

Impact Report

2023 – 2024



Compassionate Care for Every Patient, Every Family, Every Time



Dear supporters and friends of **Pilgrims Hospices**

At Pilgrims Hospices, we place patients and their families at the heart of everything we do, delivering specialist end-of-life care when and where it's needed. In 2023/24, our three in-patient units in Canterbury, Ashford, and Thanet cared for 911 patients, while our Therapy Centres, Counselling, and Spiritual Care services supported 750 community patients every month.

Our work relies on diverse funding, with 80% of our income coming from voluntary contributions, including fundraising, our Lottery, 30 retail shops, and gifts in Wills. This Impact Report highlights the difference we've made to patients and their loved ones, thanks to the generosity of our supporters and volunteers.

Hospices play a critical role in the health and social care system. Alongside providing care, we reduce NHS pressure

by offering end-of-life training and collaborating with local providers and the Kent, Surrey & Sussex End-of-Life Care Collaborative.

Despite financial challenges in 2023/24, including rising costs and global crises, we've strengthened our services and remained committed to being there for every patient, every family, every time they need us. Thank you for supporting us – you are helping hospice care live on for all, for now, for ever.

Read on to learn about the difference and impact our staff, volunteers and supporters are making to the community.

'Thank you.'

"We couldn't do what we do without the support of our community – thank you."

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Delivering our care across east Kent

What is hospice care?

We provide our services free of charge to every family who needs us. Our services are designed to cater to patient's physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs. Additionally, we also provide support for patients' families.



We deliver our services through five primary services:

1 In-patient Unit (IPU)

At our hospices located in Ashford, Canterbury and Thanet. Patients who are admitted to our three, 12 bed, IPUs are cared for 24/7.

2 Hospice at Home

Very end-of-life patients who are cared for in their own homes.

3 Counselling

Provides support for patients and also for family members.

4 Therapy and Wellbeing Centres

Our three Therapy and Wellbeing Centres, based at each of our hospice sites, provide a range of services, therapies and activities for day patients and their carers.

5 Community care

Patients who are cared for in their own homes. The regularity of visits and contact will very much depend on the patient's need.

Our Vision

A community where people with a life limiting illness and their family are supported and empowered to live well in mind and body until the very last moment of their life.

Our Mission

To make a difference to the lives of individuals living in east Kent who are facing the last year of life.

To do this, we:

- ✓ Provide open, compassionate care and expertise for patients and their families; both in the community and in our in-patient units. We will continue this support for families through their bereavement.
- ✓ Inform, educate and enable patients and their families so they can make informed choices and participate in planning their own care.
- ✓ Form strategic partnerships throughout our community; sharing our research, knowledge and expertise to enable others to play their part in supporting families where and when they need it.



Our Values

To achieve our Vision, we have a shared set of values and behaviours that will enable us to be the people and the charity that patients and their loved ones need us to be.

They form our 'CODE' which guides us in our daily working and decision making.

Compassionate

We treat everyone with compassion and care.

Open

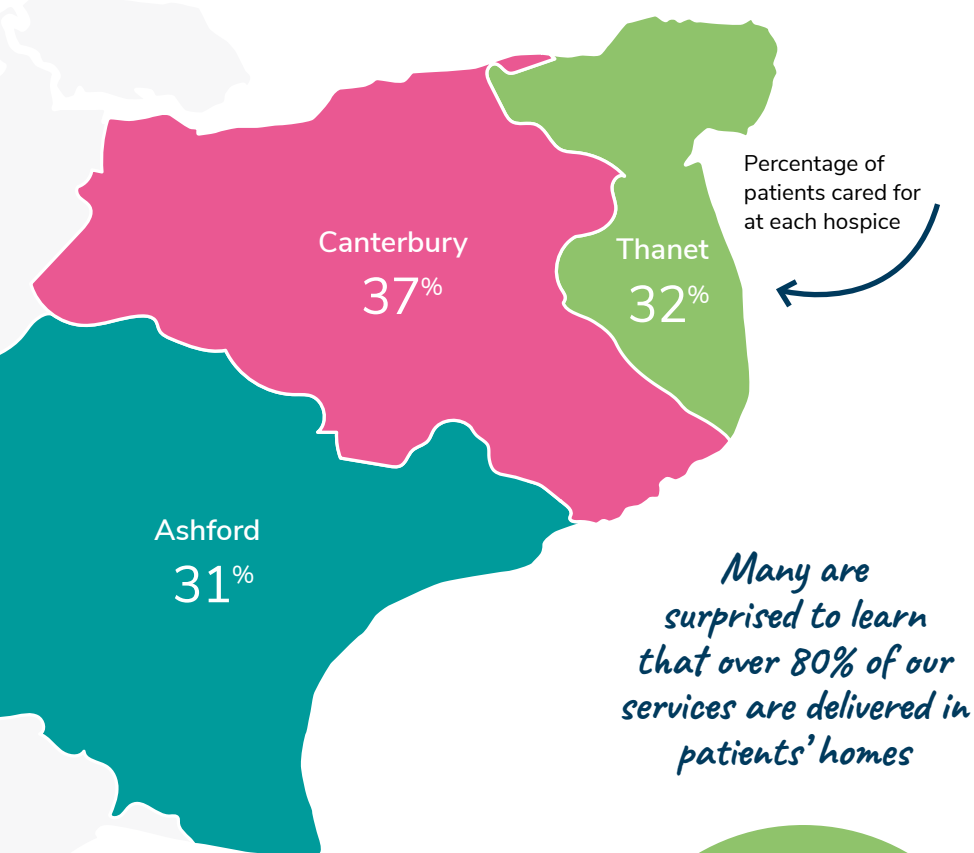
We communicate openly, honestly and effectively.

