



IMPACT REPORT 2025

INTRODUCTION



THIS INNOVATIVE HOSPITAL TO HOME PROJECT WAS DEVELOPED TO HELP BRIDGE THE GAP IN THE TRANSFERENCE OF CARE FROM CLINICAL SETTING TO THE HOME, AFTER THE LOSS OF A BABY

Hospital to Home (H2H) is an innovative project specifically focusing on early intervention for pregnancy, baby and infant loss. This unique project aims to fill the gap in the transference of care from clinical to community setting, with the aim to provide the first visit in the first three weeks of loss. This ensures no family falls through the gap or goes without the opportunity to access bereavement support when they return home. Evidence shows that early interventions, have “the potential to improve grief, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and other psychosocial outcomes”, (Hunter et al, 2024) for parents who are going through the devastating loss of their baby.

H2H initial pilot, funded by Big Lottery and in partnership with NHS Lothian, commenced in 2022, focusing on supporting families who had experienced a loss between 14 - 24 weeks of pregnancy. The initial feedback from the pilot and findings from the Held in Our Hearts (2023) Impact Report, highlighted the bespoke nature of the support, “offering a person-centered service that places the bereaved parent at the heart of what they do”. With support from Scottish Government, and the Colin Weir Foundation, this initial pilot had the opportunity to expand to three additional Health Boards and to provide this bespoke support to families experiencing loss from 12 weeks onwards and SUDI up to preschool age.

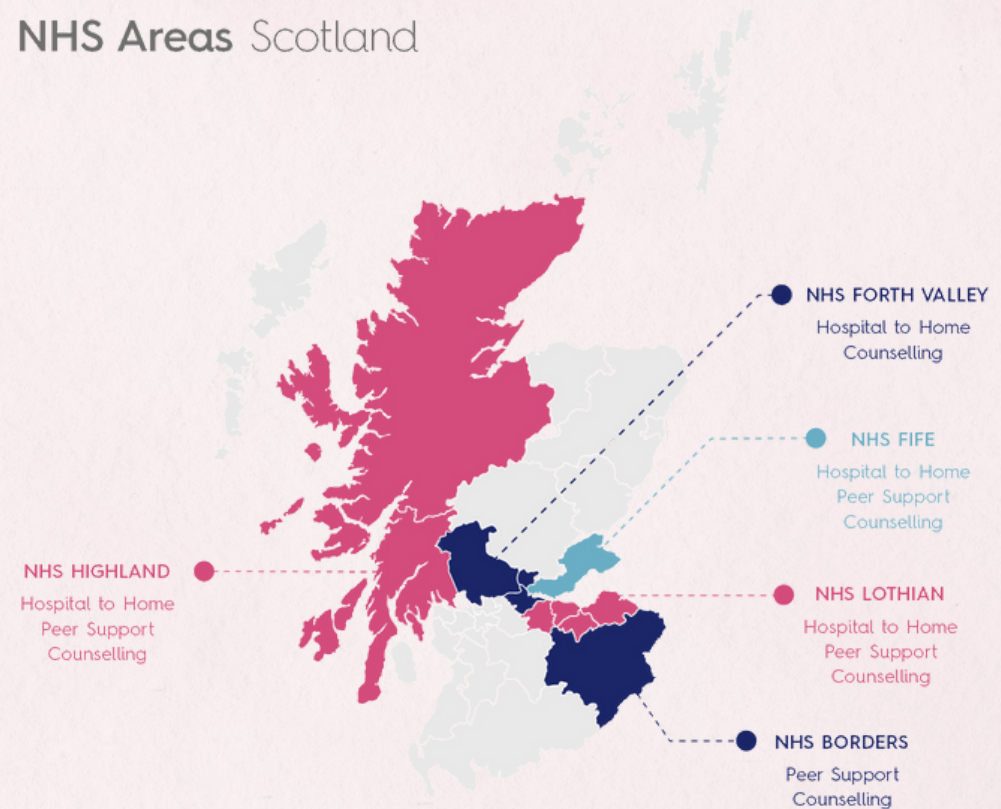
.Partnership agreements were developed with NHS Fife, NHS Forth Valley and NHS Highland, providing further opportunities to evaluate the impact of our support to more families but also explore the challenges of delivering H2H within diverse and geographically challenging areas within Scotland. H2H support workers came into post in March 2024 with initial referrals commencing in Mid-May.

