

Press Release

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Plans unveiled for the new St. Columba's Hospice

St. Columba's Hospice to provide new, world class hospice facilities in Edinburgh

Plans for the rebuild of St. Columba's Hospice were today (13th November 2008) submitted to the City of Edinburgh Council's Planning Department.

The development includes a complete rebuild of the Hospice's in-patient unit, which provides end of life care for patients with advanced, progressive illness. The new design will improve the quality of facilities available to patients, and will ensure the in-patient unit is available to more people who need the Hospice's help and support.

With a planned increase in the number of purpose built consulting rooms, out-patient services will be further developed. The Day Hospice will benefit from upgraded and expanded facilities which will support the introduction of additional services for patients – including a brand new, purpose designed complementary therapy room to enable patients to take advantage of a range of therapies designed to improve their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Throughout the rebuild the Hospice's community palliative care nurses will continue to provide support to patients in their own homes. St. Columba's Community Palliative Care Team provides help to hundreds of people in Edinburgh.

The development follows the purchase of a site adjacent to the existing St Columba's Hospice on Boswall Road. This gives St. Columba's the opportunity to develop a brand new education wing, with a new lecture theatre and seminar rooms providing a platform to further develop the Hospice's already successful education programmes. St. Columba's Hospice shares its specialist knowledge and expertise in end-of-life care, with doctors, nurses and allied health professionals across Scotland and beyond.

The existing facilities, although state of the art when they opened in 1977, now need to be upgraded to support the highest possible quality of care provided by the Hospice's dedicated team of specialist staff and volunteers. St. Columba's Hospice delivers best practice in palliative care practice and the new development will enable the Hospice to maintain its place as a leader in palliative care services.

Margaret Dunbar, Nursing and Administrative Director of St. Columba's said:
"St. Columba's has a long history of providing the best possible end of life care for patients with life limiting conditions, whilst also providing essential support for their families, carers and friends. We want to stay in our existing location so that we can continue to serve the communities that have supported the Hospice so magnificently throughout the years. This development will mark a new phase in the history of St.

Columba's Hospice enabling us to maintain our position at the forefront of palliative care services.

Dr Fred Benton, Medical Director of St Columba's said:

"People are living longer and advances in medicine mean that our remit is wider. We need to rebuild the Hospice to ensure that we are able to provide exactly the right facilities to support our patients and their families; delivering the right treatment at the right time, and in the right place for our patients."

Mrs Elizabeth Grant, Community Councillor for Trinity said:

"The new hospice development will help St. Columba's Hospice to further expand and improve on the already excellent service that it provides to the people of Edinburgh, East Lothian and sometimes beyond.

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For Further information please call Lesley Telfer 0131 551 7700

Notes for Editors:

St. Columba's Hospice, Edinburgh, Scotland's first modern hospice, opened its doors to patients and their families in 1977 as a 15 bed unit in Challenger Lodge, where the Hospice is still located today. The Hospice was made possible due to the enormous dedication and commitment of many local people, including local nurse, Ann Weatherall, and Dr Derek Doyle who were instrumental in harnessing the groundswell of support for the creation of the Hospice.

Since these early days the Hospice has developed and expanded to provide a modern and comprehensive range of care services both in the Hospice and out in the community. Although operating only one Hospice, St. Columba's undertakes the full range of services to patients with advanced progressive disease. It runs an In-Patient Unit, operates a Day Hospice, has an extensive Community Palliative Care Team whose nurses to support people in their own homes, and an Education Team whose reach extends across Scotland and beyond.

Key Facts

Over 50% of St. Columba's £5.6 million operating budget comes from the generosity of the Hospice's many friends and supporters. All of St. Columba's services are free of charge to patients and their families. Patients can be referred by their family doctor, District Nurse or hospital clinical staff.

The Hospice services provided by St. Columba's Hospice are for adult patients.

St. Columba's Hospice has an In-Patient Unit with 30 beds, made up of 4-bedded rooms, 3-bedded rooms, and a small number of single rooms. Although still with 30 beds, the new Hospice building will have more than double the current number of single rooms, whilst the remaining beds will be in 3 bedded rooms instead of 4. This will greatly increase the occupancy levels making our In-Patient unit considerably more accessible to those who need it.

Patients are admitted to help with symptom control and once their condition has stabilised they will return home again Patients can be admitted when they are nearing the end of life and require the care of St. Columba's multi-disciplinary team.

The Community Palliative Care Service is staffed by 6 senior nurses who help their community nursing and family doctor colleagues care for patients in their own homes.

The Day Hospice is active four days a week from 10am to 3pm. The Day Hospice gives patients the opportunity to meet with other people in a similar situation. It gives them the opportunity to discuss their symptoms and emotional issues with the multi-disciplinary team whilst providing respite for family and carers.

St. Columba's hospice also has an Advisory Service for doctors, nurses and other professional colleagues, and in partnership with the University of Edinburgh and Queen Margaret University, provides specialist education to nurses and allied health professionals around Scotland and beyond.

St. Columba's Hospice currently has more than 100 staff and over 500 volunteers. Our multidisciplinary clinical team comprises nurses, doctors, physiotherapists, an occupational therapist, a clinical pharmacist, a counsellor, a social worker and a chaplain. All have the one aim of ensuring that, so far as is possible, a patient's needs are met. This work is supported by a dedicated support team .

St. Columba's Hospice aims to meet the needs of patients from all cultures, religions, ethnic backgrounds, and those with no particular religious beliefs.