Dynamic

We are dynamic, improving and developing our services.

Empowered

We empower people to achieve their outcomes.

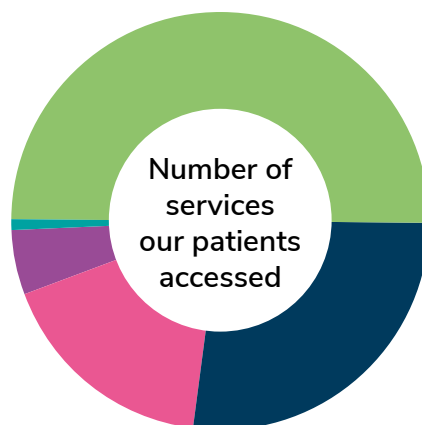


Many are surprised to learn that over 80% of our services are delivered in patients' homes

All our services are delivered by Pilgrims multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals consisting of doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers, counsellors, spiritual care advisers, complementary therapists, healthcare assistants and wellbeing practitioners – all highly skilled in supporting the needs of individuals in their last year of life and their families. They are supported by a range of support services from domestics, catering, maintenance and administration.

How many people accessed our care services in 2023/2024

We cared for 4,045 patients and their carers.



- 52% accessed 1 service
- 22% accessed 2 services
- 19% accessed 3 services
- 6% accessed 4 services
- 1% accessed 5 services

Cate's first year as a Palliative Specialist Nurse



Cate Gibson, from Ashford shares an insight into her first year as a Palliative Specialist Nurse (PSN) in Pilgrims Hospices Community Nursing team.

I think I always wanted to be a nurse. I found some photos of me when I was about six, dressed in a nurses outfit, I think I knew even then that nursing was for me. I began my training as soon as I could at 18 at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, London.

I worked as part of the team at William Harvey Hospital A&E department for about 15 years and then further trained as a paramedic.

As I got older, I felt drawn to hospice care, both of my parents had hospice at home care from Pilgrims. First my mum 14 years ago and more recently my dad, who died in Pilgrims Hospice Ashford in April 2020.

When I accepted the role at Pilgrims, my colleagues from the ambulance service, said that they couldn't think of anyone better to come and do this job for Pilgrims. It's so very different to being in a hospital environment, we are able to offer so much more to support our patients, whether it's breathlessness management, occupational therapy, wellbeing counsellors, social

workers and most importantly a 24-hour helpline. I speak to people about all of the horrible things going on at home and help them to find solutions and coping methods.

The Community Nursing team is quite different from the Ward Nursing team. We spend time assessing and looking after people in their own homes, within the hospice clinics and also supporting through telephone assessments. I liaise with GPs, consultants, district and community nurses, give palliative symptom support and end of life support. Whether the need is for signposting, equipment or sociological support, or all of the nitty gritty that families and patients need to talk about. Helping people to understand how to utilise our services and manage their conditions is so rewarding.

