



Impact Report

2024 – 2025



Compassionate Care for Every Patient, Every Family, Every Time



To our valued supporters and friends of Pilgrims Hospices

“We couldn’t do what we do without the support of our community – thank you.”

At Pilgrims Hospices, our focus is always on patients and their families, ensuring that specialist end-of-life care is available whenever and wherever it is needed. In 2024/25, our three in-patient units – located in Canterbury, Ashford, and Thanet – provided care to 966 patients. In addition, our Therapy Centres, Counselling, and Spiritual Care teams offered monthly support to over 600 people within the community.

Hospices are a vital part of the health and social care landscape. Beyond direct care, we help ease the burden on the NHS by providing vital end-of-life training and working closely with local partners and the Kent, Surrey & Sussex End-of-Life Care Collaborative.

Our ability to deliver these services depends on a wide range of funding sources. Supporter donations make up approximately 80% of our income, including proceeds from fundraising events, hospice lottery, 32 charity shops and gifts in Wills. This Impact Report demonstrates the positive changes we have achieved for patients and their families.

Although 2024/25 brought financial pressures, we have continued to strengthen our services and remain committed to supporting every patient and their family whenever they need us. Your support ensures that hospice care continues – now and into the future.

Please read on to discover how our staff, volunteers and supporters are making a real difference in your community.

‘We couldn’t do what we do without you. Thank you.’

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Delivering our care across east Kent

What is hospice care?

In 2024/25 3089 people were referred to Pilgrims Hospices. We provide our services free of charge to every family who needs us. Our services are designed to cater to patients' 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 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 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 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

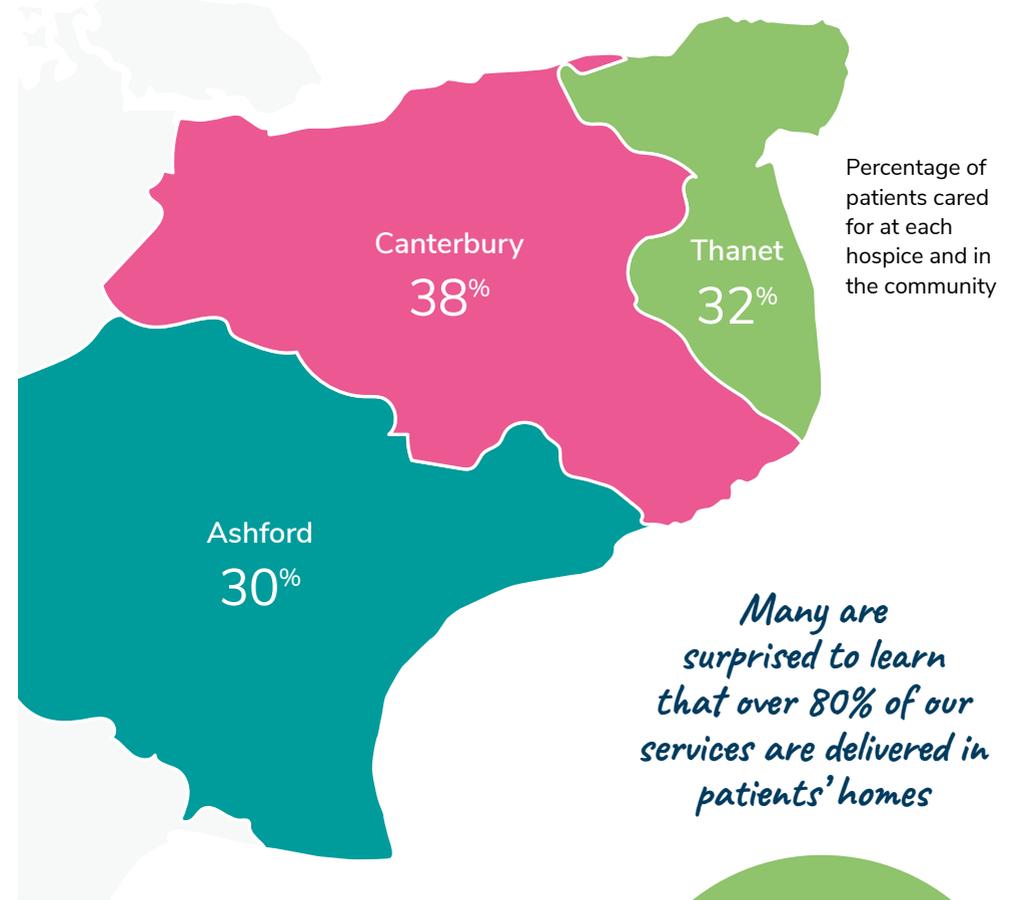
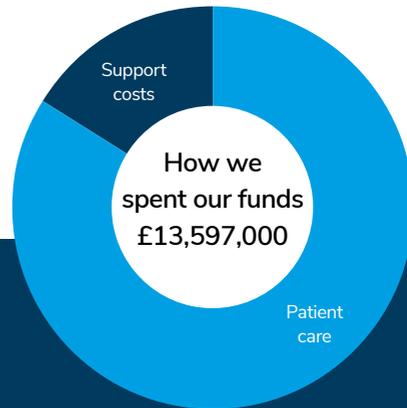
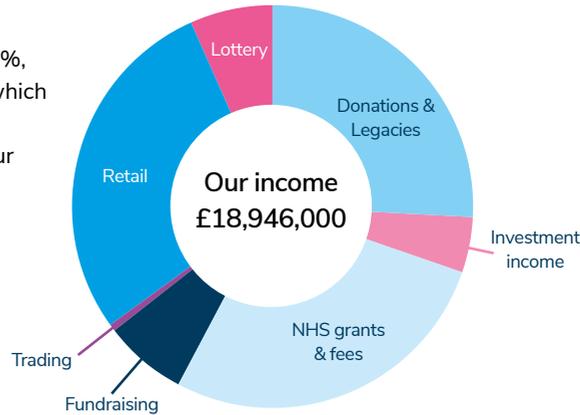
We empower people to achieve their outcomes.

