



IMPACT REPORT 2026

INTRODUCTION

OUR INNOVATIVE HOSPITAL TO HOME SERVICE WAS DEVELOPED, AND LAUNCHED, IN 2023, TO HELP BRIDGE THE GAP OF CARE FROM CLINICAL SETTING TO THE HOME, AFTER THE LOSS OF A PREGNANCY, BABY OR INFANT



Hospital to Home is an innovative early intervention opt-out service, providing bereavement support following pregnancy, baby and infant loss.

The service focuses on bridging the gap between clinical and community care, with the aim of offering families their first support visit within the first three weeks following the death of their baby.

This helps ensure that no family falls through the gaps or misses the opportunity to access compassionate bereavement support when they return home.

Evidence shows that early intervention has “the potential to improve grief, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and other psychosocial outcomes” (Hunter et al, 2024) for parents following the devastating loss of their baby.

Over the past year, Hospital to Home has continued to grow and develop across multiple Health Boards, supporting families experiencing losses from 12 weeks of pregnancy onwards, including sudden unexpected death in infancy and early childhood.

Partnership working with NHS teams has remained central to the success of the service, enabling referrals to be made quickly and ensuring families can access timely, person-centred support tailored to their individual needs.

As the service has expanded, we have also continued to learn more about the challenges and opportunities involved in delivering specialist bereavement support across diverse and geographically varied areas of Scotland.

Feedback from families continues to highlight the importance of compassionate early intervention and the value of support that is individualised to the unique needs of each family and grounded in our values of empathy, connection and love.

OUR VISION

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. .

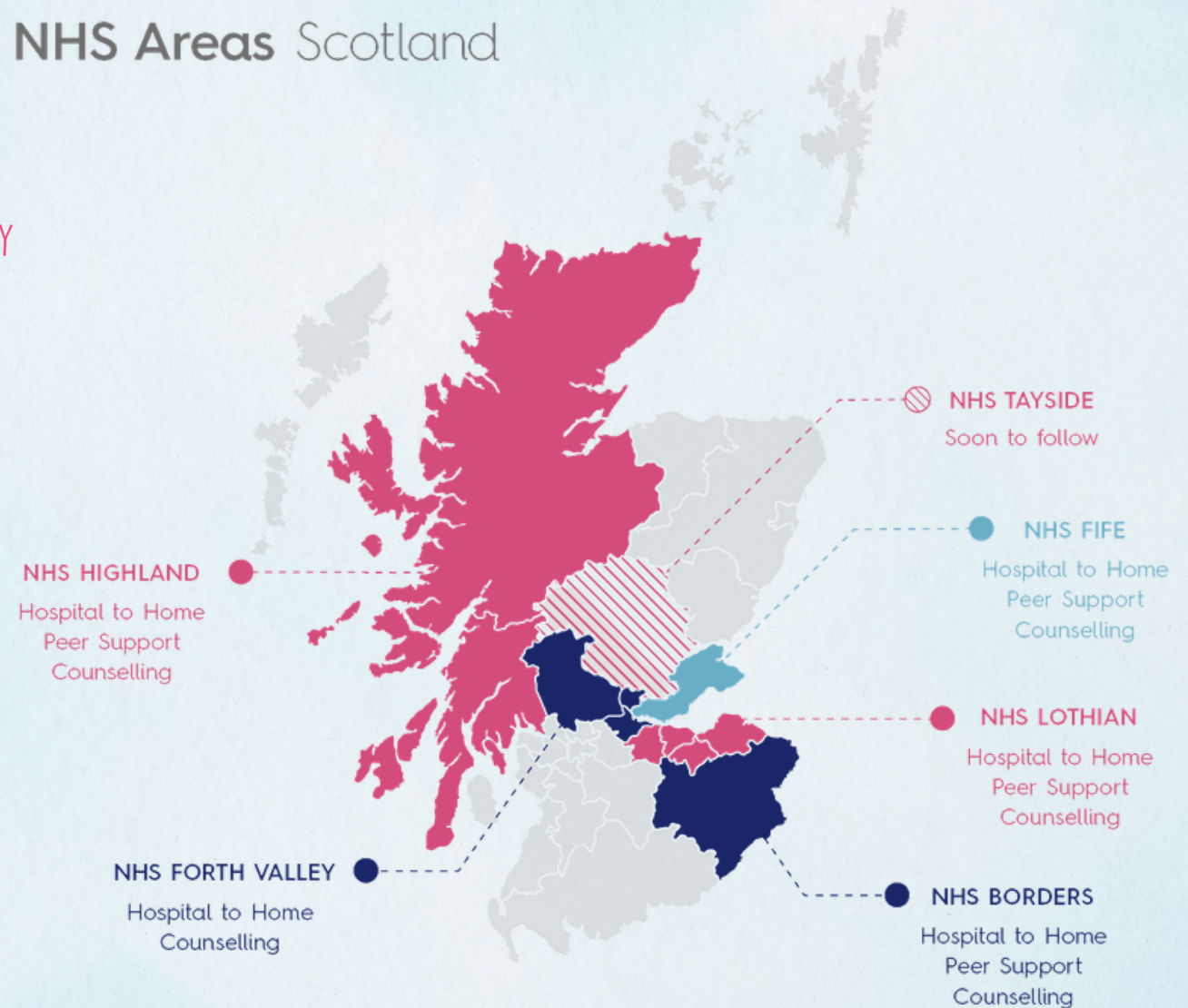
This year, our Hospital to Home service expanded into NHS Borders, ensuring bereaved families within the Health Board can access the same compassionate support already available across Lothian, Fife, Forth Valley and Highland.

