

THE KIRKWOOD SUPPORT LIFE.



IMPACT REPORT ^{2024–25}

Through thick and thin, giant hugs and bottomless mugs, **The Kirkwood Support Life** for anyone affected by a life limiting illness, **every step of the way.**

SUPPORT LIFE

More than just our mission or our motto, **Support Life** is our solemn promise and our call to arms. Painted on walls, emblazoned on posters, and written in our hearts, it is our daily reminder that the best way to approach death is through an abundance of life. That's why no matter how difficult, delicate, or dire the circumstances, The Kirkwood will always do whatever it takes to make life worth living.



06 Introduction: A Shared Belief

12 A Decade of Growth

16 A Tipping Point: Reimagining Sustainable Care

18 Together, We Support Life

20 Our Vision for the Future

22 Nasser's Story

24 The Year in Numbers

34 Gary's Story

54 Social Impact and Sustainability



A SHARED BELIEF

Our founders believed that people approaching the end of life deserved the very best care and support. Care which helped them to improve their quality of life in ways that mattered most to them.

Today, everyone connected with The Kirkwood is brought together by that same vision: A world where no-one has to face a life limiting illness alone. A world where everyone comes together to help local people make the very most of the time they have left, support them to die with dignity, and help their loved ones to live on – and live well.

Right now, here in Kirklees, around 12,000 people are in the last three years of life. Of that number, around 9,000 are currently living with or will develop an illness for which there is no cure. The Kirkwood was founded to improve quality of life for these people, against all the odds. It's our reason for existing, and the essence of palliative care. Our ambition is to be the go-to charity for anyone who may benefit from the expert, compassionate care we provide – at any stage of their journey, not just at the very end.

Over the past decade, driven by the vision of our founders and all those who have come before, we've overseen huge growth in our charity, doubling the number of patients we care for at the end of life each year and providing more support in people's own homes, in care homes and in their local communities than ever before.

But the past few years have challenged us like never before. Ever rising demand for our services, long-term underfunding across the hospice sector, and the rapidly increasing cost of providing care have presented a real threat to the future of our vital local charity.

2024–25 In Context

The Kirkwood's expansion over the past decade has been a testament to the amazing support we continue to receive from our community – from donors, fundraisers and families to local businesses, healthcare partners and our dedicated volunteers. But in recent years, despite rigorous cost-saving measures and ongoing income generation efforts, it had become increasingly difficult to bridge the growing gap in our finances.

To ensure we continue to be here for people facing life limiting illnesses in Kirklees in the future, we implemented a comprehensive plan to put The Kirkwood's finances back on a secure footing.

These changes, which were proposed in January and began to be implemented in March 2025, are presented in this year's Impact Report. Not to overshadow our successes over the last decade, but to provide essential context. Every achievement detailed in the following section reflects the dedication of our teams and the unwavering support of our community, who have played a huge part in helping to preserve our life-changing care during this period of transition.

Securing Our Future, Together

Palliative and end of life care offers so much more than just a service to our community. The care offered by The Kirkwood is often described as a 'lifeline' by those in our care, making a profound difference to the lives of patients and families facing life limiting illnesses.

