

Message from our CEO

As we approach 30 years since our charity first started, we are more aware than ever that each year brings new opportunities and challenges.

In our last financial year (April 2019 to March 2020), we developed our services to meet the changing needs of the adults, children and families we support across our local community. Services including our new Wellbeing Centre (see page 9), which opened in January 2020 and leads the way locally in its patient-centred approach.

However, in March, life changed in a way none of us could have imagined. The impact of coronavirus led to rapid changes as we adapted and responded so we could continue to deliver our vision: **making the difference when it matters the most.**

Through last year and into this current year, our Care and Support teams have worked on the frontline in our community and at the hospice, caring round the clock for patients at the end of life, some sadly with Covid-19. I am so proud of all our teams.

Thank you for your amazing support over the last year – you made it possible for us to support and empower our patients and their families with much-needed new and extended services. I hope you will join us as we go forward, with one goal: to make sure our vital care is always there, whenever and wherever it's needed.



Liz Searle, **CEO**



Our children's community team made
1,466
visits and
1,033
phone calls.

28
children were cared for
at the end of their life
by our in-patient
team and our
community team.

161
sessions of
aquatic therapy.
1,100
sessions of
hydrotherapy.

1,669
wonderful volunteers
gave us their time
and expertise.

268
sessions of our
carers' drop-in
group.



We cared for
1,427
adults
352
children and
503 relatives
(**2,282** people
in total).

We cared for
65 children as
in-patients for
a total of
694
days.

534
one-to-one support sessions
with our social work team.

1
new Wellbeing Centre.

In the community, our
My Care Co-ordination
Team cared for
1,190
adult patients
and prevented
579
hospital
admissions.

Our volunteer
Hospice at Home
befrienders
supported
53
adult patients –
more than ever
before.



We celebrated award-winners.

Our children's community team won **Nurse/Care Worker of the Year** in both the **Comet Community Awards** and the **Herts Advertiser Community Awards**.

Our volunteers and fundraisers were recognised in the **BBC Three Counties Radio's People Awards**, **Herts Advertiser Community Awards** and **Luton's Best Awards**.

We came together in a time of national crisis.

When coronavirus turned our lives upside-down, our dedicated care teams supported patients and families on the frontline, at the hospice, in their homes, by telephone and online. We upskilled other health professionals with virtual training, and ran virtual day-support sessions for child patients and their families as well as exercise classes for adult patients.

Online, we helped our communities smile through lockdown with virtual quizzes, fitness challenges and regular vlog updates from our care team.



We launched our new Wellbeing Centre, transforming patients' lives.

A first for Bedfordshire, this 'one-stop shop' brings our care for adults together in one place, helping more patients stay at home, live well and be independent for as long as possible.



We reached our communities with two new shops in Leighton Buzzard and Newport Pagnell.



"Keech Hospice Care has made my life more comfortable, but many Sikh families simply would not consider hospice care."

Dalbagh, adult patient

We raised awareness of our care nationally.

We showed what hospice care is like for our teenage patients when six million viewers watched us on **CountryFile's BBC Children in Need Special**.



We shone the spotlight on what stops the Asian community accessing end-of-life care when Wellbeing Centre patient, Dalbagh, spoke openly about it on **BBC Breakfast** and the **BBC News channel**.

We reached 1.5 million people when our film about **#WhatItTakes** behind the scenes to run a hospice went viral.



We made sure patients and families have everything they need.

Thanks to generous funding from supporters, we were able to:

- give patients, carers and families a place to retreat for calm and contemplation in our newly refurbished **Quiet Room**
- help adult patients remain independent for longer with our **specially adapted gym**
- support parents to be near their child when most needed by transforming our children's **family accommodation**
- make sure accessing the hospice is easy by extending our **parking facilities**.

Educating others

We had national success when our clinical education team hosted **two conferences** in our facilities at the hospice, one on frailty in palliative and end-of-life care, the other on managing neuro-palliative conditions.

The team also gave **45 external training sessions to around 980 health and care professionals**, bringing our palliative-care expertise into our communities.

We ran **119 internal training sessions** to upskill our own care staff.



Pushing forward with research

Our scoping review into the care needs of families who have a child with a life-limiting illness – part of a research project with the University of Bedfordshire – was accepted for publication in the British Medical Journal's *Supportive & Palliative Care*.



Leading the way

We shared our expertise at a national conference which brought together the UK's experts in palliative care. We educated others about when to stop curative treatment in children, the benefits of aquatic therapy and young people's experience of hospice care.