We continue to evaluate both the opportunities and challenges involved in delivering support across different Health Boards through ongoing quantitative data analysis. We recognise that the needs of each Health Board vary due to factors such as geography, rurality, population density and local service provision, and these remain important considerations when assessing demand and planning future development.

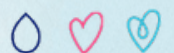
Quarterly review meetings are now established with each Health Board, creating opportunities to share data, review progress collaboratively, and identify any emerging challenges or areas for development within the service.

We have also been working with NHS Tayside in preparation for the introduction of Hospital to Home within their Health Board area over the coming year.

Services offered within NHS Areas Scotland

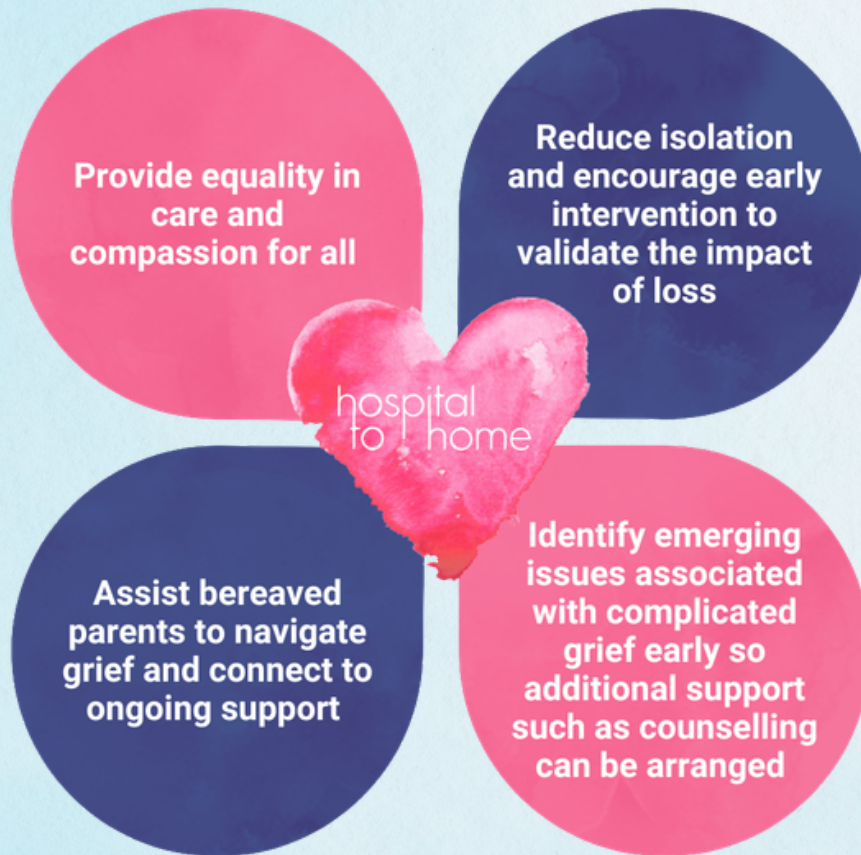


Held in Our Hearts



AIMS:

Hospital to Home support staff are experienced in supporting families through the early stages of grief and understand the shock and trauma that can follow the death of a baby. Support is tailored to the individual needs of each family, recognising that every experience of grief is unique. By taking a person-centred and family-focused approach, staff provide compassionate bereavement support that reflects each family's circumstances and needs throughout the early days and weeks following their loss.