OUR VISION IS TO HAVE HOSPITAL TO HOME IN EVERY HEALTH BOARD IN SCOTLAND, SO NO ONE IS ALONE AFTER PREGNANCY, BABY AND INFANT LOSS.

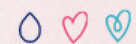
IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE CARE OF BEREAVED FAMILIES TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE THAT HZH REMAINS FINANCIALLY AND OPERATIONALLY SUSTAINABLE ACROSS SCOTLAND.

Each Health Board area has access to Hospital to Home support for families.. Ongoing evaluation of the impact for families is being captured through both qualitative data collection (initial and final assessment survey forms), sensitive data, ensuring families voices are heard, the impact of support provided captured and the sharing of families' comments and feedback through their stories and quotes. Equally, we are closely evaluating the uniqueness and challenges for delivery within each Health Board area through quantitative data, both geographically and from a population density view to evaluating the current service provision that is being asked and to influence future support planning.

Services offered within NHS Areas Scotland



Held in Our Hearts



H2H AIMS

HOSPITAL TO HOME SUPPORT STAFF ARE EXPERIENCED IN SUPPORTING EARLY STAGES OF GRIEF AND UNDERSTAND THE SHOCK AND TRAUMA FAMILIES MAY BE FEELING. THEY WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND FAMILY TO PROVIDE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT THROUGH THESE EARLY DAYS AND WEEKS FOLLOWING THE LOSS OF A BABY. WE RECOGNISE EVERYONE'S GRIEF IS DIFFERENT AND OUR CARE IS PERSON CENTRED AND FAMILY FOCUSED.

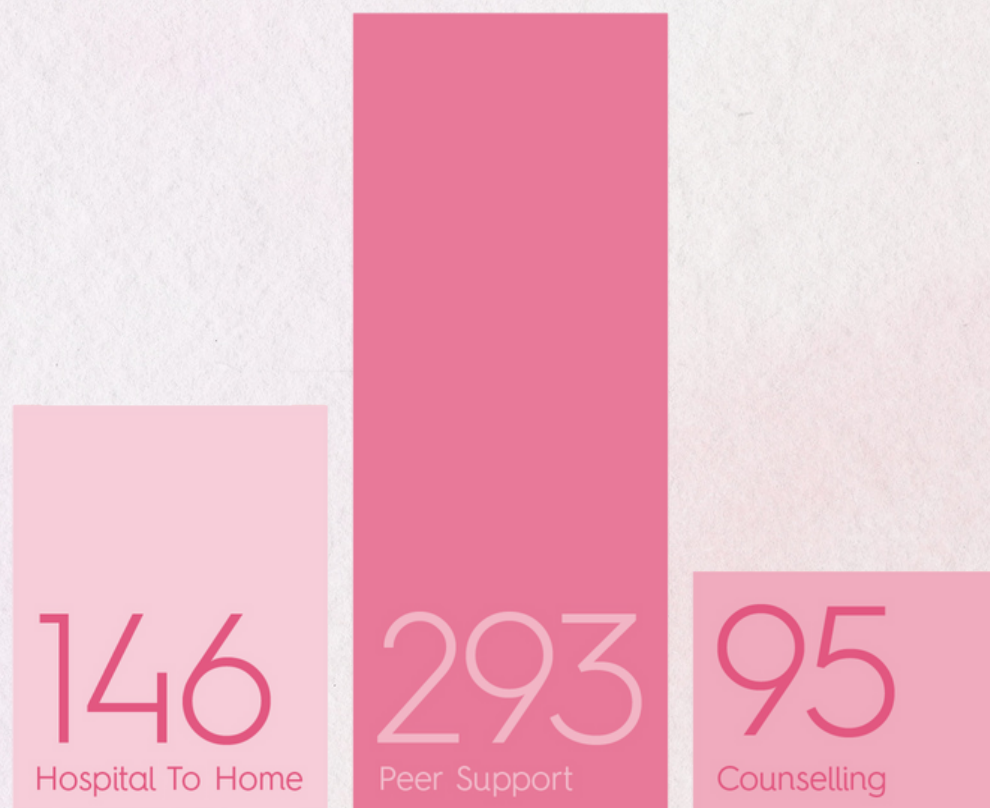
- All families experiencing a loss after 12 weeks and up to pre school age, whether at home or within hospital maternity care or paediatric services can access H2H.
- The H2H service is an opt out service.
- Professionals will make referral for support using the online referral template or direct referral through local badgernet system/direct email within NHS Lothian
- Families can access this service within the first 3 weeks after loss.
- Reduction in uptake of hospital-based bereavement services locally
- Families have access to practical and emotional support within the community setting after discharge from maternity service
- Provision of six – eight, face to face visits (where appropriate) provided for family within community setting
- Onward referral to other resources within Held In Our Hearts such as counselling and peer support and other local partner agencies
- Families feel supported and cared for in the early days/weeks and months following loss and supported on their journey after loss



