



Candidate Brief for the position of

Director of Clinical Operations

Pilgrims Hospices



Welcome letter from Helen Bennett, Chief Executive Officer

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Director of Clinical Operations role at Pilgrims Hospices. We are delighted that you are considering joining our team at such a pivotal time in our journey.

Pilgrims Hospices has been at the heart of compassionate end-of-life care in East Kent for over four decades. Every year, we support thousands of patients and their families, helping them to live well in the time they have, and die with dignity and peace. This work is only possible because of the dedication and expertise of our people - and we are now seeking a new Director of Clinical Care Operations to help lead and shape the future of our care.

This is a critical leadership role, responsible for ensuring the highest standards of clinical governance, innovation, and operational excellence across our services. You will be joining a committed and values-driven executive team, and will play a central part in delivering our strategic ambitions, including expanding access to care, strengthening our workforce, and deepening our integration with health and care partners.

We are looking for someone who shares our passion for person-centred care, who brings strategic insight and operational rigour, and who can inspire and support our clinical teams to thrive. If you are a collaborative leader with a track record of delivering high-quality services in complex environments, we would be excited to hear from you.

Thank you again for considering Pilgrims Hospices. We hope this brief gives you a clear sense of our mission, our culture, and the opportunity ahead. We look forward to learning more about you.

Warm regards,

Helen Bennett



About Pilgrims Hospices

We are Pilgrims, east Kent's largest hospice charity. We help people facing incurable illness to **live well in every moment**.

At Pilgrims Hospices, we have a simple vision:

"Of a community where people with a life limiting illness and their family and friends 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 in the lives of individuals in east Kent who are facing the last year of life.

Our care

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.

Our patients

Advise, educate and enable patients and their families so they can make informed choices and participate in planning their own care.

Our network

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.

[Download our Organisational Strategy 2024-2027](#)

What we do

Pilgrims helps people facing a terminal diagnosis, and their families, to live well in every moment.

Our work began over 40 years ago, with the vision of one village nurse – Pilgrims' founder and lifetime president, [Ann Robertson](#). Ann wanted to make a difference for the people in her community facing terminal illness.



[Download our Impact Report 2023-24](#)

Awards and Achievements

At its heart, Pilgrims is dedicated to ensuring that people living with a terminal illness can access the quality care and comfort they deserve. We are compassionate in all of our interactions so that people feel supported and well informed.

We seek to empower people through clinical care, education and insight. We strive to be dynamic – looking for innovative ways to help support the community of east Kent.

Our awards and achievements include:

- National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)
2021 NIHR and Charities Consortium Hospice and Community Research
"Hospice UK Award" (highly commended)

The Hospice UK Award is awarded to the hospice (or group of hospices) which has made significant progress in becoming research active through contributing to NIHR Portfolio Studies.

- Stronger Kent Communities – June 2021
"Recognition of Excellent Volunteer and Management Practice" quality mark

- UK Enterprise Awards 2020
National "Best Hospice Care Provider 2020 - South East England"

The UK Enterprise Awards (part of SME News) recognised that Pilgrims Hospices has demonstrated excellence, commitment and dedication even in the face of uncertainty.

- Hospice Income Generation Network (formerly National Association of Hospice Fundraisers)
National "Most Innovative Idea or Campaign"

Pilgrims received national recognition at the National Association of Hospice Fundraisers ceremony. This was awarded for Most Innovative Idea or Campaign for the development of the Pilgrims event app, use of technology to enhance the participation experience of our two flagship fundraising events: the Cycle Challenge and the Pilgrims Way Challenge. These events raised more than £180,000 in 2019; enough to keep a bed open on one of our inpatient units in Ashford, Canterbury or Thanet for more than 360 days.



Job Purpose

To provide strategic and operational leadership for all clinical and patient services across the organisation, ensuring high-quality, safe, and compassionate care.

The postholder will act as the CQC Registered Manager and Caldicott Guardian, with responsibility for clinical governance, workforce development, and service innovation.

Acts as Line manager of key clinical leads of Medical, Nursing and Allied Health Professional teams.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership & Strategy

- Lead development and delivery of clinical services aligned with Pilgrims' vision and strategic goals
- Represent Pilgrims in commissioning, provider partnerships, and national forums
- Provide visible, accessible leadership and foster a culture of excellence, learning, and collaboration



- Chair strategic Clinical Leadership forums both internally and externally, e.g. Hospice Education Collaborative, East Kent “Need to Do Something Group” provider collaboration Forum
- Develop and implement strategies to meet evolving service demands
- Collaborate with Director of Finance and IT for robust planning and funding
- Develop annual overarching clinical corporate plan with operational targets and budgets
- Ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements
- Provide reports to Trustee Board and Executive team demonstrating progress
- Influence Integrated Care Systems development plans
- Represent Pilgrims in external partnerships and clinical opportunities
- Engage in regional and national professional networks and forums



Clinical Governance & Compliance

- Ensure compliance with CQC standards and statutory regulatory requirements
- Lead clinical audit, risk management, and quality improvement initiatives
- Promote evidence-based practice and oversee clinical policy implementation

