



# Referral to Specialist Palliative Care

## Referral Criteria

The patient has progressive, life limiting or life threatening disease (malignant and/or non malignant)

### and any of the following:

- The patient has symptoms that require specialist assessment/management and which are beyond the capacity of the primary care team to manage optimally
- The patient and/or their family has psychological, social or spiritual needs that require specialist assessment
- The patient is dying and the primary care team requires additional support and/or advice

**Note: Patients who are having life prolonging treatment are not excluded from referral to palliative care.**

## Triggers for referral

- The referring clinician would not be surprised if the patient died within the next 12 months
- Recurrent presentations to hospital
- For inpatients, it would not be a surprise if they died this hospital admission
- Progressive disease despite life prolonging therapy
- Low probability of success from available therapeutic options
- Withdrawal, or consideration of withdrawal, of life prolonging treatment (e.g. haemodialysis, ventilation)
- Patient or family concern about end of life issues
- Recent marked decline in physical function
- Care needs exceed carer capacity

## Palliative care referral may be for:

- Assessment
- Advice
- Consultation
- Support
- Direct patient care
- Assistance with discharge planning