2024/25 STATISTICS

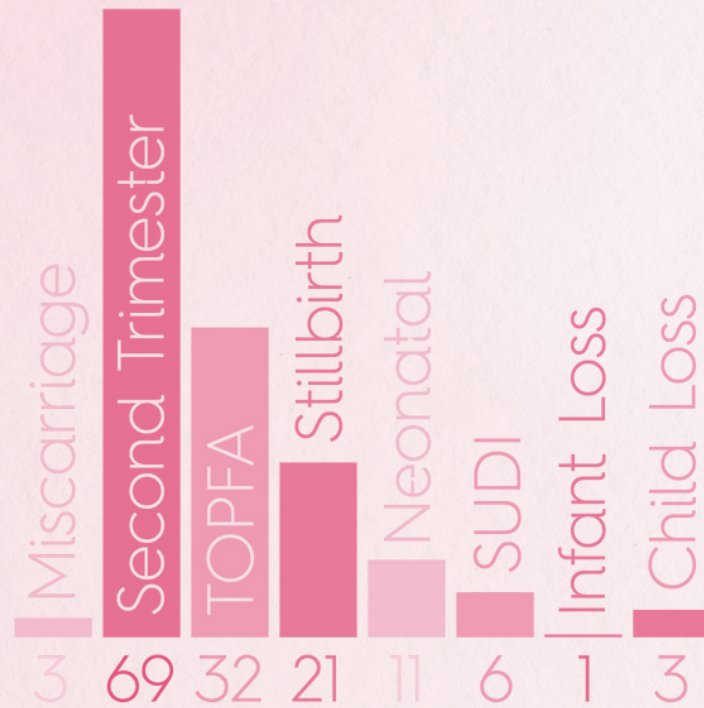
Overall Referral Figures

534 Total



Hospital to Home

146 Referrals



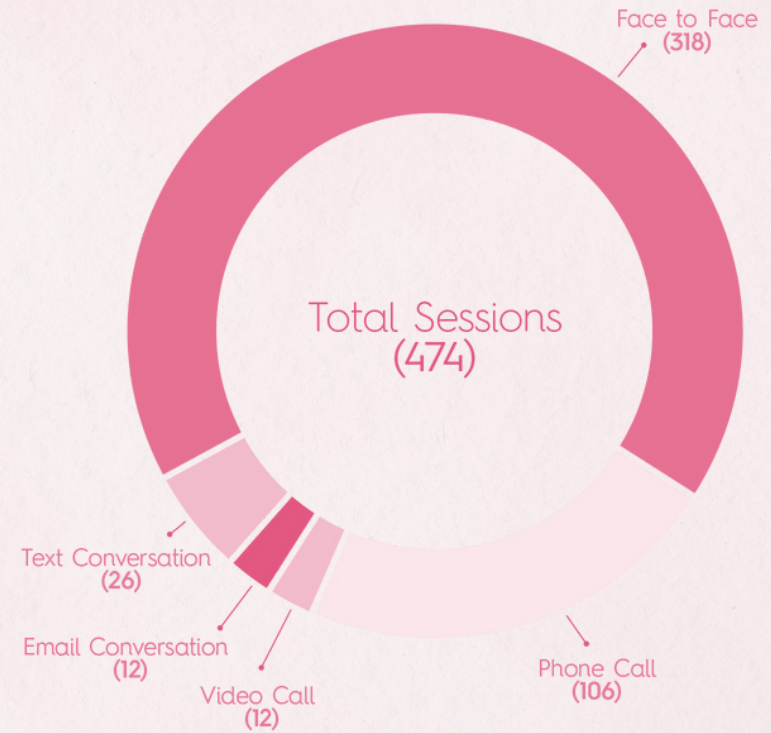
Held in Our Hearts Annual Statistics 2024