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 2024/2025 it cost us over £18 million to run our full range of services.

In 2024/2025, we received an annual NHS contribution of approximately 20%, which equates to around **£4 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.

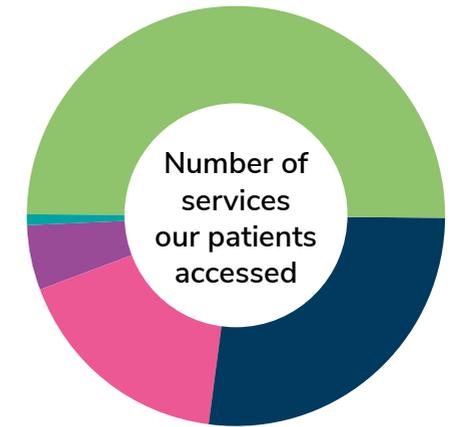


Many are surprised to learn that over 80% of our services are delivered in patients' homes

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 2024/2025

We cared for 4,041 patients and their carers.



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

Did you know...

In 2024/2025, we were proud to welcome over **11,000** supporters to our events and campaigns, raising more than **£900,000**. These funds enable us to operate our three inpatient units for six weeks.

Cultivating a sustainable future

Kent Community Foundation helps Pilgrims Hospices enhance wellbeing and biodiversity

Through a generous grant from the Environment Fund administered by Kent Community Foundation, Pilgrims Hospices has transformed an outdoor space at its Canterbury site into a thriving kitchen garden – reflecting our commitment to environmental stewardship, community wellbeing, and responsible resource use.

This initiative is already having an impact. As well the nutritional benefits of fresh, seasonal produce appearing each day on our hospice menus, we're reducing our carbon footprint through fewer food miles and associated transportation emissions, and less packaging waste.

We've created a closed loop system by composting our kitchen scraps and harvesting rainfall to help conserve water and reduce the reliance on mains water. These seemingly simple measures help us protect soil health and promote biodiversity.

Beyond its environmental and nutritional benefits, the garden enhances wellbeing by creating a tranquil, sensory-rich space for

patients, families, and staff. As it matures, patients will be invited to help harvest produce for their own meals.

Delivered in partnership with volunteers, the Canterbury Army Careers team, and Pilgrims staff, this project showcases the power of community collaboration.

Together, we are cultivating a model that nurtures both people and the planet, and demonstrates how ethical, forward-thinking initiatives create long-term social value.



Ian Ashton, Catering Services Manager, explained:

"It's so nice to be cooking in the kitchen and be able to quickly pop outside to pick some fresh parsley to add to a dish. It really is wonderful being able to say that the herbs or vegetables have come straight from our very own kitchen garden."



