



Patricia Gilmore with the Eaton family

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Interview with Patricia Gilmore: My role in Children's palliative care

"It is a privilege to work with families and be able to support them holistically - not just their medical needs but also offering them a bespoke package of care."

Families of children who have a life limiting or life-threatening condition will know, it's a worrying and frightening time, but their journey is made a little easier thanks to our Children's Palliative Care Team.

Trish Gilmore works at ellenor, the only hospice in the UK to provide support

to children with cancer to live at home whilst undergoing treatments, such as chemotherapy. Around a third of children's cancer supports are cancer patients, with between half to two-thirds making a full recovery. As a Senior Staff nurse, she supports the paediatric outreach team and helps look after 30 families living in Bexley and North West Kent.

“The children we work with have different life-threatening conditions which means they have been born with long term complex health needs. We also work with children with a cancer diagnosis. Children are referred to us from the local community, local hospitals and various London hospitals such as Great Ormond Street, the Royal Marsden, and University College Hospital London. Although children will have to attend their main appointments with consultants at these hospitals, community care and monitoring allows families to reduce the time spent travelling to London for treatment that can be delivered at home.

“It is a privilege to work with families and be able to support them holistically - not just their medical needs but also offering them a bespoke package of care.

“Once a diagnosis has been made and a treatment plan agreed, my role is to visit the patients at home and provide support, advice and symptom management for children undergoing treatment. Our priority is to help children live as much of a normal life as possible. Many lead a normal life and make a full recovery.

“The Covid-19 crisis has added fear and another challenge to their lives. Families have expressed a heightened state of anxiety therefore we are always there -to offer reassurance and tender care like building a plan with them to cope with lockdown to having all necessary medicines and prescriptions available, and continuing chemotherapy treatment at home.

“We keep in contact with families by WhatsApp, email, phone, or online via weekly zoom calls. For our oncology patients, we visit them weekly at home, wearing full PPE.

“I feel privileged to work with wonderful colleagues and the families we support. These times remind me how much I love my job - it's been particularly rewarding to know that we can always help families through these tough times.”

We want to continue being there for children living with cancer. Please donate whatever you can towards our vital work: www.ellenor.org/donate

We are **ellenor**, a charity funded by the generosity of our local community, offering the best care and support to families facing terminal illness in Kent. We are the **only** charity in the county that provides hospice care for people of all ages – babies, children and adults - and their families. This includes pain and symptom relief, end of life care, respite, bereavement support and emotional and spiritual care.

Our Children's Hospice Care, formerly known as chYps, is provided in the comfort of the family home and spans across North and West Kent and the London Borough of Bexley. Adults living in Gravesham, Dartford and Swanley, receive care in their place of choice, including their own homes, at our Hospice in Gravesend and in local care homes.

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