GESTATION OF LOSS REFERRALS

Hospital to Home

Support Method



Held in Our Hearts Annual Statistics 2024



METHOD OF SUPPORT

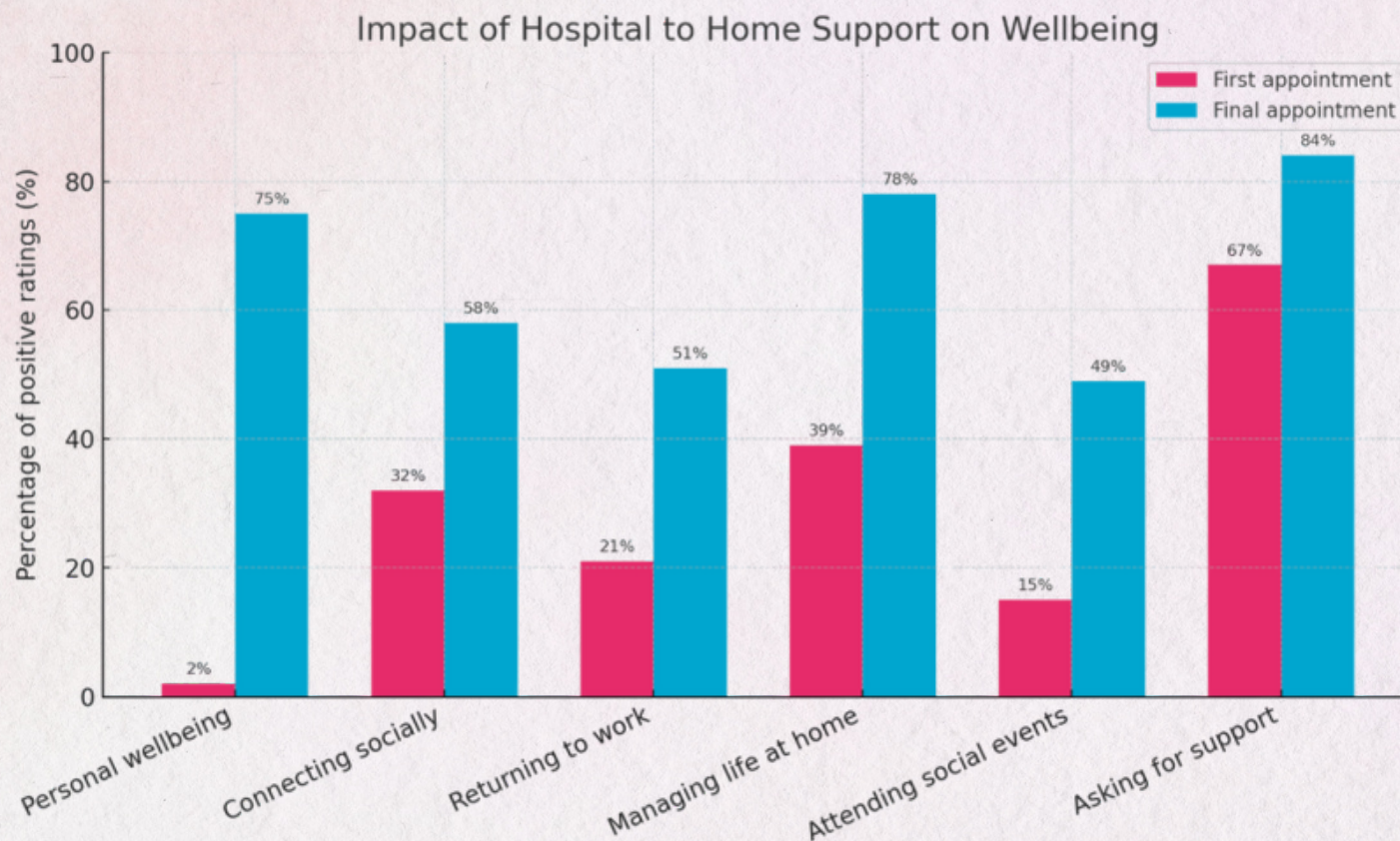
EVALUATION FINDINGS

WE ARE CONTINUALLY EVALUATING OUR H2H SUPPORT SERVICE AND IMPACT OF THIS EARLY SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES FOLLOWING THE LOSS OF THEIR PRECIOUS BABY.

Every family, at their initial and final visits with their H2H support worker, is asked to complete a short questionnaire. The aim of this questionnaire is to reflect the impact for the family at that time and how they are coping following their loss.

It supports discussion with families to enable the H2H support worker to identify priorities for the family ensuring individualised care and support planning going forward.

The assessment form focuses discussion around seven core themes which we recognise are impactful for families following the devastating loss of their baby/child.



EVALUATION FINDINGS AND STATISTICS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

When we asked families how they felt with regard to (How am I doing?), they responded, as we would have expected, at this time. We found over 80% of respondents in total shared they felt poor or OK at time of first visit. By the end of support from H2H over 52% of families supported felt well in themselves with 22% sharing their mood felt good. This not detract from the ongoing grief journey but better supports them to manage these complex emotions following loss.

*Scoring tool used: Poor; OK; Well; Good; Very Good



Emotional Wellbeing:

Those rating their wellbeing as 'Well' or 'Good' rose from 17% to 75%. Reports of 'Poor' wellbeing fell by 77%. Families described feeling more emotionally supported, validated, and able to grieve in a healthy way.

Family Relationships:

Positive ratings increased from 23% to 66%, while reports of strained relationships dropped by 77%. H2H helped families reconnect and communicate more openly after loss.

Social Connection:

Feelings of social engagement rose by 81%, and feelings of isolation dropped by 26%. Individuals reported feeling more able to connect with friends, family, and their wider support network.

Daily Functioning & Work:

The number of individuals who felt able to resume daily routines and work more than doubled (from 21% to 51%). H2H helped build confidence, stability, and resilience in everyday life.