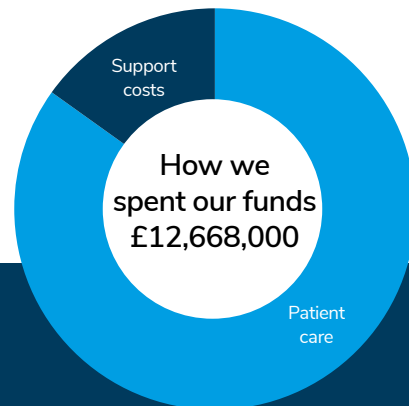
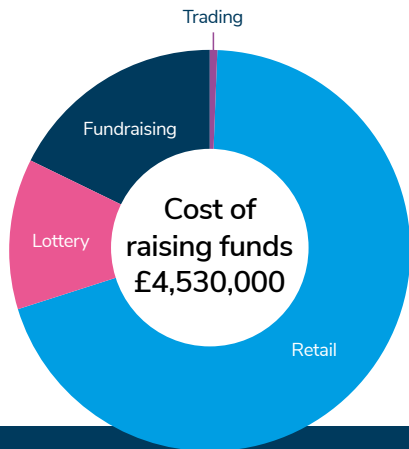
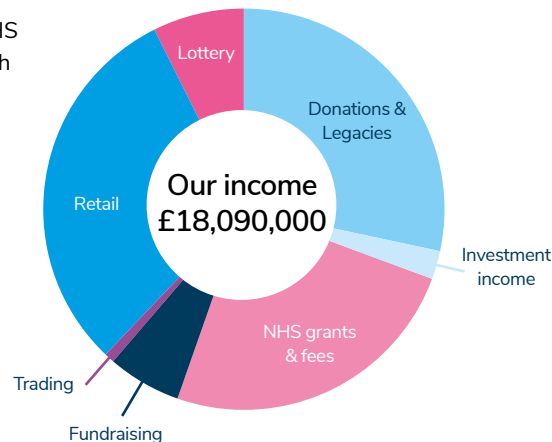
Although it was a massive learning curve coming to Pilgrims, the job satisfaction is beyond anything I've ever done, I come to work each day knowing that I'm going to make a difference to someone who is in need of our special care.

Funding Pilgrims

Pilgrims Hospices is an independent charity that provides its services free of charge to every patient, every family, every time they need us. To do this, we rely heavily on the support and generosity of our local community in east Kent. In 2023/2024 it cost us over **£17.2 million** to run our full range of services.

In 2023/2024, we received an annual NHS contribution of approximately 20%, which equates to around **£3.3 million**, which is reviewed each year. The remaining costs have to be generated through our Fundraising and Retail activities.

There are a variety of ways people help us reach this target, including joining our weekly lottery, visiting one of our 30 hospice shops, fundraising at home or at work or by taking part in one of our many sponsored activities organised by our team of fundraisers.



Did you know...

We welcomed more than 10,500 attendees at our events and campaigns in 2023, raising an incredible £800,000, which is enough to pay to run our three inpatient units for one month.

320 tonnes
of clothing recycled

3,270
Christmas trees
recycled raising
over £60,000

Our social impact

Our value in 2023/24 within the community is more than the care we deliver.

220 tonnes
of bric-a-brac,
books & furniture
recycled

30 shops
selling affordable
pre-loved items

We received
£28,644
worth of food
donations from local
businesses

1,150
volunteering
opportunities

Pilgrims employs
418
local people

Stepping Stones

The first step in bereavement support



Grief is a natural yet overwhelming experience that often leaves us feeling isolated and unsure where to seek support. Pilgrims Stepping Stones provides a variety of support groups in Ashford, Canterbury, and Thanet. These groups are open to all adults in east Kent. The program's specially trained volunteers guide individuals through the grieving process, helping them understand and navigate the complex emotions that come with loss. By sharing experiences and listening to others, participants often find comfort in knowing they are not alone, forming new friendships and support networks that can extend beyond their grief.

In 2019, Pilgrims introduced Stepping Stones Bereavement Cafés, held monthly at each local Pilgrims hospice. These cafés offer a relaxed, safe environment for bereaved adults to meet others, share their experiences, and learn strategies to cope with grief.

Each 1.5-hour session is limited in size to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate as much or as little as they wish.

These group meetings are greatly valued by those who attend the sessions. In 2023/2024 Pilgrims held 36 Bereavement Cafés.

Attendees of the group said

"It was invaluable to have a safe space to express my feelings."

"I always feel better after a meeting."

