



E-learning for end of life care
Training for health and social care staff

e-ELCA: End of Life Care for All - A Briefing
E-learning in end of life care for health and social care staff - January 2010



Introduction

The Department of Health's (DH) End of Life Care Strategy (2008) emphasised the need for a cultural change across the workforce involved in end of life care.

The strategy estimated that up to 2.5 million people could have some kind of involvement in the care and support of dying people and their families during their working day.

The strategy continued: "Given the size of the workforce and the differing levels of skills, knowledge and attitudes required at different stages of the end of life care pathway, the development of e-learning to support the effective delivery of training is essential."

The e-learning resource is one of three elements in a workforce development programme which the DH and the National End of Life Care Programme (NEoLCP) are over-seeing.

In June 2009 we published core competences and principles for people working in end of life care and an update on that work is being published with the e-ELCA launch (21 January).

In the summer of 2010 we will publish training resources aimed at improving how workers communicate with dying people and their loved ones.

The e-ELCA Project

e-ELCA has been developed by e-Learning for Healthcare (e-LfH) and the Association for Palliative Medicine (APM).

Around 50 e-learning sessions are currently available to many NHS staff. Other NHS and social care staff and others working with dying people can access the first ten or so sessions on the public-facing site www.EndOfLifeCareforAll.com.

Work to allow social care staff to undertake learning sessions on the e-LfH Learning Management System is continuing.

Ultimately the project will offer more than 100 interactive and accessible e-learning sessions to complement and support learning in health and social care workplaces and classroom settings.

A key aim of the new resource is that workers in social care – such as care home assistants, domiciliary care workers and social workers – will have access to online learning in an area of care often perceived to be the main responsibility of health services. That will apply across the public and independent sectors.

All the learning sessions have been written and peer reviewed by clinicians or health and social care experts and practitioners.

They will be grouped under four core courses identified in the national strategy.

These are:

- assessment
- advance care planning
- communication skills and
- symptom management.

A fifth course integrates learning through case studies, using a variety of clinical or social care settings to help directly link training about end of life care to the learner's working day.

Opening up training and education around end of life care

Social care and health care staff not working in specialist palliative care can find it difficult to access training and education about end of life care.

For staff working in care homes or domiciliary care workers supporting people in their homes in particular, access to one or two day courses has always proved difficult.

As registration issues are resolved and more learning sessions are rolled out, the range of issues covered should ensure there is something for all workers – and volunteers – regardless of setting.

Each session lasts around 20 minutes and includes features such as self-assessment tools, audio/video clips and case studies.

Some sessions provide basic information to people new to this area - encouraging them to take that learning further. People more experienced in this field can develop their knowledge.

Learning can take place on-site in the workplace or at home, so travel times and costs are minimised.

e-ELCA is about opening up training and education in one of the most sensitive and demanding areas of care.

Social care and voluntary sector workers

We know that there is unmet need for training which will help unlock the potential of many care staff and improve the care they provide to dying people. This applies to those working in social care and as either volunteers or staff in the voluntary sector.

The DH has secured additional licences that can be used for social care access to the materials and is working with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), Skills for Care and DH social care workforce leads to take this further. The Department and its partners are exploring a number of methods including 'bulk' sign-ups covering entire organisations.

For the moment though, it is a case of watch this space but we hope to be able to announce our plans within the next few months.

While social care staff and some NHS workers will not have the same immediate levels of access as many of their health colleagues, once issues of registration and access are sorted out they will be able to access other relevant existing e-LfH materials.

For health care workers, e-ELCA is available to access through a number of different

ways depending on an individual's role.

Existing e-LfH users and GPs

Those health care workers currently accessing another e-LfH e-learning project and GPs should email elca.support@e-lfh.org.uk to arrange access.

NHS health care staff (excluding doctors)

NHS health care staff, excluding doctors, should contact their internal trust training and development lead about accessing e-ELCA via the National Learning Management System (NLMS). The NLMS is the e-learning platform fully integrated with the Electronic Staff Record which means activity from e-ELCA learning will be recorded against an employee portable training record.

New e-LfH users (doctors - except GPs)

Those doctors, except GPs, new to e-LfH e-learning should complete the registration form at www.e-elca.org.uk. A username and password will then be issued.

Evidence of learning

The sessions will each result in a certificate as proof of completion. While the sessions might or might not contribute to registration requirements such as continuing professional development depending on the profession, the certificates will be evidence of learning activity.

e-Learning for Healthcare and the Association for Palliative Medicine

e-LfH is a DH programme working in partnership with the NHS and professional bodies to provide high-quality online learning content for the training of the NHS workforce across the UK.

This project, by including a wide range of resources for social care staff, represents new ground for e-LfH and the social care workforce. e-LfH is currently developing content for around 50 e-learning projects in partnership with medical royal colleges and other professional organisations.

Its projects enhance traditional learning, support and reinforce existing teaching methods and provide a valuable reference point.

All of the e-learning content is developed by e-LfH in partnership with the royal colleges, faculties and other professional bodies and is written and reviewed by senior clinicians and professionals. All of the content is highly interactive using video, animation, graphics and case studies to ensure the learning is engaging, interesting and easy to absorb.

The e-LfH team has won a number of awards including most recently, the e-Learning Age Gold Award for their Anaesthetic e-learning project. Visit www-e-lfh.org.uk for more details.

The Association for Palliative Medicine for Great Britain and Ireland is an association of doctors who work in hospices and specialist care units in hospitals. It has around 1000 members from the UK and Ireland and members in other countries.