357 tonnes of clothing recycled

4,200 Christmas trees were recycled raising in excess of £78,500



1,150 volunteering opportunities



Our social impact

Our value in 2024/2025 within the community is more than the care we deliver.

We received £20,484 worth of food donations from local businesses

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



32 shops selling affordable pre-loved items



Pilgrims employs 370 local people



Pilgrims People, their stories

Innovation in care: Empowering volunteers, enriching lives

At Pilgrims Hospices we wouldn't be able to do what we do without people like Niomi, a Ward Support Volunteer at our Ashford hospice.

With a professional background in teaching, community care, and dementia support, Niomi has embraced her volunteer role. Inspired by Dr. Kathryn Mannix's work on patient-led end-of-life care, she joined Pilgrims volunteer workforce to help others experience dignity and comfort in their final days. Her role not only supports patients on the ward, it assists the care team providing additional support and services when needed.

As Niomi says, "Pilgrims Hospices understand how a person dies, enabling patients to remain dignified. It's how everyone deserves to die.

"Every situation is unique," Niomi explains. "It's about working out what's required for each individual." Her work balances resilience and accountability with empathy and compassion – from supporting patients to easing the emotional load on families and staff.



Seeing an opportunity to improve the hospice experience for visiting children, Niomi took the initiative to create activity packs, supported by the Hospice Services Manager. This simple innovation is helping to take away the fear and uncertainty young people face when visiting the hospice because they would undertake similar activities in their own homes.

Beyond her volunteer role, Niomi takes part in some of our fundraising activities. Alongside her husband, she took part in the 2024 Pilgrims Hospices Cycle Challenge, completing 30 miles to raise funds for Pilgrims.

Her story encapsulates Pilgrims' mission – to make a difference to the lives of individuals living in east Kent who are facing the last year of life.



Running for Compassion

Cheyenne's Marathon Mission

When Cheyenne Williams from Dover took on the London Marathon, she was running in memory of her mum, Belinda "Bill" Williams, who was cared for by Pilgrims Hospices when Cheyenne was just six years old.

Reflecting on that time, Cheyenne shared:

"The wonderful staff enabled our family to have some normality and routine during a frightening and difficult time. They supported us all – not just my mum – and created memories I'll always treasure."

Now, more than 20 years later, Cheyenne has given back by raising funds to help ensure that compassionate care continues for future generations. Supported by her family, friends, and colleagues at Woodpecker Court, Cheyenne's fundraising

included: quiz nights, bake sales, and community events.

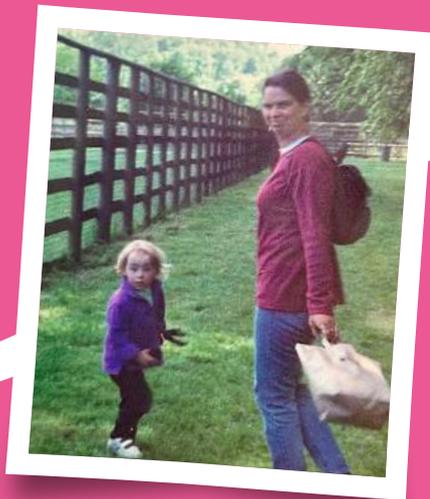
Her story demonstrates how important Pilgrims multi-disciplinary approach to care is, ensuring the entire family is looked after and even, after many years, cherished memories are remembered. Every mile she ran and every pound she raised helps Pilgrims to sustain its vision of compassionate, person-centred care.

"I hope I'm honouring my mum and keeping her memory alive. Supporting other families who are on the same journey brings me comfort," Cheyenne said.

Cheyenne's determination reflects how local people supporting each other make hospice care possible.



Belinda (Bill) Williams



Cheyenne with her mum

THIS IS HOSPICE CARE

In February 2025 Pilgrims Hospices joined 142 hospices from across the country to promote the importance of Gifts in Wills. Speaking with one voice, for the first time, the national This is Hospice Care campaign highlights the critical and varied role of end-of-life care.

Data from Hospice UK has shown that without Gifts in Wills, 30,000 people per year wouldn't receive hospice care. This income stream is vital in ensuring people get the care and support they need at the end of life.

This is Hospice Care highlights the breadth of care we provide patients and their families. It's love and life and celebration. It's care for the carers, for those dying and for those left behind. It's going the



extra mile, reminiscing on old memories, and creating new ones. It's the birthdays, the weddings, the new flavours and the old favourites. It's rediscovering creativity, exploring spirituality, and talking about what really matters. It's allowing anyone, anywhere, to embrace the life they have left.