- All families experiencing a loss after 12 weeks and up to pre school age, whether at home or within hospital care can access Hospital to Home.
- This is an opt-out service, meaning all families are offered a referral by NHS staff, helping to ensure equitable access to support and consistency of care for everyone following the loss of a pregnancy, baby or infant.
- Held In Our Hearts will reach out to the family within 48 hours of the referral being received and visit the family at home within the first 3 weeks.
- 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, reducing isolation, improving mental health outcomes
- Reduction in reliance on NHS Psychological Services

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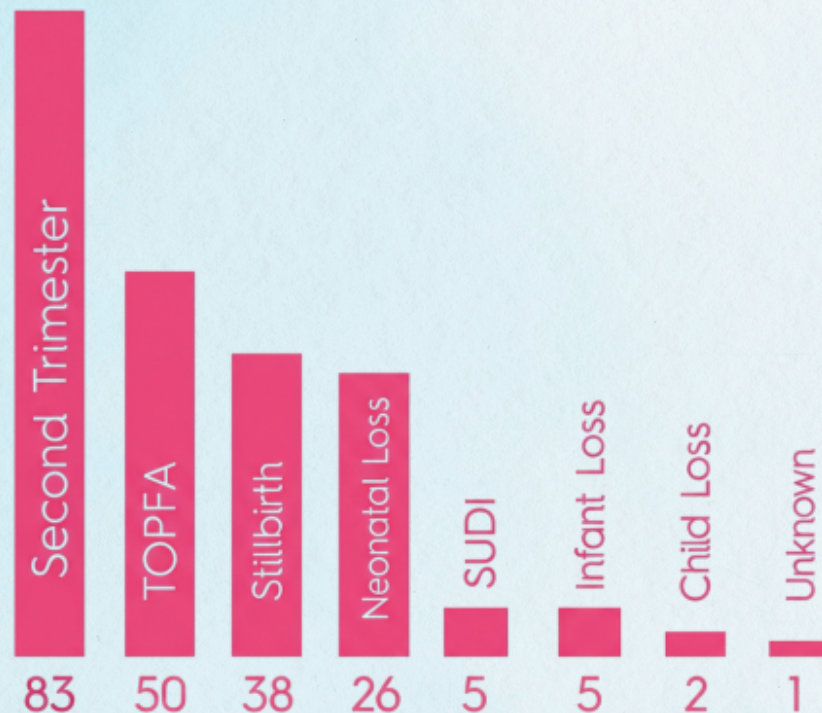
IT'S HARD TO OPEN THE DOOR AFTER A LOSS, BUT
HELD IN OUR HEARTS REALLY UNDERSTAND
BECAUSE THEY'VE BEEN THERE. THEY KNOW AND
CAN HELP YOU START THOSE TALKS, EVEN
THOUGH IT FEELS IMPOSSIBLE