Launching ground-breaking services

Our new **Wellbeing Centre** offers a unique approach locally when it comes to supporting adult patients with life-limiting illnesses to live well and stay independent.

We introduced **voice banking** for patients with neurological illnesses like motor neurone disease so they can 'bank' their voice in case they lose it.

We opened a **clinic for patients with chronic liver failure**, run with Luton and Dunstable Hospital.

“ When I heard about Keetch’s voice-banking service, I decided I’d like to record mine and now I know I’ve got it there to help me communicate later on, if I need it. Keetch has given me a voice. ”

Yvonne, who has motor neurone disease, pictured left with voice-banking volunteer Dirk



Bringing our care into patients' homes

Our **My Care Co-ordination Team's** palliative care support workers made more home visits than ever before. The team prevented **579** hospital admissions.

Welcome to our new Wellbeing Centre

Putting patients at the centre of everything we do.



Paul with Lunar, Occupational Therapist

What makes it different?

It's unique locally in offering a 'one-stop shop' for adult patients, bringing together our specialist team with the goal of helping patients live well and be independent for as long as possible.

What services does it offer?

As well as medical assessments and individual treatment plans, services include a wide range of therapies, a specially adapted gym and social work support. Find out more about our support and services at keech.org.uk.

Why is it needed?

As a leading hospice, we know patients' needs are changing as people are living longer with complex illnesses and more young patients move from child to adult care services.

The Wellbeing Centre works seamlessly with our adult in-patient unit, which is there when patients need a stay at the hospice or for care at the end of life.



Lifting the lid on our care

5.5 million people learnt about hospice care and our new Wellbeing Centre when we threw open our doors to BBC TV News and BBC Three Counties Radio. Roberto Perrone broadcast his Drivetime show live from the hospice, speaking to patients, volunteers and staff.

“ I feel protected at Keech Hospice Care, having the whole team support me, from getting a prescription to accessing benefits. Louise, one of the social work team, will even make phone calls for me because having a brain tumour means holding the phone to my ear hurts.

I enjoy the Wellbeing Centre's walking group and circuit training. Keech's physiotherapist and occupational therapist are great because they know I'm capable but don't have the energy levels I used to have so they adapt sessions to suit me.

I've had reflexology, reiki and massage, and Maggie, one of Keech's complementary therapists, calms me down even after a rubbish week. I also have sessions with Keech's music therapist, Nathan. He's someone I can talk to who understands and can help me. Keech certainly isn't a sad place - it's a community full of hope and optimism. ”

Paul, Wellbeing Centre patient at Keech Hospice Care



Our **adult in-patient unit** cared for **161** adults for **1,684** nights.

“I had my hen night at the hospice and the care team helped me get ready for my wedding.”

Tamzin had just started seeing boyfriend Ben when she found out she had breast cancer. Keech Hospice Care made sure they could have a once-in-a-lifetime wedding.

“The first time we went to Keech, I instantly felt calm. There were plenty of staff to help and every person I met blew my mind. Here, I could have my own room, open the French doors and let fresh air in, and enjoy peace and quiet.

Ben and I had arranged to get married and the team at Keech helped ensure our plans were still possible. I had my hen night at the hospice - the girls came over for bubbles and did my nails - and the care team helped me get ready for my wedding. It was such a lovely day.

The team helped sort the pain in my hip and get everything set up for me so I could go home. I'm looking forward to having a curry and bottle of wine with my new husband!

The beauty of Keech is knowing that I can come back if I need to. Keech Hospice Care is just an amazing place - it's made me feel so much better. I can't thank them enough.”

Tamzin, adult in-patient at Keech Hospice Care

Tamzin married Ben in October 2019 and, thanks to Keech Hospice Care's incredible care team, she was able to return home for her curry. Tamzin died a few weeks later.

We care for children with life-limiting illnesses, and support their families, wherever we're needed.

Caring at home or at a school and hospital near you...

Our children's community team cares for and supports children and families wherever it's needed across Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Milton Keynes. As well as taking our care out to families in their own homes or a child's school, the community team attends hospital appointments with parents, offers educational play sessions if a child is unable to go out, and is available **24/7 with our freephone advice line.**

Thanks to funding from the BraveHerts Children's Appeal, the team now includes a community matron, and events and activities coordinator.



