

Securing our future

In our 40th anniversary year, we need to overcome unprecedented financial pressures driven by factors outside of our control.

Hospices across the country are facing a fight for survival, and St Helena is no different. We have a window of opportunity to address our challenges and we intend to take it.

The challenge

Demand for our services has never been higher – but so are the costs. After £1m deficits in the two previous years, we have worked incredibly hard to be close to breaking even in 2024-25.

However, because of political decision, we are again facing a major deficit for next year, 2025-26. Most of this is for reasons entirely outside our control. In particular we face a £1.1m increase in pay costs alone from April:

- The Government's increase in employers' National Insurance payments, which takes effect in April.
- Pay rises awarded to our clinical staff, to keep in line with NHS terms and conditions called Agenda for Change. Those increases have been approved by the Government, but we have been given no funding to match them.
- Increases in the Minimum Wage and Living Wage.

Another key issue is that the Government and NHS have not given hospices enough financial support over the years to keep pace with increasing running costs, even though we play a vital role in helping the NHS by keeping people out of hospital. This issue needs addressing.

If we just let things continue our reserves will be exhausted within 3-4 years, leaving us effectively bankrupt. But we're not going to let that happen.

The situation in numbers

- We have supported more than 60,000 people in the past 40 years
- Our total turnover is £23-24m, including subsidiary companies set up to generate additional income
- We have 575 staff and 900 volunteers
- 20% of our income comes from the NHS, with the rest raised through donations, grants and our commercial activity
- We spend £10m on frontline services
- £1.1m – additional 2025-26 staff costs resulting directly from Government measures, including the National Insurance increase and national living wage rises, and the failure to match hospice funding to increases in NHS pay.
- £200k of additional non-pay costs relating to the increased cost of living, especially higher electricity bills.
- 90% of our work is in the community

Taking action

Over our history we've changed and adapted – adding new services, whilst holding on to our values and ethos. In the last 10 years we supported the same number of people as in the first 30 years.

Now, in our 40th anniversary year, we need to ensure that St Helena has a viable future for the next 40 years and beyond.

To reduce our costs, we're looking at every single aspect of the organisation – what we do and how we do it. We need to be honest about what we can and can't do – for the people we care for, our partners and our supporters.

It's too early to say what changes will be made, but we will share news of any decisions once they're made.

There may be some reductions in staff numbers as we readjust. We will do everything we can to be creative to minimise this risk, as we don't wish to lose any of our amazing colleagues.

We're not alone. Hospices across the country are cutting jobs and services. But we're better-placed than many because of the steps we've already taken to bring in new income, for example:

- Running lotteries for more than 30 other charities.
- Developing our new cleaning and care social enterprises, which will generate profits for the hospice in coming years.
- Acquiring the Slice of Colchester café, which achieved £4,000 sales in its first week.

We will continue with these activities, as well as our partnership in the project to redevelop Holy Trinity Church. This has attracted grant funding and there is no cost St Helena.

Please keep supporting us. We need all our donors and other supporters now more than ever.

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