

The Family Support Team at St. Columba's Hospice Care currently has space to accept new referrals for our Children and Families service.

The service offers information, support (1:1 / group) and signposting to children and young people under 18 who either have an adult family member living with an incurable illness (e.g. incurable cancer, MND) or who have been bereaved as a result of incurable illness. It helps children and young people to understand illness, helps families to prepare for the future, including thinking through issues of guardianship, and supports children to cope with bereavement. The service covers Edinburgh and the Lothians (West Lothian, East Lothian, MidLothian). Support is offered online via NHS NearMe / AttendAnywhere, by telephone, and/or face-to-face, as appropriate.

The support we offer is tailored to the needs and age of the child:

- 0-3 years – information and support for parents/carers on how to include/prepare very young children when someone has an incurable illness or when someone has died.
- 4-16 years – as above with the addition of one-to-one support for the child/young person themselves (following assessment), family sessions, and group support.
- 16-18 years – we will assess young people between 16-18 to decide whether the Children and Families project or local adult services would be more appropriate for their needs.

Reasons for referral:

- Helping parents/caregivers talk to their children about illness/diagnosis/death and dying
- Supporting the family with the child/young person's emotional needs, both pre- and post-bereavement
- Advocacy - ensuring children's voices and needs are heard and included pre/post-bereavement
- Interactive memory/keepsake work
- Offering information/advice/guidance for support in nursery or school

How to make a referral to the Family Support Service:

Please ensure that the patient/family are aware that a referral is being made and that they have agreed to this. To make a referral, call the Family Support Team on our direct dial number, 0131 551 7760. Please leave a message with the following information if no one is available to answer your call:

- *your name, role and contact number.*
- *Information about the reason for the referral – children's names, ages, contact information for the family, and some background information about the illness/bereavement.*