“ We like to meet families early on because then we go on the journey with them. It could have a happy ending – we discharge them or they go into our adult service. But for some we do the really specialist work at the end of a child's life. By this time, we've built up a close relationship and families know they can trust us. ”

Deborah, Community Matron

Caring at the hospice...

Our **day support** service offers weekly groups for under-fives and older children, monthly groups for teenagers, specialist clinic appointments, and regular organised events and activities.

Children stay at the **in-patient** unit to help get their symptoms under control, if there's a crisis, after being in hospital or for a respite break. Families can stay close by in our newly refurbished on-site family accommodation.



“ Overnight stays gave us breathing room as a couple and Cerys gets used to us not being there. I can leave her at Keech knowing she's completely safe. ”

Cheryl, Cerys's mum

“ We have two days of support a week at the hospice - Ismael gets so much out of it and his confidence has improved massively. ”

Nazia, Ismael's mum



Ismael with Art Therapist Dani

Caring at the end...

We care for children at the end of life, either at the hospice or at home – wherever families prefer.

Last year, **28** children were cared for at the end of their life by our in-patient team and our community team.

166 children attended day support.

“**Her first day at Keech Hospice Care, Anoosha found her wings!**”

Anoosha, 6, had spent most of her life confined to a hospital room. When she first came to Keech, mum Amiee said it was like her daughter had been set free.

“Anoosha has had five cardiac arrests, multiple seizures and many operations, and she’s now waiting for a multi-organ transplant. For most of her life, she’s lived in a tiny hospital room due to fear of infection. Despite all this, she’s the loudest, happiest child you’ll ever meet.

Our first contact with Keech Hospice Care was when Hannah, one of Keech’s community nurses, visited Anoosha in hospital and told us she felt Keech would benefit us both. Anoosha was too ill to visit the hospice so it was amazing that play therapist Jennie could come out to us.

The first time we came to Keech, it was like Anoosha got her wings - she had three hours to have fun with the other children, with no-one telling her she needed to go back to her room. Seeing her playing like any normal child is priceless.

It also means I can be ‘mum’ and not just Anoosha’s carer. I may do her meds while we’re there, but I hardly notice it as I’m relaxing and chatting with the other parents.

I don’t know when the call for the transplant will come or what the future holds but I do know Keech will continue to be there for us.”



Anoosha and her family supported Keech Hospice Care by taking centre stage in our **2019 Christmas Appeal**, helping us raise **£17,500**.



We support the whole family...

Our supportive care team makes sure both child and adult patients, and their families, are looked after physically and emotionally.

“There’s so much help from the hospice. One of the first things we did once Mariska stopped chemo was go swimming together as a family in Keech’s hydrotherapy pool. The water is great for Mariska as it is warm, she can walk freely because it takes her weight and she can exercise her whole body.

We’ve also had music therapy as a family and Mariska has had sessions on her own. I’ve had reiki, too, which was very relaxing.

Mariska’s brother Karsten has had one-on-one bereavement support sessions with Keech’s family support workers because he was having trouble expressing how he felt about his sister being ill. The sessions were good for him because they were time when he was the focus.”

Leni, mum to child patient Mariska

1,272 sessions of music, art and complementary therapy.

497 patients and their families received pre- and post-bereavement support.

Mariska, seen here with *Bake Off’s* Nadiya Hussain at the hospice, developed leukaemia when she was 10 and went on to develop a rare bone disorder and epilepsy.

Keech Hospice Care

Making the difference when it matters the most

We are the children’s hospice for Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Milton Keynes, and the adult hospice for Luton and south Bedfordshire.

We are one of very few hospice charities in the UK which supports and cares for both children and adults, and their families.

Our care is provided at the hospice itself and also in the family home, hospital, school or care home – wherever support is needed the most.

We need to raise around £6 million every year – that’s over £17,000 every day – to continue our specialist care for children and adults, and their families. We also rely on over 1,600 volunteers, including around 1,000 retail volunteers.



Where we provide care

Thank you to all our amazing donors and volunteers. We could not do it without you.

Whether it’s funding or time, we’re enormously grateful for whatever you can do or give.

-  facebook.com/keechhospicecare
-  @KeechHospice
-  youtube.com/keechhospicecare
-  01582 707940

 If you have any questions or would like to find out more about getting involved, email us at: letmehelp@keech.org.uk.

 Visit our website www.keech.org.uk



Our Mission is to lead the way in providing excellent care, supporting children and adults with life-limiting conditions and those affected by death and dying, helping them to live well and make every day count.