"A fantastic group so cathartic!"

In 2022/2023 Pilgrims introduced Stepping Stones Walk & Talk groups. In 2023/2024, 150 Stepping Stones Walk & Talk groups took place.

Through these walks, people, like Fraser Anthony have found a safe, supportive environment where they can share, or not share, at their own pace. "The group is really lovely – everyone is so supportive. You don't have to talk if you don't want to, and there's no pressure. It's comforting to know that everyone is there for the same reason."

Participants walk through beautiful surroundings, engage in meaningful conversations, and connect with others who understand their grief. "We're often so busy talking to each other that we don't even notice where we're walking," Fraser shares with a smile. "It's such a lovely atmosphere, and I feel safe."

As the youngest member of the group, Fraser initially thought he might feel out of place. However, he quickly found that the mix of ages didn't matter.

"There's such a variety of people, but that doesn't even cross my mind anymore," he says. "It's not about age – it's about the shared experience of loss. I've met some incredible people, and while we may not have deep personal connections, there's an ease in how we gel as a group. We talk, reflect, and support each other."

For Fraser, the Stepping Stones group has become a vital part of managing his grief. "It's like therapy without being therapy," he says.

"The volunteers are wonderful, and I've learned new coping mechanisms that help me on the tough days." Fraser especially values the chance to support new members of the group, helping them feel less alone as they navigate their own journeys.



Fraser
Anthony

Jayne's story

For many, leaving a gift in their Will is the ultimate expression of a lifetime of support.

Individuals leave gifts in their Wills to Pilgrims for many reasons. In 2023/24, Gifts in Wills represented 20.9% of Pilgrims Hospices total income. Here, Jayne, a Pilgrims volunteer and supporter, talks about why she has chosen to leave a gift in her Will to our charity.

"I had a dear friend who became a Pilgrims in-patient in 1983. Up until then I had never been into a hospice and, like many others, had a perception that it would be a gloomy, foreboding place. However I was delighted to experience Pilgrims as caring, welcoming and supportive – a bright, vibrant building and truly caring, kind, friendly and compassionate staff. They took care of my friend so well – and also helped her family with their grief when my friend died. I was so very impressed with this incredible organisation and the

care they gave my friend and her family at all stages of her journey – and could not believe this incredible charity was funded almost entirely through donations. I vowed at that point to do all I could to support such a worthy cause.

Over the years I've done all sorts of things – including running six marathons, organising my own fundraising events and taking part in many organised by Pilgrims. The list is long – and it will continue to grow!

My long-term relationship supporting Pilgrims – both as a fundraiser and volunteer – is the reason why I have chosen to also make a gift in my Will, so my support can continue, even when I am no longer here in person."



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Fundraising helps to support families, carers and friends

Being part of the Fundraising team at Pilgrims is much more than raising money to support the charity. We talk to Billy Williams, Events & Digital Fundraising Manager and Ellie Cane, Individual Giving Manager, about their roles.

Billy said: "When I was as part of the Pilgrims Wellbeing team, I worked closely with patients and their families to help improve their mental health and wellbeing. Creating a sense of community and camaraderie during the Wellbeing group sessions helped to change our patients' and their loved ones' views on hospice care. It gave me first-hand experience of how therapeutic interventions can help our patients live their lives as well as possible."



"Since moving to the Fundraising team, it's been amazing to see how the journey continues."

"Before joining the Fundraising team, I hadn't been aware how involved the fundraisers are with people who are grieving and how taking part in one of our challenge events in memory of a loved one can play such an important part in the bereavement process. Even after a loved one dies, it's heartwarming to see a family's engagement, enthusiasm and support for Pilgrims continue through fundraising. I feel very lucky to have experienced this full spectrum; from emotional and wellbeing support at the start of the journey, to watching families cross the finish line together at a Pilgrims event in memory of their loved ones. It really is a full circle moment, Pilgrims is there to support anyone in our community when and where they need it."

Ellie is responsible for our Trees of Love and Sunflower Memories remembrance events. Ellie said:



"We know better than most that when someone dies, it's not the end of the journey for those left behind. We put our arms around the family and friends of our patients, helping them through one of the most difficult times they might experience."

"We want to make sure everyone has the opportunity to celebrate and honour the memories of their loved ones, both inside and outside the hospice walls. Every year, we welcome over 1,700 people into our hospice gardens for Sunflower Memories and Trees of Love, our annual remembrances. These much-loved events also reach out into the east

Did you know?

