

St John's Hospice

Caring for patients and families in our community every day since 1986

St John's Hospice
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www.sjhospice.org.uk

Caring for patients and families affected by
life shortening conditions in North
Lancashire and the South Lakes since 1986

VOICE

Valued Opinions to Improve Care Excellence

St John's Hospice Service User Forum



What is the VOICE Group?

VOICE stands for **Valued Opinions to Improve Care Excellence** and is St John's Hospice's user forum. This title reflects the group's brief and purpose and is in sync with the hospice vision to **put local patients and their families at the heart of everything we do**. VOICE was formed in 2014 to elicit and share service user views, opinions and concerns. Members meet every six to eight weeks to address and share issues with senior management, service leaders and staff with this aim in mind.

VOICE aims to involve patients, families and carers in improving their experience of the hospice services. Voicing and discussing views via VOICE aims to help influence patient care and future development of services.

Forum members have all had experience of hospice services in some form during the past five years. The forum's main duties are:

- To ensure that patients', families' and carers' experiences and views are central to the ongoing development of hospice services
- To ensure involvement of patients, carers and carers in assessment and evaluation of the hospice services
- To recognise those groups who traditionally do not have a voice in palliative care
- To prepare an annual report showing the benefits of patient, family and carer input in helping to improve the service user experience
- To communicate with the wider community about services, valuation of services and recruiting forum members

The forum has undertaken, and will continue to do, many pieces of work with St John's Hospice e.g. review of patient information leaflets, annual patient led assessments of the care environment and patient surveys. Working relationships have also been established with Healthwatch Lancashire as well as University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust through their Community Engagement Manager.

Service user input is a key part of healthcare development across all care settings. Its purpose is to work with patients, families and carers to create and

deliver hospice care and support services to people who have life shortening conditions. The hospice values input from patients, families and those who have been bereaved. Feedback is often positive, but VOICE encourages constructive comments, especially where things could be improved.

What VOICE Members say about their group...

"I just wanted to give something back to the hospice as a thank you for the exceptional care that was given to my mum, brother and I. I wanted to help ensure that the hospice continues to be there to care for others in the future."

"My mother was an in-patient and was cared for with such compassion and dignity that when the opportunity to join VOICE came up, I felt it would allow me to give something back to St John's Hospice."

"Joining VOICE was appropriate for me after a family member needed to use the hospice services. As a group we are there to speak from prior experiences and draw conclusions together on how best to improve the services going forwards. The forum is a supportive team, working together to identify what service users really need from their local hospice, and to suggest improvements."

"I gained confidence and a positive outlook in life after being referred to the Oak Centre on their COPD program. Two years later I'm now a member of the forum, as well as a volunteer."

Become a part of the VOICE Group...

If you are interested in joining the VOICE group and would like some more information, you are welcome to contact:-

Alison Isherwood

Volunteer Facilitator for St John's VOICE

Telephone the hospice reception on **01524 382538** and ask for Alison's contact number.

Alternatively, email Alison at alison.isherwood@sjhospice.org.uk.