

Our programme

Who we are

Compassionate Sheffield exists to improve people's experiences of death, dying, loss and grief in Sheffield.

This community-led programme acknowledges that death is a social and cultural event, that affects all of us.

We're funded by the NHS Integrated Care Board, Sheffield City Council and St Luke's Hospice.

The programme began in 2021. You can read our previous impact report on our website.

"Through various initiatives that connect neighbourhoods, engage local businesses, and work alongside healthcare and support services, Compassionate Sheffield is making a lasting impact on our city's collective health and happiness."

- Pam Daniel, Equality and Engagement Lead at Voluntary Action Sheffield, and Chair of Sheffield Poverty Truth Commission

What we do

We collaborate with people, communities and organisations to create spaces where people feel safe and supported to explore and develop their knowledge of death, dying, loss and grief.

We work with communities to develop asset-based resources in partnership with local care agency services. This helps to bridge gaps between local citizens and Sheffield's health and wellbeing services.

Our work is targeted to support individuals and communities who experience health and wellbeing inequalities in the city.

How we do it

The programme is led by the needs, experiences, and ambitions of those we work with. By responding to what matters most, we encourage a sense of ownership with the people we partner with.

Whether we are creating spaces for people to talk openly about life, loss and death, delivering workshops or creating resources, our role varies between being facilitators, collaborators and curators.

Community development

Encouraging confidence, building capability and unlocking capacity

We take a community development approach to our work, using a model of social movement to support cultural change

Cultural change Challenging the over-medicalisation of death, by elevating the social, cultural and spiritual elements that influence our experiences of life, loss and death

Social movement Actively listening to the experiences of citizens and creating sustained impacts, resulting in collective ownership





Our activities: some examples

This is a brief insight into some of our work over the last year, to find out more, please contact us:

- Curating the Sheffield Life, Loss and Death Festival during May with 45 events and over 1,000 tickets booked.
- Delivering workshops to increase knowledge and understanding of grief, advance care planning and the dying process with voluntary sector organisations, community groups, NHS organisations, Sheffield City Council, local businesses and individuals.
- Facilitating Death Cafes both for the public and for traditionally under-represented communities such as unpaid carers and the neurodivergent and LGBTQ+ communities.
- Delivering ‘How to facilitate a Death Cafe’ training sessions to encourage those interested in hosting their own spaces. The number of people facilitating Death Cafes in Sheffield has grown, meaning more people across the city are having conversations about this important part of life.
- Partnering with BBC Radio Sheffield to facilitate a range of discussions around Life, Loss and Death, and supporting their Grief Series.
- Facilitating discussions for system leaders, hospital, primary care and voluntary sector staff about the importance of person-centred care at end of life.
- Working within the Townships 1 Primary Care Network (PCN) area with community groups, individuals, voluntary sector and primary care staff, plus libraries and places of worship. We collaborated to identify local assets, develop tools, and unlock capacity for people to be better supported during life, loss and death.
- Supporting the development of a self-sustaining local, multidisciplinary Grief Team.
- Working within Network North PCN area to identify motivated individuals and opportunities for improving the rate and quality of advance planning for people living with dementia.
- Regularly attending the Friends of Foundry drop-in events to talk with the community and professionals about what support exists and what might be missing, whilst offering creative engagement activities around the subject of life, loss and death.
- Collaborating with local Mosques to facilitate regular men’s discussion groups and workshops around life, loss and death after evening prayers.
- Working closely with SOAR to collaboratively deliver projects, for example; establishing self-sustaining death cafes and grief cafes, plus facilitating multiple workshops for their chronic pain group.
- Collaborating with RivelinCo to deliver a mini-season of events called ‘Connecting Through Loss’ including a creative community social event, a family film screening of Coco and a Mexican Day of The Dead Workshop.

“This session helped me meet part of my migrant community and understand how they’ve navigated their grief and loss.”

- Workshop attendee

“I gained new perspectives. I felt validated. I’ll plan my end-of-life plan.”

- Workshop attendee

“Having a death cafe specifically for LGBTQ+ people was absolutely invaluable, and I really hope that more will be held.”

- Death Cafe attendee



If you'd like to learn more about any of these examples or if you're interested in working collaboratively with Compassionate Sheffield in the future, please get in touch!

Team@compassionatesheffield.co.uk



Resources

This year we've collaborated with organisations, communities and individuals, to develop a variety of asset-based resources.

This approach enables the experts within communities to identify what matters to them, and to share their knowledge, skills and support.

These resources include:

- informative videos
- documentary films
- booklets
- web pages

Six of them are shown here...

"I am continually impressed with the skills, enthusiasm, support and knowledge that the Compassionate Sheffield team have offered, and continue to offer us. The support has hugely helped us to integrate death, dying and grief conversations, planning and support, into the care provision of the Primary Care Network".

- Glen Watson, Paramedic Practitioner, ACP



End of Life Care – We Answer your Questions

[This video](#) shares answers to important questions about death and how we can prepare for the end of life, by the United Women Affiliation.



Planning your end-of-life care

[This video](#), available in six languages, focuses on having conversations with loved ones about end-of-life care, co-produced with people from Sheffield's Yemini, Pakistani and Roma communities.



NHS Chaplaincy: Information for staff

[This video](#) hears the voices of chaplaincy staff across five South Yorkshire ICB services, sharing insights into their role, when chaplaincy teams should be contacted and the importance of spiritual care.



What Should I Do Now?

This booklet is being developed following a need identified through our work with Townships 1 Primary Care Network. It aims to support people with navigating the emotional and practical processes that take place after someone dies.



Advance Care Planning

This [online page of resources](#) supports people and professionals with planning ahead. It shares tips about how to have conversations and holds information about practical things that can be put in place.



Stories from the Pandemic: A lasting testimony from Sheffield

[This documentary film](#) shares experiences of the pandemic from across Sheffield. A lasting testimony, acknowledging that everyone has a story.

What next?

The Compassionate Sheffield programme moves forward with the experience and belief that we can effectively work with individuals, communities and organisations to help address social and health inequalities; influencing experiences of life, loss and death.

This past year, we have developed our purpose and approach, challenging our ways of listening and doing.

Our ultimate goal is to achieve a 'realistic utopia', as set out in the [Lancet Commission's report on the value of death](#).

The 5 key principles of a 'realistic utopia' are:

1. The social determinants of death, dying, and grieving are tackled
2. Dying is understood to be a relational and spiritual process rather than simply a physiological event
3. Networks of care lead support for people dying, caring, and grieving
4. Conversations and stories about everyday death, dying, and grief become common
5. Death is recognised as having value

"Compassionate Sheffield are one of our most innovative and effective partners and a gift to the Voluntary Sector in Sheffield as a whole.

The team at Compassionate Sheffield put the public first and are always seeking to find co-designed and person-centred approaches."

- Andy Freeman,
Space to Breathe,
mental health and
wellbeing charity



Ways to get involved

If you'd like to explore ways that we could collaborate with you, your community or your organisation, please get in touch with us.

- Team@compassionatesheffield.co.uk
- Join our newsletter mailing list to stay up-to-date on our latest projects, events, workshops and opportunities to get involved
- Follow our social channels: <https://linktr.ee/compassionatesheffield>



"[It was] genuinely one of the best things I have ever done. Thank you for the privilege of being involved this year."

- Sheffield Life, Loss and Death Festival
Workshop Facilitator

"[I feel] empowered, encouraged and hopeful after hearing from some wonderful professionals working to do things better"

- Workshop Attendee