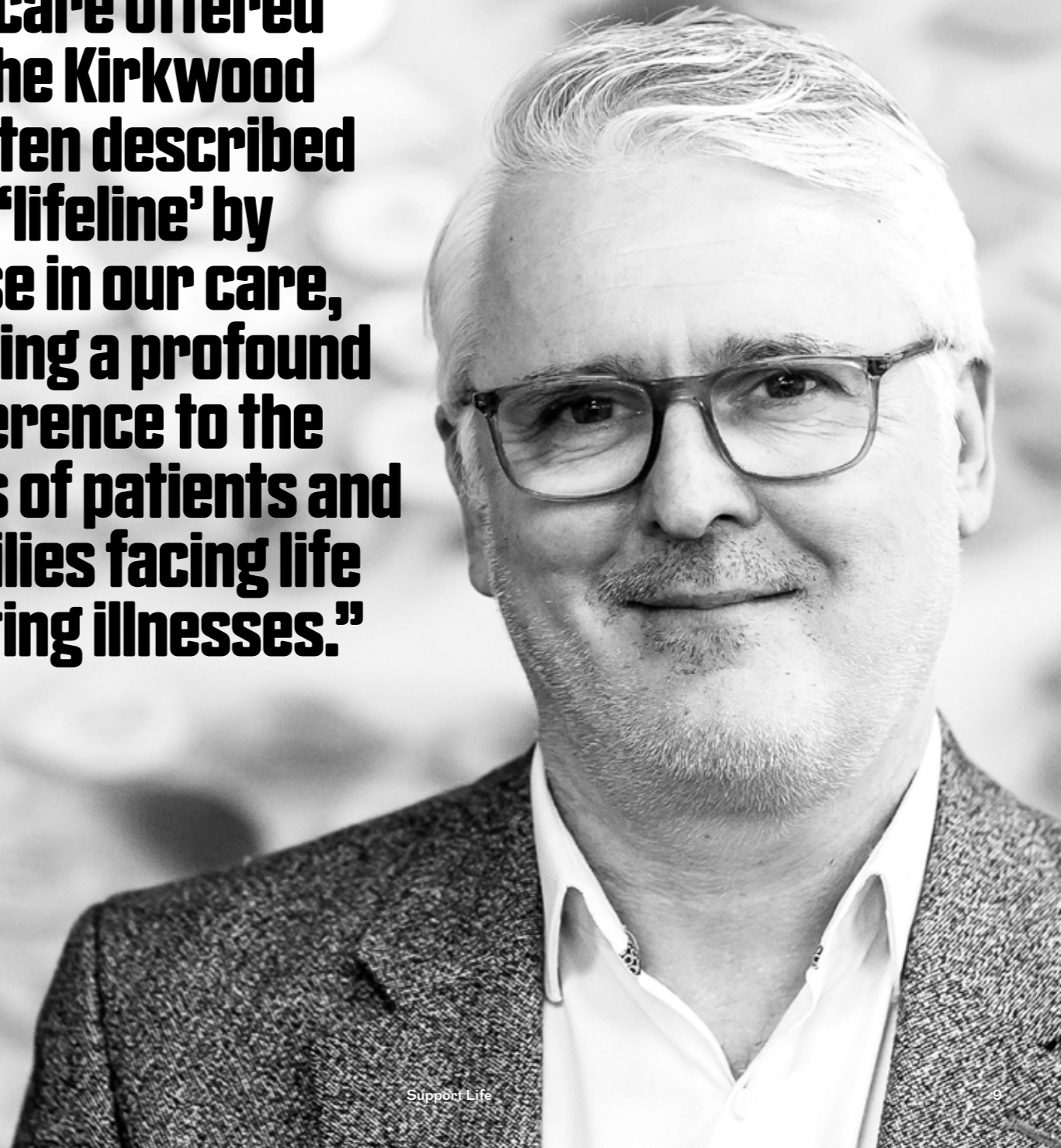
While we've taken significant steps to ensure our financial stability, the future of The Kirkwood will rely on the continued strength and growth of our Movement.

By working together, by rallying more voices to our cause, we can make sure the compassionate care we all value so deeply will continue to be there for those who need it – today, tomorrow and for future generations.



Michael Crowther
Chief Executive
The Kirkwood

“The care offered by The Kirkwood is often described as a ‘lifeline’ by those in our care, making a profound difference to the lives of patients and families facing life limiting illnesses.”





A DECADE OF GROWTH

The ten years leading up to 2025 represented a significant period of growth for The Kirkwood, driven by one clear aim: to make sure anyone in Kirklees who needed our care had access to it.

While many people still associate us with the hospice building in Dalton, our teams support people right across Kirklees, at every stage of illness and in bereavement too. Our goal over the past decade was simple – to be there for more people than ever before – and it drove us to find innovative new ways to support those affected by a life limiting illness.