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2025/2026 DATA

Gestation of loss referrals 210 Referrals



Held in Our Hearts Annual Statistics 2025/2026



210 REFERRALS

624 HOSPITAL TO HOME
SUPPORT SESSIONS

90% OF REFERRALS CAME
DIRECTLY FROM THE NHS

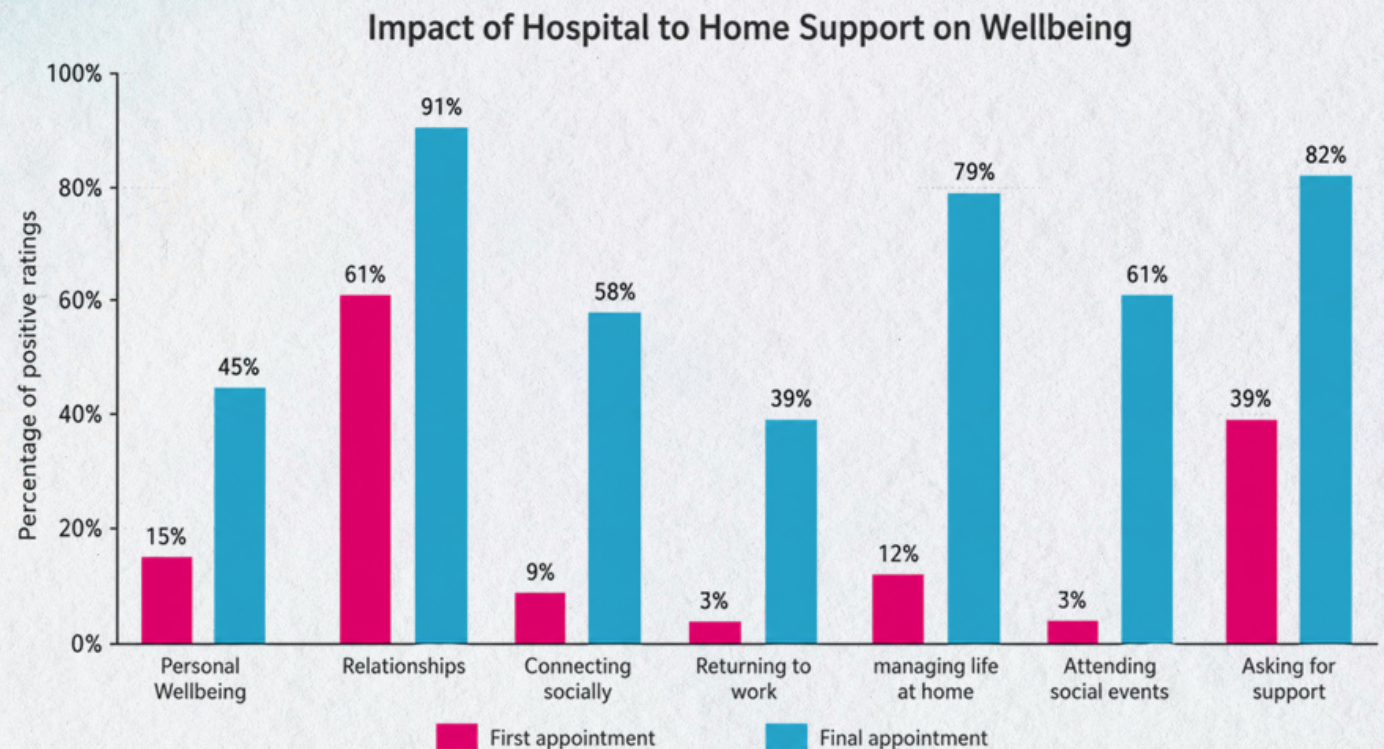
EVALUATION FINDINGS

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

At both their initial and final visits with their Hospital to Home Worker, families are invited to complete a short questionnaire designed to capture how they are coping at that point in time following the loss of their baby.

The questionnaire also helps guide conversations with families, identifying individual priorities and tailoring support plans to each family's specific needs and circumstances.

The assessment explores seven core areas that we recognise can be significantly affected following the death of a baby or child. Each area is scored using the categories Poor, OK, Well, Good and Very Good. The table below shows the percentage of families who provided a positive rating of Good or Very Good.



EVALUATION FINDINGS AND STATISTICS FROM SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRE

The data demonstrates a significant improvement across every area of wellbeing following Hospital to Home support, highlighting the positive impact that compassionate, ongoing bereavement support can have on families after the loss of a baby.



The greatest improvements were seen in families' ability to manage day-to-day life and reconnect socially. Positive ratings for managing life at home increased from 12% at the first appointment to 79% following support, while confidence in attending social events rose from 3% to 61%. This suggests that support helped families gradually regain confidence in navigating everyday situations that can often feel overwhelming after bereavement.

There was also a substantial increase in social connection and emotional resilience. Positive ratings for connecting socially rose from 9% to 58%, while personal wellbeing increased from 15% to 45%. These findings indicate that families felt less isolated and more emotionally supported as their engagement with the service continued.

Relationships and support-seeking also showed strong improvements. Positive relationship ratings increased from 61% to 91%, suggesting that families felt better able to communicate and cope together following support. Confidence in asking for support increased from 39% to 82%, demonstrating that families became more comfortable reaching out for help and accessing wider support networks.