Service Development & Innovation

- Drive continuous improvement in patient care, adapting best practice and innovation from the wider sector.
- Collaborate with external partners to enhance service delivery and patient experience.
- Integrate research and evaluation into clinical practice
- Manage clinical commissioning and business relationships
- Facilitate communication across clinical and non-clinical teams

Workforce Planning & Development

- Design sustainable workforce models for clinical professionals
- Oversee recruitment, retention, and professional development of clinical postholders
- Ensure staff are qualified, appraised, and supported
- Lead and direct Palliative/EOLC teams in line with strategic vision
- Lead and support direct reports through performance reviews and development
- Collaborate with People team on recruitment, induction, training, and retention
- Develop clinical career pathways with Learning & Organisational Development team

Financial & Operational Management

- Contribute to budget preparation and financial projections
- Manage the approved clinical department budget and resource allocation
- Monitor clinical quality targets and performance
- Prepare cost-benefit analyses for service initiatives
- Analyse performance data and implement improvements
- Report KPIs to Executive and Board



Communication & Stakeholder Engagement

- Build strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Act as ambassador for Pilgrims, promoting public confidence
- Ensure effective communication across multidisciplinary teams
- Role model Pilgrims' values and drive positive colleague engagement

Professional & Personal Responsibilities

- Comply with all Pilgrims Hospices policies and procedures
- Maintain mandatory training standards
- Stay updated on legislation and professional training
- Demonstrate personal and professional development
- Ensure confidentiality and compliance with data protection laws
- Understand and apply Caldicott principles when handling patient data
- Comply with all Pilgrims Hospice policies and procedures and ensure all health and safety policies and guidelines are adhered to across the clinical workforce



Person Specification – Director of Clinical Operations

Essential

- Relevant clinical qualification (e.g., Nursing, Medical, AHP)
- Significant senior leadership experience in clinical care
- Experience of service development and innovation
- Strong understanding of clinical governance, CQC regulations, and compliance
- Proven leadership in change management, budgeting, and patient outcomes
- Significant experience developing others
- Experience of facilitating an “open” culture where others have the freedom to speak up and express concerns transparently
- Excellent interpersonal and stakeholder engagement skills
- Commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Experience improving patient outcomes and operational efficiency
- Strong financial acumen and KPI delivery
- Proven experience navigating complex healthcare systems
- Collegiate decision-maker with sound judgement
- Enjoys collaboration with experienced system health leaders
- Credible, confident, and open to learning

Desirable

- Experience in palliative or end-of-life care
- Third sector and volunteer engagement experience
- Master’s degree or equivalent
- Board-level experience
- Familiarity with national palliative care strategies and research

Additional Requirements

- Full UK driving licence and access to a vehicle with business insurance
- Enhanced DBS check
- Willingness to travel across sites



Other Information

This job description will be reviewed annually and may evolve to meet service needs. Additional duties may be required within the scope of the role.

Pilgrims Hospices is committed to:

- Promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Valuing individual contributions and treating people with dignity and respect
- Applying EDI principles across all employment practices
- Providing training and development opportunities
- Encouraging positive collaboration with volunteers
- Maintaining confidentiality in all aspects of work
- Operating as a smoke-free organisation



Other details

Job Title

Director of Clinical Operations

Salary

Circa £95k

Benefits

As well as offering a range of financial discounts, staff and volunteers have access to:

- Flexible and hybrid working practices
- Competitive salaries in line with national healthcare bodies
- Safe, high-quality mental and physical support where needed, including the provision of Mental Health First Aiders across the organisation
- Access to regular resilience and mindfulness workshops
- Purchase annual leave schemes
- Annual reward and recognition schemes
- Access to Blue Light Cards
- Free parking across all sites
- Subsidised meals across all sites

Location

Flexible across East Kent (Canterbury, Ashford, Thanet)

Reports to

Chief Executive

Hours

35 hours per week (some out-of-hours required as part of the Executive on-call rota)



Line Management

Medical Consultant Lead, Head of Nursing, Head of Psychosocial and Bereavement Services, Head of Therapies and Wellbeing, Clinical Quality and Education Lead, Think Talk Act Clinical Programme Manager, Expert Clinical Volunteer Lead

Working Arrangements

Flexible office/home working arrangements to be agreed with line manager and aligned with role and charity needs

Important Dates:

KEY INFORMATION	DATE
Closing date for applications	Monday 29 th September
Preliminary interviews with Berwick Partners	w/c 13 th and early w/c 27 th October
Initial interviews with Pilgrims Hospices	w/c 10 th November
Final panel interviews with Pilgrims Hospices	w/c 17 th November



How to Apply

To apply, please submit a CV along with a covering letter setting out your interest in the role and briefly summarising how you meet the criteria outlined in the **Person Specification**.

The preferred method of application is online at www.berwickpartners.co.uk/94400

If you are unable to apply online, please email your application to response.manager@berwickpartners.co.uk

All applications will receive an automated response.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Diversity Monitoring system, which will be found at the end of the application process.

For **detailed information** on how we process your personal data, please review our privacy policy on our website <https://berwickpartners.co.uk/privacy-and-cookie-policy/>

In line with GDPR, we ask that you **do NOT send us** any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember not to mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

If you have any queries or would like more information in regard to this document, please contact:

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