Liaison Worker to meet regularly to:
 - a. Identify children and families who would benefit from palliative, end of life and bereavement care
 - b. Identify adolescents that are eligible for transition from Paediatric Service to Adult Palliative Care/Hospice Service
 - c. Undertake joint meetings with identified child and family to establish care needs
 - d. Maintain joint visits, wherever possible, regardless of place of care – home, hospital, hospice
 - e. Maintain comprehensive documentation of planning and care for children
 - f. Liaise with Specialist PPC Service at Starship, as required, for advice and support

Resources:

- 1) Guidance for Integrated Paediatric Palliative Care Services in New Zealand; Ministry of Health, Sept 2012 <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/guidance-integrated-paediatric-palliative-care-services-nz.pdf>
- 2) Memorandum of Understanding between Hospice New Zealand and Paediatric Palliative Care Clinical Network – please email rachel@hospice.org.nz for a copy
- 3) Starship Clinical Guidelines for health professionals – <https://www.starship.org.nz/health-professionals>: **Search Paediatric Palliative Care Clinical Network**
- 4) Transition Pathway for Adolescents/Young Adult – <https://aucklandregion.healthpathways.org.nz>

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Some principles of all COVID-19 guidelines produced by the Collaboration:

As with all guidelines, they are designed to support decision making and best practice alongside individual assessment and ongoing reassessment as possible.

No one size fits all, and the guideline recommendations should be tailored to individual circumstances. If local guidelines are available, these guidelines can be used in addition as appropriate. In some instances, these guidelines may not necessarily be appropriate or fitting.

Whilst these guidelines are aimed specifically for people with COVID-19, the principles may also apply to people who are dying of other conditions too during a crisis.

Please do not share these guidelines on social media: the information may be sensitive to the public if not given the appropriate context.

Please feedback with your experience, and what else needs to be added or changed, as we learn more about how best to help people needing palliative care in a COVID-19 pandemic. Please email rachel@hospice.org.nz