Returning to work remained one of the most challenging areas for families, however even here there was notable progress, with positive ratings increasing from 3% to 39%. This reflects both the significant impact bereavement can have on employment and routine, and the role support can play in helping families rebuild confidence over time.

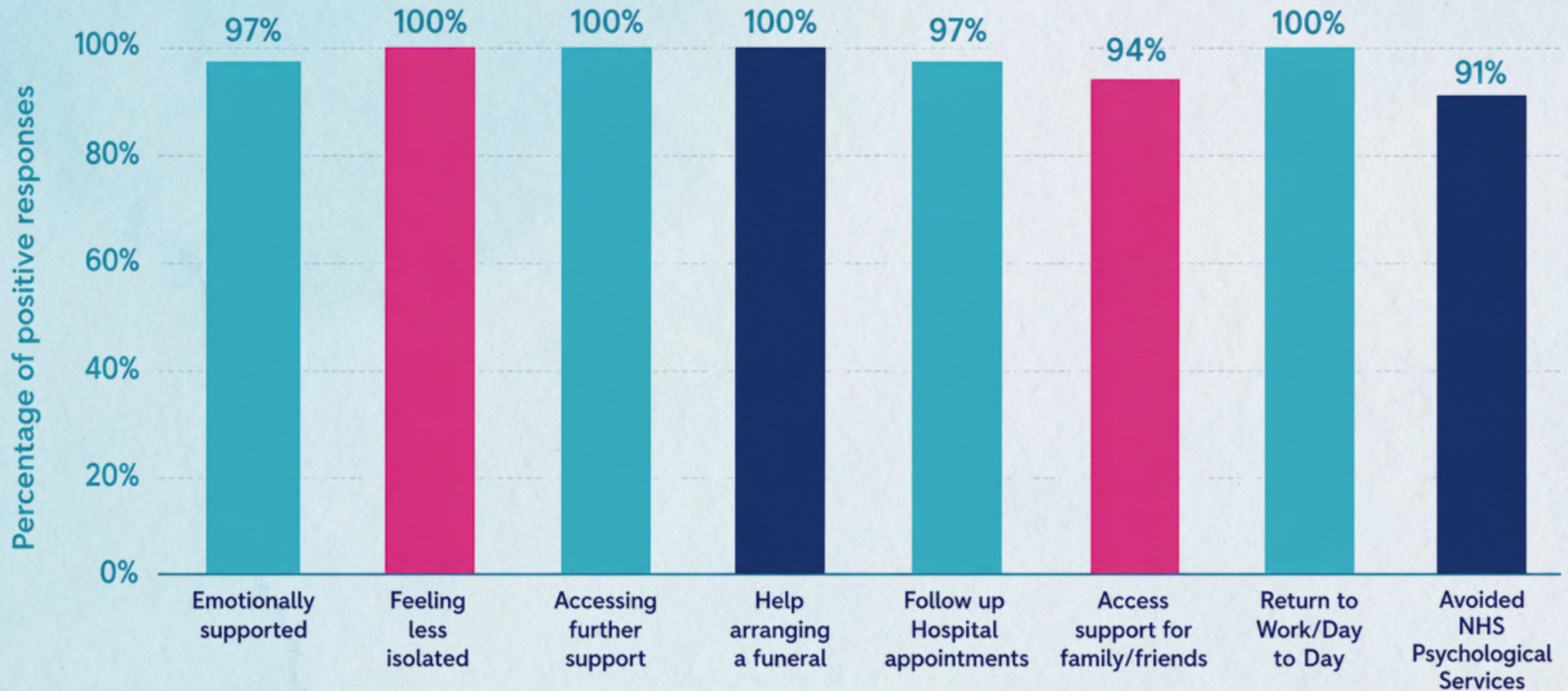
Overall, the findings reinforce the importance of early, compassionate and ongoing bereavement support following baby loss.

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THE HOSPITAL TO HOME SUPPORT WAS WHAT I NEEDED DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF MY LOSS. I DIDN'T KNOW WHO TO TALK TO OR HOW TO EVEN GET STARTED WITH LOOKING FOR SUPPORT WHEN MY BABY DIED, SO HELD IN OUR HEARTS REACHING OUT TO ME DIRECTLY WAS INSTRUMENTAL. I FOUND IT VALUABLE AND PIVOTAL TO BEGINNING MY JOURNEY TO ACCEPTING WHAT HAD HAPPENED. IT MADE ME FEEL LESS ALONE. IN THE EARLY DAYS OF LOSS, IT WAS ENOUGH TO KEEP ME GOING."

