

Information for you and your family

What is palliative care and why do we need a case conference

Insert name of your organisation

It has been suggested that a case conference be held to discuss how you, or your family member might benefit from palliative care. The following explains what this is and why it is important.

Case conference: Case conferences or family meetings are an opportunity to discuss a person's care needs. They ideally include the person (if able to attend), their family and/or their substitute decision-maker, and members of the care team including the doctor.

Palliative care: Palliative care is person- and family-centred care that supports a person to live the best life they can with a life-limiting illness. A life-limiting illness means that the person has little or no prospect of cure and is expected to die. The focus is on quality of life.

Life-limiting illnesses include dementia, advanced heart, kidney, lung or liver disease, cancer, and motor neurone disease.

People can receive palliative care for days or weeks, or for months to years. Older people coming to the end of their life without illness may have some of the same care issues. They can also benefit from the approaches to care taken in palliative care.

Common care issues in palliative care include:

- pain
- dyspnoea (breathing difficulty)
- dysphagia (difficulty with swallowing)
- constipation/incontinence (bowel and/or bladder management)
- depression
- delirium (sudden confusion)
- anxiety
- nausea (feel that you want to vomit)
- fatigue (tiredness).

Who should attend a case conference?

Staff in residential aged care facilities and providers of home care often meet with families. If possible, the person receiving care should attend, their GP, and any concerned family members or friends.

Your contact for this case conference is:

Name of staff member: _____ Role: _____

Telephone: _____