Managing Home Life:

Confidence in managing day-to-day responsibilities increased from 39% to 78%, while those struggling dropped by 64%. Families felt more in control of their home life and routine.

Attending Social Events:

Those feeling confident attending social events increased from 15% to 49%, showing improved social confidence – a key milestone in grief recovery.

Asking for Support:

Willingness to seek help rose from 31% to 58%, and no individual remained in the lowest category. Families reported feeling able to access the help they need.

Evaluation findings summary

These outcomes provide compelling evidence of the impact and effectiveness of the Hospital to Home project. Families showed measurable improvements across emotional wellbeing, family dynamics, social connection, and everyday functioning.



'The support was invaluable, I don't know how I would have made it through without the help. It helped to talk about my little girl Zara and come to terms with her death, to talk to someone that wasn't family where I could be fully honest and vent about my hurt. I needed the kindness and knowing there was further support if needed.'



'To meet a stranger and welcome them into my home at one of the most vulnerable times in my life did not feel unnatural or strange, it was exactly what I needed as the worst time. The support, empathy and compassion I was given by the wonderful (H2H support worker) really has hugely helped my ongoing recovery and healing as I navigate my way through the loss of my long-awaited baby boy. Selfless actions from a stranger who then became an angel in my recovery. Thank you x'



'The Held in our Hearts team are simply amazing. They reached out to us during the darkest days of our lives and provided us with a huge amount of support, which is a true blessing at times like that. (H2H support worker), provided us with both practical support and emotional support throughout everything. Her help ranged from helping us coordinate with the funeral home, so we didn't have to, to arranging for us to collect our precious baby's ashes, all the way through to helping us deal with the emotional aftermath of what we'd been through. This really is invaluable, and we couldn't be more grateful.. This charity will always hold a special place in our hearts.'