This is the impact of hospice care, for all, for now, forever.

"I always imagined hospices were marvellous places but until I experienced it myself, I didn't know just how exceptional everything and everyone would be."





Driving resilience and operational effectiveness

Sam Churchyard, Hospice Services Manager, Pilgrims Canterbury

Since joining Pilgrims in November 2022, Hospice Services Manager Sam Churchyard has brought a wealth of practical expertise from his background in plumbing, heating, and facilities. His hands-on experience and solution-focused approach have become central to strengthening Pilgrims Canterbury's resilience and operational effectiveness.

"The challenges are significant and far reaching," Sam explains. "Managing multiple projects while supporting a dedicated team of staff and volunteers is no small task. At the heart of everything we do – whether the project is large or small – is a commitment to keeping patients at the centre. Ultimately, every initiative must strengthen the charity and enrich the quality of patient care."

For Sam, every decision is rooted in long-term impact: enhancing the environment for patients, their families, and friends so their experience of hospice care becomes

a positive, long-lasting memory – one that inspires continued support for Pilgrims in the years ahead.

As Pilgrims capacity grows back to full strength which was lost during the COVID-19 years, we are benefiting from renewed momentum. Sam works

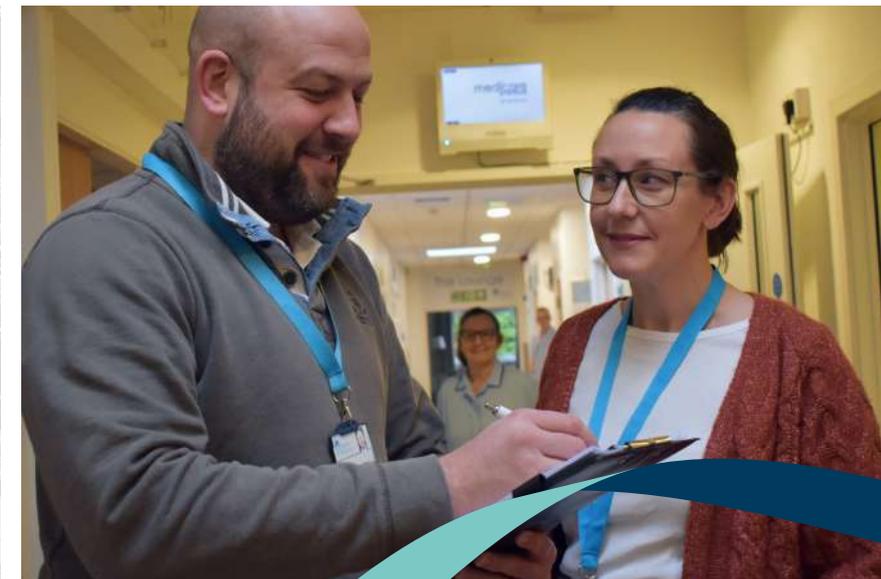


closely with engaged corporate partners who invest time, skills, and energy into improvement projects to enhance our hospice facilities.

Prioritising these projects can be complex. Sam's role takes him everywhere – from modernisation project planning meetings to hands-on work with the maintenance team. "I've even found myself helping to repair the patients' goldfish pond," he laughs. "Every project brings something special, and I'm incredibly lucky to work with such a dedicated team. I have an overwhelming sense of pride to be able to say "I have enhanced patients' and visitors' experiences in a hospice that means so much to both its workforce and local community.

Joining at the tail end of the COVID-19 era a highlight for Sam is seeing the site thriving once again and the buildings full of people. He also recognises the immense contribution of volunteers, whether they're welcoming visitors, arranging flowers, gardening, assisting the wellbeing teams or supporting countless behind-the-scenes tasks. They are backbone of Pilgrims Hospices and allow us to deliver such a range of excellent services seamlessly.

"I'm proud to be part of future-proofing our hospices for the next 40 years, and beyond," Sam says. His leadership is helping ensure Pilgrims remains innovative and resilient.