By focussing on specialist support delivered within patients' homes, care homes, and clinical settings, and by consistently working to reach people earlier in their journey, we successfully doubled the number of people we helped each year.

We expanded our specialist palliative care presence into North Kirklees to ensure equitable access; introduced specific expertise like our Admiral Nurse and Care Home Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) to provide more focused support; and the launch of the Care Co-ordination team and Connect with The Kirkwood made it easier to access our help – with greater support available at every stage of illness.

Challenging Misconceptions and Building Trust

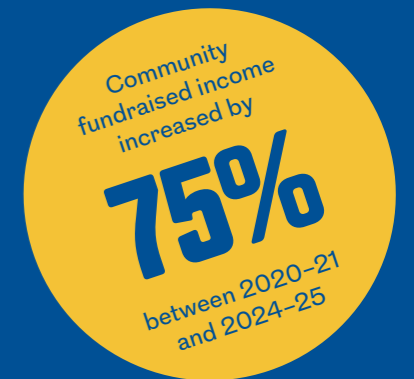
Doubling the number of people we support here in Kirklees wasn't simply about developing new services; we needed to reach out to more communities and challenge common

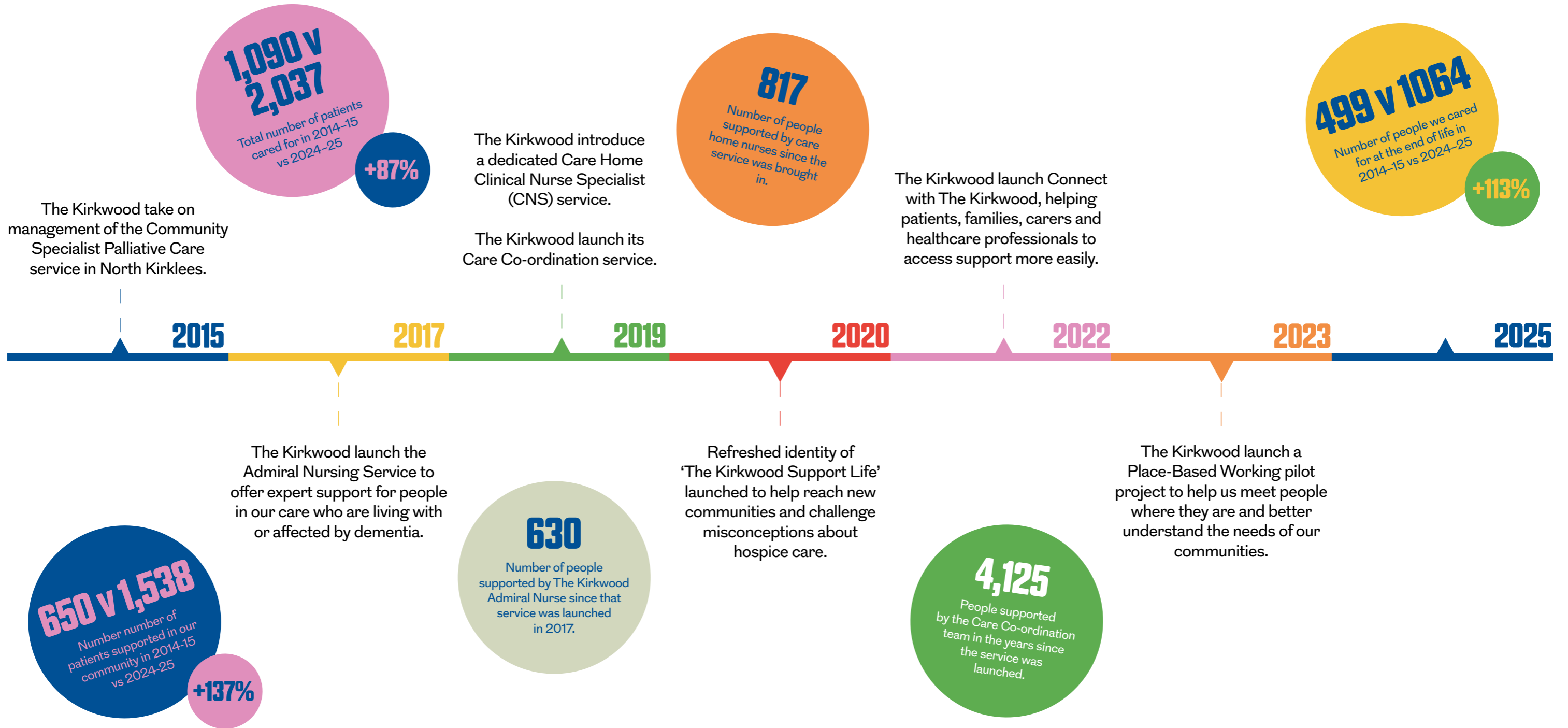
misconceptions about hospice care. We knew that many people believed The Kirkwood was only for the very last days of life, or perhaps that we weren't for them at all. We knew we had to change that perception.