I GENUINELY DO NOT THINK I CAN EXPRESS IN WORDS HOW VALUABLE THIS SERVICE HAS BEEN FOR ME SINCE LOSING MY DAUGHTER. ALMOST 6 MONTHS ON I DO NOT THINK I WOULD BE WHERE I AM IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR THE SERVICE AND THE REGULAR VISITS.

IT IS SUCH A SAFE SPACE TO CRY; RANT AND SAY ANYTHING. NEVER ANY JUDGEMENT JUST A LISTENING EAR. I HAVE SHARED THINGS I DIDN'T EVEN WITH MY CLOSEST FAMILY. BEING ABLE TO TALK SO OPENLY AND HEAR SOMEONE ELSE TALK ABOUT MY BABY AND USE HER NAME — LILY,

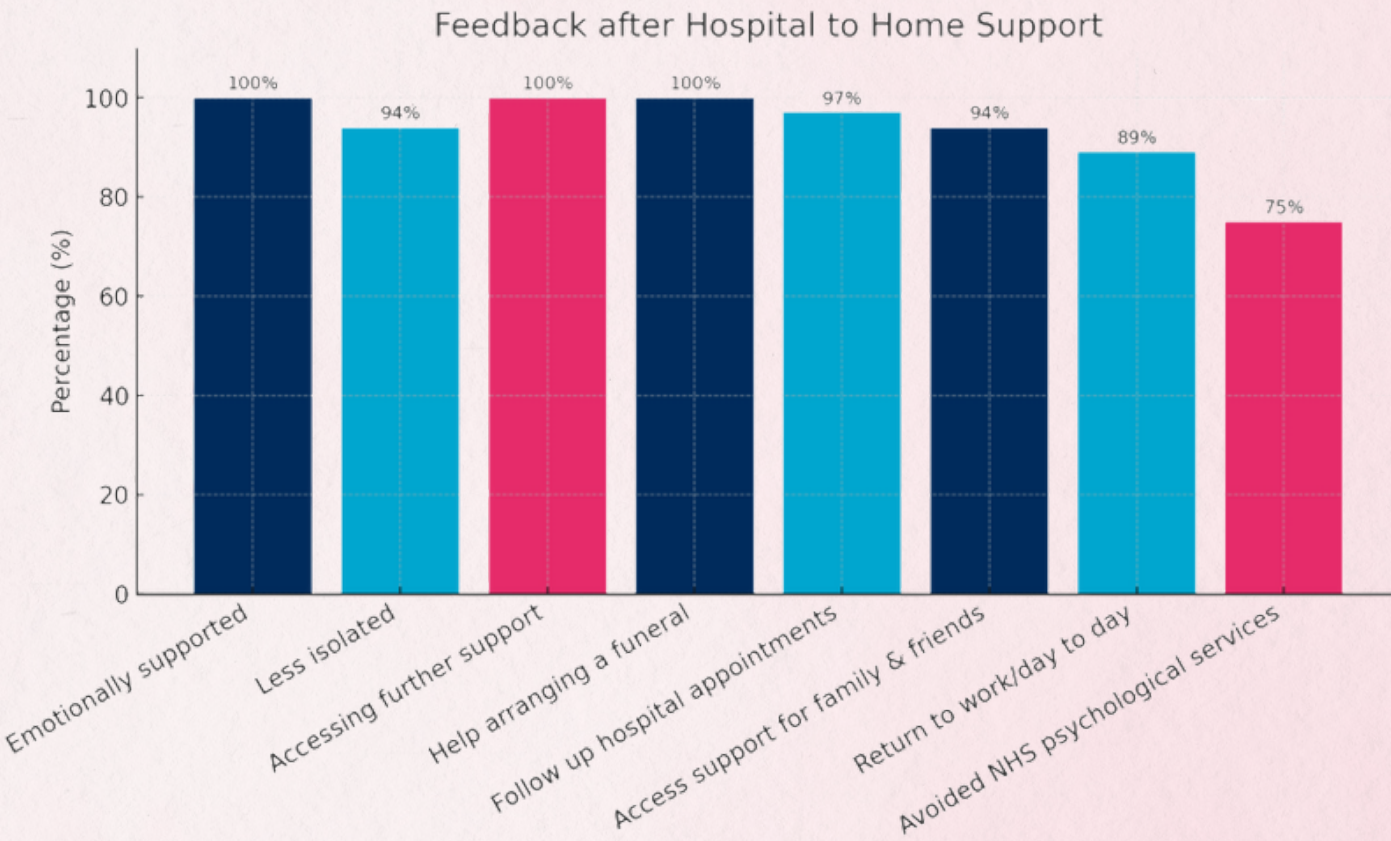
THERE JUST ISN'T THE WORDS TO TRULY SAY HOW MUCH THIS HAS MEANT TO ME BUT I JUST KNOW YOU HELPED ME SURVIVE THIS TIME AND I AM ABLE TO PICTURE MY FAMILY FUTURE AND HAPPIER TIMES WHICH I WASN'T ABLE TO BEFORE. THANK YOU WILL NEVER BE ENOUGH