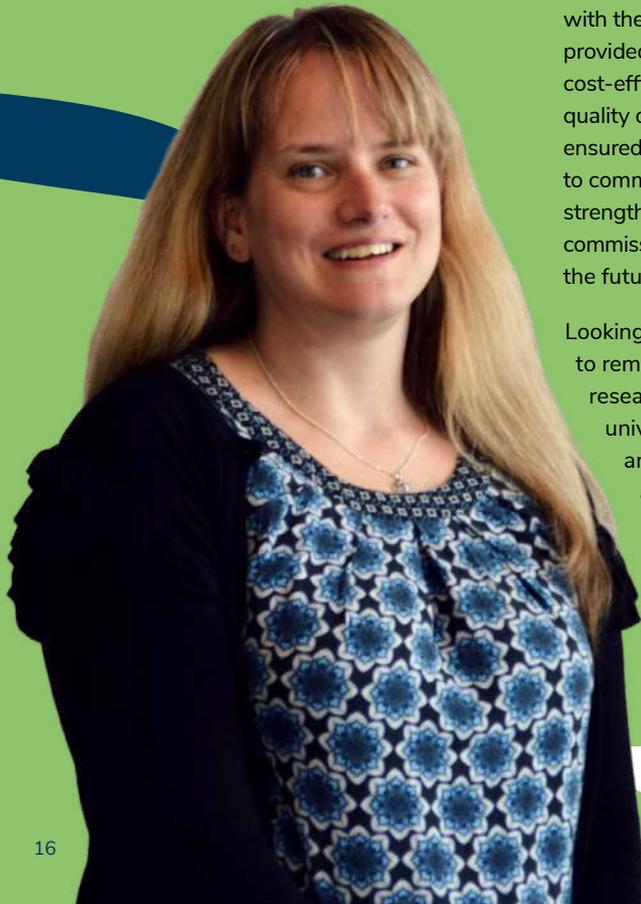
Research is not just an academic exercise

Research at Pilgrims Hospices is not just an academic exercise; it is a practical and compassionate pursuit that directly benefits our patients and their loved ones. By engaging in research, we continually improve the quality and effectiveness of our care. Our team works closely with patients, families, and the wider community to ensure that the questions we investigate are those that matter most to the people we serve.

Through our research activities, we test and refine new approaches to care, ensuring that every intervention is grounded in the best available evidence. We share our findings with national partners and contribute to raising standards across the hospice sector. Our research also supports our clinical teams, helping them to develop their skills and make decisions based on the latest knowledge.

The impact of our research is tangible. Projects undertaken by the department with their clinical and care colleagues, have provided evidence for the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of hospice care, improved quality of life for patients and families, and ensured our services remain responsive to community needs. This work also strengthens our case when negotiating with commissioners and funders, helping to secure the future of hospice care in east Kent.

Looking ahead, Pilgrims Hospices aspires to remain at the forefront of hospice research, working in partnership with universities, healthcare providers, and, most importantly, our patients and supporters. With continued support, we can ensure that Pilgrims Hospices remains a place of innovation, compassion, and hope, making a real difference to the lives of those we care for.



Avneet Kaur Dhandee, a GP trainee from London, completed a placement at our Canterbury hospice in 2025. Here she shares her experiences of Pilgrims Hospices.



I initially associated hospice work with sadness, grief and anguish, but I felt so much gratitude during my time at Pilgrims. Whilst some negative emotions are definitely more real than ever within the hospice environment, positive feelings shine through; families share their gratefulness for the care, patients express relief as they become the most pain-free they've ever been, and it's lovely to see the comfort people feel thanks to the kindness shown by staff.

I was able to get involved with delivering many services, including:

- Clerking in new patients
- Identifying actively dying patients and managing their care appropriately



- Prescribing effective medication dosages and identifying beneficial choices of analgesia, anti-emetics, laxatives, and syringe drivers
- Visiting patients at home alongside the medical team

Throughout my placement, I was guided and supported by a consultant and the wider Pilgrims team, who are all amazing!

Something I'm most proud of is taking part in the Pilgrims Way Challenge 2025, which took place whilst I was working at the hospice. I completed the challenge with my medical school friend, Sana. We walked 35km from Dover to the Canterbury hospice, on a very hot day! When we crossed the finish line, we were cheered on by the wonderful ward nurses and patients.

I practice the Sikh faith, and am inspired by many Sikh values in how I live my life. Core aspects of the Sikh ethos include the Panjabi terms "sewa" (selfless service) and "daya" (compassion).

As hospices are almost completely charity funded, they are a prime example of sewa and daya, helping to better thousands of people's lives and their experiences of end-of-life care, every single year.