We worked hard to raise awareness about the breadth of our services, spreading the word about our charity and letting people know how we could help to improve their quality of life in ways that mattered to them.

We focussed on becoming a more accessible and truly representative service for everyone in Kirklees. This led us to launch a place-based working approach in 2023, committing to meet people where they are and working closely with diverse groups to understand their needs.

We also reimagined our brand: **THE KIRKWOOD SUPPORT LIFE** – a charity dedicated to supporting local people to live well, at any stage, regardless of the life limiting illness a person might be living with.





A TIPPING POINT: REIMAGINING SUSTAINABLE CARE

The success of the last decade, marked by our achievement in doubling the number of people we care for each year, led to an inevitable rise in the cost and complexity of delivering our specialist care. At the time, these service developments were sustainable for the hospice. Then came the COVID-19 pandemic, global conflicts, and economic uncertainty.

Rising demand for our vital services over the past few years, coupled with rapidly increasing costs of everything from utilities to employee salaries, resulted in substantial losses. Despite our best efforts, the incredible generosity of our donors and support of our NHS partners, The Kirkwood, like many charities in the sector, reached a crucial tipping point in 2024–25.

The Reality of the Challenge

The simple truth is that the funds we raised could no longer cover the comprehensive, community-wide services we were delivering. Our long-range forecasts revealed that maintaining our existing service was unsustainable. If we did not act decisively, we risked compromising our ability to provide care in the future.

The scale of the crisis meant we had to make difficult decisions. To secure the quality of our core clinical services, we had to prioritise those patients with the most complex needs. This shift allows us to concentrate our resources where need is greatest. As a result, we anticipate a reduction in the number of people we can support each year, dropping from 2,100 to around 1,300.

The changes to our services included restructures across all areas of the charity – including in clinical, corporate and support services.

While we have done everything possible to minimise the impact on patients, families, our workforce, and the wider Kirklees community, these difficult decisions were vital to ensure the long-term survival of our charity. The changes create a path forward, ensuring we can continue to offer the very best care for people affected by life limiting illnesses whose needs cannot be met elsewhere.

TOGETHER, WE SUPPORT LIFE



Following the announcement about our financial position, something extraordinary happened. Our Movement responded with an outpouring of support. When The Kirkwood needed help, the people of Kirklees answered our call.

Our supporters understood the gravity of the situation and the critical importance of protecting specialist palliative care in our community. They didn't just stand by; they came out in force to advocate for our future. They wrote passionate letters to their local MPs, they increased their regular donations, joined our lottery, and organised countless fundraising efforts.

It was a profound demonstration of the shared belief at the heart of The Kirkwood. It showed that our charity is not just an organisation, but a vital, deeply cherished community asset.

We couldn't be prouder of our Movement or more grateful for their continued, unwavering support. The tenacity and commitment shown by every supporter renews our strength and endorses the importance of our mission.

