



The Shape of Care

Impact Report
2025–26



St Columba's Hospice Care

Listening to a changing community

1,258
referrals assessed and triaged by our Access Team

1,361
people supported across our services

81%
average inpatient occupancy

868
community referrals, helping people access care closer to home

Every person who comes to St Columba's Hospice Care has a unique story. Understanding how our communities are changing helps us plan accessible, equitable and sustainable services, so people receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place.



Across Scotland, people are living longer, often with multiple long-term conditions and more complex illness. Advances in healthcare also mean more children with life -limiting conditions are surviving into adulthood.

These changes are increasing demand for palliative and end-of-life care, while health and social care services remain under pressure.

Our strategy, The Strength Behind Our Stories, provides a framework through three priorities: working in partnership to meet community needs; supporting and growing an exceptional workforce; and developing a sustainable, resilient organisation.

Over the last year, our population and demographic review has helped us understand our community and changing needs, shaping three key workstreams to improve access, experience and outcomes. Future Care Planning supports conversations about what matters most. Our LGBTQ+ inclusion work aims to ensure everyone feels welcomed, respected and able to access appropriate care. Our stepped bereavement model provides the right level of support at the right time. By listening and analysing population trends, we are addressing barriers and reaching those who need hospice care most.



Support in many forms

As needs change, so do the ways we provide care. In the Hospice, at home and in the community, our teams work together to provide the right support in the right place.

While fewer people were admitted to our inpatient unit this year, those we cared for had increasingly complex needs and stayed longer. We strengthened our staffing model to maintain expert, compassionate care.

Hospice at Home, our Virtual Ward and outpatient clinics also helped people remain in familiar surroundings while accessing specialist palliative care.

As community-based NHS services evolved, we closed our Care at Home service rather than duplicate existing provision, focusing charitable resources where they can make the greatest difference.



Creating moments of comfort, connection and normality as part of everyday hospice care.

CLINICAL CARE: KEY FIGURES

253
inpatient admissions

929
people supported by Hospice at Home

3,637
Compassionate Neighbours and Gardeners interactions

223
people supported through outpatient clinics

SUPPORTING THE WHOLE FAMILY: KEY FIGURES

964
children and family support sessions

1,509
counselling sessions

112
people cared for through our Virtual Ward

608
people supported through Compassionate Communities wellbeing activities

Our counselling, bereavement, and children and families teams provided personalised emotional support, while Compassionate Communities helped reduce loneliness and strengthen local connections through volunteering, social activities and practical support.

Complementary therapies and the arts programme supported holistic wellbeing, providing relaxation, creative expression and space for reflection for patients, families and carers.



The people behind the care

Behind every conversation, visit and moment of comfort is a committed team.

Our staff and volunteers bring expertise, compassion and dedication, so investing in our people remains central to exceptional care.

New leadership and personal development processes are helping colleagues build their skills, confidence and potential.

We also brought Practice Development and Quality together as one team, strengthening links between education, quality improvement and patient safety.

As a University Hospice, we work with Queen Margaret University, the University of Edinburgh and other partners. This year we welcomed students from many healthcare professions, supported collaborative research and shared expertise through teaching, conferences, journals and international education events.

New leadership development framework rolling out in 2026

Around **732** volunteers contribute across the Hospice, community and charity shops, bringing time, kindness and humanity to hospice life. They donated **60,649** hours this year – equivalent to almost **6.9 years** of continuous volunteering.

Enhanced Performance Development Plan supporting six-monthly development conversations



New online learning platform launched



Every hour given by our volunteers brings kindness, connection and care to those who need it most.

Gold Investors in People accreditation and Silver Investors in Wellbeing award

Building a sustainable future

DIVERSIFYING OUR INCOME

As an independent charity, we continue to develop new ways to sustain hospice care. Alongside our charity shops, social enterprise grew through our furniture warehouse, North Berwick café bookshop and Manor House Therapies – supporting communities while generating vital funds.



EMBRACING INNOVATION

We appointed a Head of Digital Services to lead our Digital Strategy and Digital Resilience Plan, and completed our move to Microsoft Azure, providing more resilient, secure and flexible digital infrastructure. Enhanced cyber security now exceeds the average for similar sized organisations, while digital investment is helping teams work more efficiently and prepare for innovations in patient care.



Providing outstanding hospice care means looking beyond today. This year, we strengthened our organisation through more sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation and new sources of income.

INVESTING IN SUSTAINABILITY

By integrating our Combined Heat and Power system with our solar panels, we improved energy efficiency, reduced carbon emissions and saved around 25,000kg of CO_2 – equivalent to planting approximately 1,556 trees.

The year in numbers

The generosity of donors, volunteers, trusts, corporate partners and local communities continued to make a remarkable difference, helping raise £11.32 million to provide compassionate care and invest in the Hospice's future.

Our income remains strong, with fundraising performance particularly encouraging when legacies are excluded.

Total income was lower than last year, reflecting the exceptionally high level of legacy gifts received in 2024/25. Legacy income naturally varies from year to year, and this year's total was more in line with long-term trends.

At the same time, demand for specialist hospice care and the cost of providing it continue to rise. Increased staffing costs, inflation, and investment in income generation and retail contributed to higher expenditure. Every pound raised helps us respond to growing demand, sustain high-quality care and invest in the future of hospice services.

£11.32M
raised



Donations up
30.5%
(an increase of £450K)



Looking ahead

As we approach our 50th anniversary in 2027, our strategy, The Strength Behind Our Stories, continues to guide everything we do. By working in partnership, investing in our people, embracing innovation and strengthening our financial resilience, we are building a hospice ready to meet the changing needs of our commtunities – today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

£2.72M
core funding from NHS Lothian

+ + + +



£580K
additional income generated (compared with last year) through charity shops, Iona Café, events and trading activities



£500K
confirmed additional annual Scottish Government funding



Copyright © 2026 St Columba's Hospice Care. All rights reserved.
Registered in Scotland N° 48700.
Charity N° SC003634