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:

My initial impression that it's a place to die was removed. The opposite is the case. The staff (all) have wanted me to keep forward looking and have minimised difficulties.

Every need is met – everyone is friendly and helpful. Food is excellent. All staff from housekeeping, healthcare assistants, nurses, doctors and physios are absolutely wonderful.

Remarkably knowledgeable staff – at all levels, and helpful at all times of the day and night.

I was very low mentally following my wife's death, the counselling sessions gave me a purpose and routine again, help me look at life now and trying to move forward.

The hospice was not what I was expecting. The level of laughter was so welcome. The carers, caterers, nurses and doctors were great.

My mum was treated with so much dignity and care. She was treated as a human being and her concerns were answered with respect.

The group gave me a space every week to be myself, I enjoyed being with others who totally get it. I really don't think anything could have been better.



iWantGreatCare

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.

1,929
Complementary
Therapy contacts

6,230
Occupational
Therapy contacts

7,308
Social Work
contacts



3,847
Counselling
contacts

Did you
know?

April 2024 –
March 2025

1,073
Bereavement
Care sessions



4,486
Physiotherapy
contacts



6,141
Community
Nursing contacts

885
Patients were
admitted to our
inpatient units

1,556
Spiritual Care
contacts



Putting patients first: How data is shaping better care at Pilgrims

At Pilgrims Hospices, every patient matters. But how do we make sure that care is always tailored to the individual? The answer might surprise you – it starts with listening, and it's powered by data.

Dr Pia Amsler, Pilgrims' Medical Director, and Aaron Salter, Pilgrims Business Intelligence Lead, are helping us understand and improve the experience of people in our care.

"This isn't just about symptoms or checklists," Pia explains. "It's about understanding what is most important to each individual person at that moment in their life. That's what helps us create meaningful care plans and support people in the ways that matter most."

"We ask every patient three simple questions," says Pia. "What is important to you? What matters most right now? And what have been your most pressing concerns over the last few days?"

This seemingly simple approach is at the heart of an innovative methodology that's helping Pilgrims ensure that the patient is at the centre of everything we do.



Patient answers are recorded and become part of their care plan. Over time, the changes in these responses help us understand the impact of our care – not just physically, but also addressing emotional, social, practical and spiritual domains.

With Pia's clinical leadership and Aaron's technical expertise, Pilgrims has developed a series of outcomes measurement tools that gather insights from patients and also their families or caregivers throughout their time with us – whether they're staying in one of our hospice wards or receiving support at home.

"We collect and analyse all of this information and create easy to understand reports," explains Aaron. "These help our clinical teams reflect, adapt, and improve. We're now able to track how a patient is feeling when they come to us, and how they feel after receiving our support. We can see real-time improvements – it's amazing to see how data can drive change."



Creativity, collaboration, and compassion

Art that inspires community wellbeing

Pilgrims Hospices' Time to Create art group is more than just a therapeutic activity – it's a platform for connection, expression, and community collaboration. In July 2024, the programme reached a remarkable milestone when patients were invited by local artist Beverley Parker to exhibit their artwork at Then & Now, her exhibition at the Pie Factory, Margate.

The invitation held deep meaning. Beverley's husband, artist John Horton, was cared for by Pilgrims in 2023, and the exhibition was dedicated to his memory. Through her grief, Beverley found strength in creativity – and a way to give back. "Pilgrims played an enormous part; they were supportive, caring and understanding," she said. "Inviting patients to exhibit was about recognising how powerful art can be – it is a living statement, positive and empowering."

The collaboration between Beverley and Pilgrims' Wellbeing team, led by Sharon



Thompson, showcased how community partnerships can inspire long-term impact. Patients from Pilgrims' sites in Ashford, Canterbury and Thanet created artwork exploring emotion, reflection and hope. Those unable to attend in person viewed the exhibition digitally through Pilgrims' Therapy Centres.

Sharon said: "This partnership showed how creativity improves wellbeing and empowers people to share their stories with pride."

For Pilgrims Hospices this project demonstrates how compassionate communities comprising local artists, supporters and patients can come together through art and connect, heal and inspire each other.



Email: eastkent@pilgrimshospices.org

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Ashford

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Ashford, Kent TN24 0NE

Canterbury

56 London Road, Canterbury,
Kent CT2 8JA

Thanet

Ramsgate Road, Margate,
Kent CT9 4AD

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