

# Dying on the Streets:



Palliative care for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed

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## Background

People who are homeless or vulnerably housed are likely to die young, with an average age of death of 45 years. Many experience life-limiting illnesses, further complicated by dependence on alcohol or drugs. These illnesses can cause significant problems in the last year of life, however access to palliative care is severely limited.

## Aim

To develop a co-ordinated approach to palliative and end-of-life care for people who are homeless and vulnerably housed across the city of York.

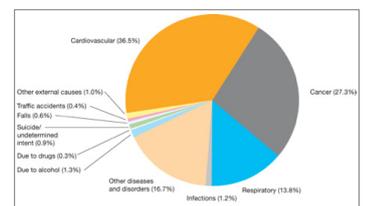
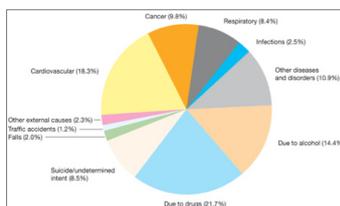
## Approach

The project began with research undertaken at the University of York<sup>1,2</sup> informing education in end-of-life care for Changing Lives hostel staff, delivered by St Leonard's Hospice. The education program had a positive impact on care, however joint working across organisations highlighted that vulnerable individuals were falling through 'gaps' in end-of-life care provision. This was the catalyst to bring together health professionals working with the homeless population of York and palliative care specialists to develop: processes of identification of individuals nearing the end-of-life, guidelines for symptom management, advance care planning and palliative care education.

## Next steps

Drawing on best practice nationally, we aim to develop a responsive service relevant to the needs of service users at the end-of-life.

Initial meeting with Vale of York CCG, York Drug and Alcohol Service, Changing Lives, University of York Health Sciences, St Leonard's Hospice. Second meeting due May 2018 with other interested parties.



1. Hudson BF, Flemming K, Shulman C, Candy B (2016) Challenges to access and provision of palliative care for people who are homeless: A systematic review of qualitative research. BMC Palliative Care. 15:96
2. Skelton A. (2017) A literature review to investigate the barriers and facilitators experienced by people who are homeless or vulnerably housed when accessing specialist palliative care services. Dissertation submitted for BSc Health & Social Care Practice