In 2023/24, 26% of our event participants took part in memory of a loved one.

Kent community, with over six additional Trees of Love services in 2023 which are attended by over 300 local people."

"Each year, these special remembrances give everyone in our community who is grieving the space and time to share treasured memories and celebrate the lives of those they love. We recognise how important this is for anyone in east Kent who needs bereavement support, so our remembrances are always open to everyone, regardless of a previous use of our services".

Pilgrims listens

Our service users tell us what they feel a hospice should be, what their needs are and how we can work with them. This has been central to building a strategy that puts the different groups of people we work with front and centre.

Just some of the feedback we have received:

Mum wished to be at home to die and the support we had from the hospice was invaluable to us and gave us the confidence to keep her at home. The 24hr helpline was so reassuring Everyone was kind and compassionate. They knew the situation, were friendly & empathetic at all times.

It was a wonderful place, they gave my husband and I confidence in his last few days of life. I cant thank them enough. Everyone was kind and caring not just the Doctors and Nurses but everyone. It restored my faith in nursing. Thank you so much. I will never forget what you have done for my husband.

After being discharged from Oncology I was concerned and anxious about my care and what would happen in the future. Coming here to the hospice has given me the confidence and reassurance that I will be looked after.

I felt very low until I became involved with the hospice. They give me hope.

Everyone has been extremely helpful and full of good advice, I'm very grateful to have been offered all this brilliant support. Thank you so much.

Cat has been incredibly important in providing spiritual support through a nightmare time. She makes sure we feel cared for and supported when no one else can help. I couldn't be without her.



In public I appeared to be coping with the death of my partner of 41 years. But 'At home alone' I was falling apart. I had a fear of these two selves splitting and 'me' breaking down. My counsellor Geoff, helped put me back together!

I have never felt so cared for in my life. I can talk to any of the staff and they always take the time to listen to me. I can't fault them at all, they are all wonderful.



I Want Great Care (IWGC) is the world's leading independent platform for measuring patient experience and outcomes, with over 5.8 million healthcare reviews across 28 countries worldwide.

Founded in 2008 to support healthcare by increasing clarity and empowering patients to review the care they receive, Pilgrims Hospices has been using IWGC to collect service users' feedback for many years and has over 6,000 reviews online.

iWantGreatCare

2,806
Complementary
Therapy contacts

7,149
Occupational
Therapy contacts

8,978
Social Work
contacts

2,599
Counselling
contacts

Did you
know?

Apr 2023–Mar 2024



5,878
Community
Nursing contacts



Volunteering is good for your wellbeing

Sue and Tony have a wealth of volunteering experience. Together they have donated more than 40 years of valuable time and skills, volunteering at Pilgrims Herne Bay shop.



Tony who is now 83 years young, says, "I love it, I've always kept myself busy, and being part of the hospice shop team is an important part of my weekly routine."

Sue is 77, she joined Pilgrims Retail volunteer team when she retired some years ago. She said: "I had a career in retail as a manager, and decided to retire early to spend more time with my husband Tony, after he retired. However, I felt a bit too young to completely retire, and thought about volunteering in a charity shop. I knew the Pilgrims Hospices shop, I had often popped in for a browse. I approached the shop in Herne Bay to offer my services, and was accepted as a volunteer, and before I knew it, I was part of the team. I started with a few hours, and then it became a day, and sometimes more if needed. That was about 24 years ago, I can't imagine not doing it now!"

"As time went on, I was asked to take on the role of keeping the shop running smoothly, as I'd retail management

experience, I was happy to do this. After some time, we needed to recruit a further volunteer to help man the till space; I asked Tony if he'd consider joining me as part of the team, which he did. We've been volunteering together for around 20 years and we've never looked back. I've even encouraged my friends to join us as volunteers too!"

Tony added: "I really like the experience of being around people, and talking to regular and new customers. Customers come along to browse and have a chat, and we do our best to make everyone feel really welcome. It must work because they come back regularly!"

"Volunteering is such a positive thing to do, and an important part of our lifestyle, we really enjoy our time in the shop. I've enjoyed the volunteer work at Pilgrims even more than some of the jobs I've had over the years."



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Ashford

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Ashford, Kent TN24 0NE

Canterbury

56 London Road, Canterbury,
Kent CT2 8JA

Thanet

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Kent CT9 4AD

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