



## Case study four:

# Tool 1 - What social workers offer at end of life

These are some of the particular ways that all social workers support end of life and bereavement care.

You can use this tool to consider the role of social workers in end of life care and how your role can support people who are dying or bereaved.

### 1. Discussions as the end of life approaches

Social workers:

- Build relationships that enable discussions to take place
- Sensitively initiate discussions about the future
- Ensure everyone is involved who needs to be
- Refer people to other professionals for more support when appropriate.

### 2. Assessment, care planning and review

Social workers:

- Focus on promoting wellbeing and achieving what matters to each person
- Look at all needs and strengths
- Consider preventative services and changing needs in the future
- Advocate for support from other services

- Ensure people get benefits they are entitled to
- Balance individuals' and unpaid carers' needs
- Advise on and implement the relevant legislation and policy to support decision making
- Sensitively apply social care law, policy and practice to safeguard people when needed.

### 3. Co-ordination of care and delivery of high quality care in different settings

Social workers:

- Ensure people are at the centre of their care and have information about who is doing what
- Build relationships with specialist palliative care providers
- Support communication and information sharing so that care is joined up
- Work with other professionals, agencies and organisations to maximise quality of life
- Act as a point of contact as things change
- Monitor how care is helping people to achieve the things that matter to them
- Share good practice to ensure that people's needs are appropriately met across different settings.

### 4. Care in the last days of life

Social workers:

- Keep the focus on quality of life
- Ensure people have the information they need
- Deal with practical issues
- Provide emotional, social, cultural and spiritual support
- Ensure people are not alone if they don't want to be.

### 5. Care after death

Social workers:

- Ensure people have the information and support they need to complete the associated formal processes and procedures
- Help people to find ways to live with loss
- Provide support for people who are left at risk as a result of losing someone
- Refer people for specialist support if they need this
- Provide emotional support to colleagues as part of developing a supportive reflective culture
- Share learning with others.

This is an extract from Association of Palliative Care Social Workers in collaboration with the former College of Social Work and Making Waves Lived Experience Network/OPEN FUTURES Research, with support from the British Association of Social Workers and Hospice UK (2016) *The role of social work in palliative, end of life and bereavement care* [www.apcsw.org.uk/resources/social-work-role-eol.pdf](http://www.apcsw.org.uk/resources/social-work-role-eol.pdf)