



St Clare Hospice has been recognised for its delivery of end-of-life care to people across west Essex at a national awards ceremony in London this week.

The Our Health Heroes Awards champion people at the heart of the healthcare system who work to achieve better outcomes for patients. The sixth-annual awards ceremony was held at London's Science Museum on Thursday 24th March.

A panel of expert judges awarded St Clare Hospice the 'Most Progressive Integrated Care Workforce Programme' prize for their impactful collaboration with West Essex CCG and Essex Partnership University NHS Trust (EPUT).

With a hospital death rate of 49%, west Essex is higher than the national average, prompting the Hospice to partner with West Essex CCG and EPUT in late 2019. They worked together to develop a programme aimed at reducing hospital admissions, so that a greater proportion of patients can receive end of life care in more familiar surroundings, such as their own home.

To deliver on this aim, the partnership devised a localised model of care to empower skilled health and social care professionals to deliver person-centred care in patients' preferred places. Not only did this provide a better standard of care, but it also enabled the Hospice to support local partners throughout the pandemic by freeing up hospital beds for COVID patients and mitigating risk of exposure to Covid for vulnerable patients.

Steps taken include the launch the West Essex out of hospital care model. The Hospice is part of a system-wide integration project helping partners focus local resources and services, aligned and delivered around a GP registered population based in six localities. As part of this, the Hospice has been enabling its team of Clinical Nurse Specialists to work more closely with GP surgeries, and to deal with more complex referrals which are triaged and handled by a central Care Coordination Centre (CCC) set up by the partnership.

Sarah Thompson is CEO of St Clare Hospice. She comments: "We knew that by working in partnership, and integrating our services with local health and social care systems, we'd be able to reach more people with St Clare Hospice's outstanding hospice care, wherever they need it. Being recognised with this Health Heroes award alongside our partners West Essex CCG and EPUT is a fantastic achievement for us all and testament to our combined efforts to build innovative partnerships which improve the care our patients receive."

Louise Hall, Deputy Director of Transformation at West Essex CCG comments: "The West Essex Out of Hospital Model of Care is designed to place patients at the centre of all care and support pathways. Our ambition is to shift away from reactive care to a model that promotes good health and proactively identifies individuals that may require some additional support.

Louise adds: "Delivering care in the community this way requires team work across organisational boundaries and it is fantastic to have the support of St Clare Hospice embedded in the community to provide specialist palliative and End of Life Care to our residents, alongside support and training to our health and care professionals."

Tracy Reed, clinical lead for end of life care at Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) said: “We are delighted to be recognised for our collaboration with St Clare Hospice and West Essex CCG. It’s vitally important we continue to work with our partners to support localised, fair access to specialist palliative care wherever possible.

“The services delivered by St Clare Hospice gives patients more choice and promote better health and wellbeing in more familiar surroundings. The success of working in collaboration is also reflected in our outstanding CQC ratings in this area.”

John Rogers, CEO of Skills for Health - the not for profit that delivers Our Health Heroes - adds:

“A huge congratulations to St Clare Hospice on winning this award. Without the wider healthcare workforce that Our Health Heroes Awards aims to recognise and celebrate our NHS would grind to a halt. Now more than ever, it is important to raise awareness of the valuable contribution that these inspirational teams and individuals make to the health of the nation and to thank them publicly for the sacrifices they make.”