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Feedback after Hospital to Home Support



Once support visits are complete, families are invited to complete a short survey about the care and support they received.

This feedback helps us understand what is working well and identify areas where we can continue to improve. Families' experiences play a vital role in shaping the ongoing development of our Hospital to Home service.

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"KATY WAS AMAZING — SHE CAME AND TALKED ABOUT OUR LOSS BUT ALSO HELD SPACE JUST TO TALK ABOUT LIFE IN GENERAL WHICH WAS SO NEEDED ! WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE SUPPORT AND KNOW THAT THE DOOR IS OPEN SHOULD WE NEED MORE"

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FAMILY SURVEY



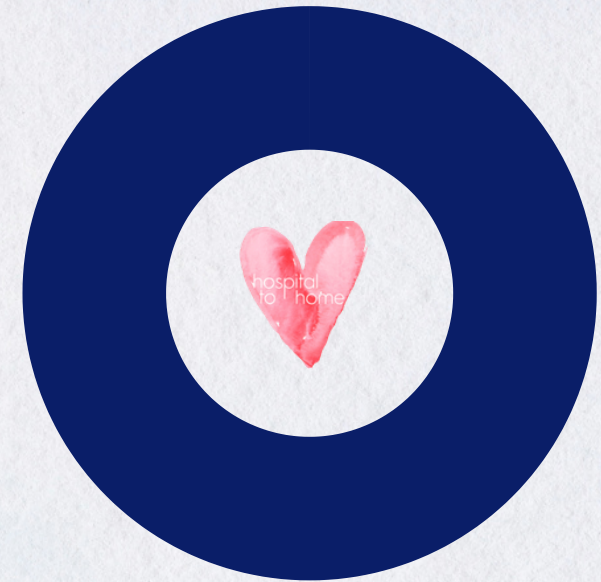
FELT LESS ISOLATED
AFTER HOSPITAL TO HOME
SUPPORT.