FAMILY SURVEY

Once H2H support visits are complete, families are invited to fill out a short survey. This survey helps us collect feedback on the care provided, so we can better understand what’s working well and identify areas for improvement.

Family feedback plays a vital role in shaping the ongoing development of the H2H service. It not only guides how we support families but also demonstrates the value of this care when we apply for funding

The survey asks families to share feedback around 7 core questions about the support they received from their H2H support worker.



FAMILY SURVEY

100% OF FAMILIES FELT MORE ABLE TO ACCESS OTHER SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOLLOWING SUPPORT FROM H2H

100%

OF RESPONDENTS SHARED THAT THEY FELT EMOTIONALLY SUPPORTED BY H2H IN THESE EARLY DAYS FOLLOWING THEIR LOSS WITH 94% SHARING THAT THEY FELT LESS ISOLATED AFTER ACCESSING SUPPORT FROM H2H.

"I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS SERVICE ISN'T STANDARD ACROSS ALL HEALTH BOARDS. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT THOSE FIRST FEW MONTHS WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF HOSPITAL TO HOME."

97% OF FAMILIES FELT H2H SUPPORTED THEM IN PREPARING FOR AND ATTENDING FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENTS WITH HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.

FAMILY SURVEY

100% OF FAMILIES FELT SUPPORTED IN
ARRANGING / PLANNING THEIR
BABIES FUNERAL OR MEMORIAL
ARRANGEMENTS

"WHEN WE MET WITH THE HOSPITAL TO HOME TEAM WE WERE ALREADY ARRANGING OUR BABY'S BURIAL SERVICE OURSELVES. BUT WE SO APPRECIATED THE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND BEING GIVEN THE TIME TO SIT AND TALK AS A COUPLE ABOUT OUR LOSS AND HOW TO NAVIGATE LIFE IN THE AFTERMATH"

- 94% OF FAMILIES FELT ABLE TO ACCESS GRIEF SUPPORT/ADVICE FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS THROUGH SUPPORT FROM H2H
- 89% OF FAMILIES FELT H2H SUPPORTED THEM IN CONTACTING OR PLANNING FOR RETURNING TO WORK/DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES

"HOSPITAL TO HOME IS A GREAT SERVICE FOR FAMILIES GOING THROUGH SOMETHING SO TRAGIC. THEY HELPED US AS A FAMILY, WITH A YOUNG CHILD ALREADY AT HOME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED AND THAT ALTHOUGH THE PAIN OF LOSING A BABY WILL NEVER GO AWAY, WE WILL LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT. I'M GRATEFUL TO OUR H2H SUPPORT WORKER FOR HER SUPPORT THROUGHOUT AND BEING SO KIND WITH OUR SON TOO."

CONCLUSION

H2H support provides equitable bereavement care for families across the NHS Boards in which it operates.

Close partnership working with local Health Boards ensures continuity and consistency of care following a loss.

Clear referral pathways, networking events, and training sessions help ensure that professionals across maternity services in each partner Health Board understand the H2H service and can make timely referrals on behalf of families.

Embedding H2H as an opt-out service means all families are automatically offered support, with referrals completed before they return home.

This approach allows H2H to reach families proactively, sparing them the burden of seeking help during such a devastating and overwhelming time





TO EVERYONE WHO MAKES THIS POSSIBLE
—THANK YOU