100%



FELT MORE ABLE TO
ACCESS OTHER SUPPORTS
AND SERVICES

100%

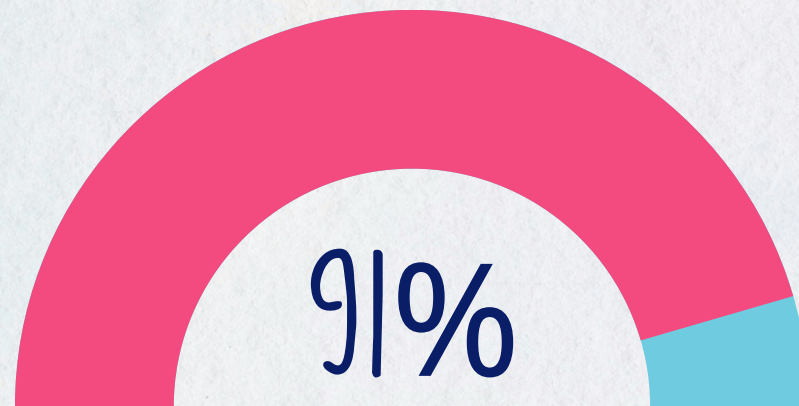


FELT MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT
RETURNING TO WORK AND DAY
TO DAY ACTIVITIES

100%

FAMILY SURVEY

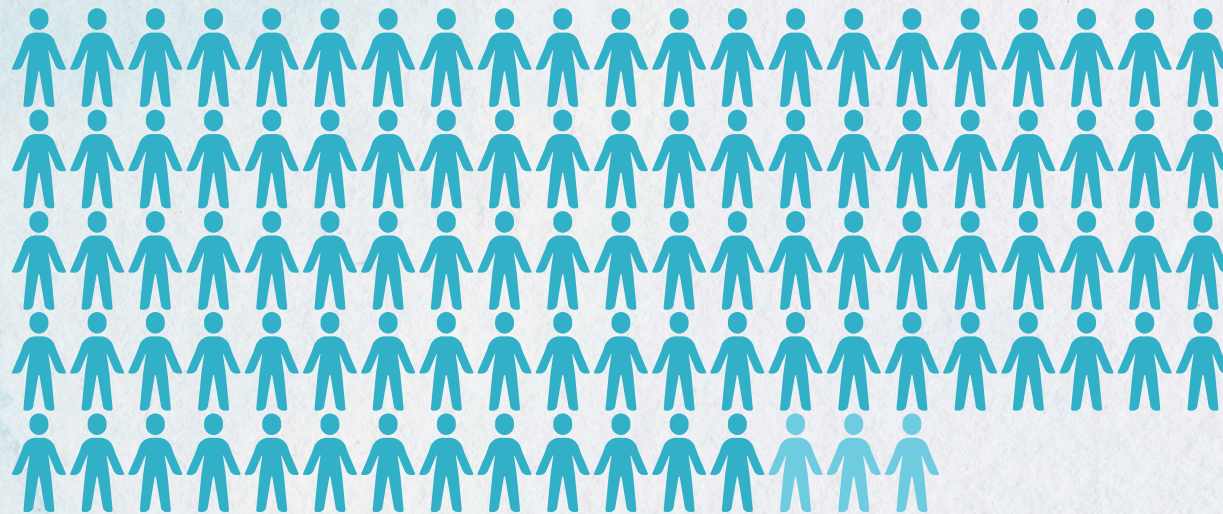
91% OF FAMILIES REPORTED THAT, BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT PROVIDED THROUGH HOSPITAL TO HOME, THEY DID NOT FEEL THEY NEEDED TO ACCESS NHS PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES



Our findings show that Hospital to Home has the possibility to help alleviate pressure on NHS psychological support services by providing early emotional and practical support to families. Our family survey results demonstrate that a vast majority of families found the support helped them cope without the need to seek additional NHS psychological interventions.

FAMILY SURVEY

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



The high satisfaction rate (97%) indicates that the charity is successfully complementing healthcare provision by supporting families to access and engage with follow-up care, thereby enhancing the overall patient and family experience.

FAMILY SURVEY



"Hospital to Home supported us in the hardest time of our lives. We felt understood and heard by Ashley and her amazing support. We felt we had someone to turn to any time, and Ashley helped us immensely by assisting with some tasks that were unbearable for us at the time. We couldn't be more thankful and will remember her kindness forever."



"Hospital to Home support is a vital part of surviving those first couple of months. Having someone come see you who isn't there to judge how you are coping but to talk and support you through such a tough time, is such a help."



"Working with hospital to home, it healed a part of me I thought would be broken forever, I was able to appropriately work through my early stages of grief in a healthy environment with someone who understood and wasn't trying to fix me or my feelings. I don't think I'd feel how I do today if it wasn't for working with hospital to home."

CONCLUSION

Equitable, compassionate care

Hospital to Home support provides equitable, compassionate bereavement care for families across the NHS Boards in which the service operates.

Strong NHS partnership working

Strong partnership working with local Health Boards helps ensure continuity, consistency and timely support for families following the death of a baby or infant. Through established referral pathways, professional networking, and ongoing training opportunities, maternity and neonatal staff across partner Health Boards are supported to understand the Hospital to Home service and make referrals quickly and confidently.

Proactive, opt-out support

Embedding Hospital to Home as an opt-out service means every family is offered support, with referrals made before they leave hospital. This proactive approach removes barriers to accessing care and ensures families do not have to seek support themselves at a time of profound grief and trauma.



Our new Hospital to Home Film features three families who all have their own deeply personal experience of baby loss.

Three babies, three families, and a journey that no parent is ever prepared for; nor should they be.

The days immediately after are unlike any others. Grief without shape, before you know how to hold it.

Then come things nobody prepares you for.

Beth and Alan hadn't known they could name their son Ruairidh.

Clare and William had to find the strength to leave Campbell behind.

And nobody had told Natasha and Callum that Maeve could have a funeral.

Held In Our Hearts' Hospital to Home service was there for all of them because every staff member has lived through their own loss.

We're not able to fix what cannot be fixed, but to hold each family, a steady, quiet anchor in the darkness of loss; to walk alongside them.

SCAN QR CODE TO WATCH OUR NEW HOSPITAL TO HOME FILM





TO EVERYONE WHO MAKES THIS POSSIBLE
—THANK YOU