Together, we will build back, build stronger, and continue to **SUPPORT LIFE** for all those here in Kirklees who need us.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE



Despite the changes we've made to our services, we will never compromise on delivering the best quality of care for those who reach out for our help. Our immediate priority is ensuring the financial sustainability that guarantees we remain here for those in need, both now and for future generations.

Although we have been forced to scale back some services built up over the last decade, we remain on track to deliver more care to more people than we did just five years ago, proving that our long-term trend remains one of growth. Our core vision remains undimmed: we will never stop striving to meet the needs of those affected by any life limiting illness – at home, in our hospice, and in every town and village across Kirklees.

We will continue to be here for those in most need, providing the very best, expert, and compassionate care for those nearing the end of life, and supporting families facing bereavement to live on and live well. And we will find innovative new ways to help more people in need once again to ensure our care reaches every corner of our community.

It's what those who came before us would expect – and the very least the people of Kirklees deserve.

In the meantime, we are committed to actively lobbying our partners in the NHS – locally, regionally, and nationally – for a fairer balance between voluntary fundraising and the statutory funding we currently receive to support our vital work.

NASSER'S STORY

When Nasser Navsarka's wife was told her cancer had returned and there was nothing more doctors could do, the family faced an impossible choice: stay in the hospital, go home, or consider a place they knew very little about, The Kirkwood.

supported me like a brother."

When Nasser's wife died peacefully on 3rd June 2024, the emotional support continued. The staff cried with the family and immediately assisted with all the Islamic funeral arrangements,

ensuring the paperwork was completed within hours so they could bury her the next day, as is their tradition. They even helped lift her into the coffin with immense care and respect. "I can't describe what that meant to us," Nasser said.

Today, Nasser remains a passionate advocate. "To anyone from the Asian or Muslim community, don't be afraid of the word 'hospice.' The Kirkwood is a place of peace, dignity and love where your culture and faith are fully respected.

This place gave us time, care, and dignity when we needed it most. And that's something I'll never forget."

"At first, most of our family thought home was best, we just didn't understand what The Kirkwood really was," said Nasser. "But my wife made her own decision. She rang me and said, 'I'm going to The Kirkwood, it's my decision.' And the moment she arrived, she called again and said, 'This is the best decision I've ever made.'"

Nasser was by his wife's side throughout her six-week stay. She had faced three separate cancer diagnoses with incredible strength,

mentally and physically. When they arrived at the In-Patient Unit, she instantly found peace. "It wasn't what we expected. It was peaceful, calming. She said it felt like a holiday resort, not a hospital. The atmosphere, the staff, the garden—everything was beautiful. It felt like a place where people come to be cared for with dignity."

For the first two weeks, it was a reprieve. "She walked around the gardens, enjoyed the sunshine. It was like a breath of fresh air. I was finally able to rest."

What struck Nasser and his family most was the deeply personal and culturally sensitive care. "As a Muslim, I was genuinely moved by how much thought had been put into our faith. From the moment we arrived, the staff had already set up a private room with a prayer mat. We were never made to feel different; our faith was respected in every possible way."

Nasser highlighted the staff's gentle awareness. "Me and my wife prayed five times a day, and even if a nurse came in during prayer, they would quietly

step out and wait. That kind of awareness and respect goes beyond care. It made us feel seen, heard, and valued."

As his wife's condition worsened, The Kirkwood ensured Nasser could stay close, offering him a bed in her room, meals, and the chance for their daughters to spend precious time with their mum. "I can say without any doubt that the standard of care is on another level. Every person treated us with genuine compassion. They cared for her like family, and they



Scan the QR code to watch Nasser's story and discover how The Kirkwood became a place of peace and tranquillity for him and his family during the most difficult time of their lives.

2024—25

THE YEAR IN NUMBERS





**TOGETHER,
WE SUPPORTED
2,702 PEOPLE
IN 2024-25**



“For the first time in three years, I physically took my hands off my mum and let someone else care for her. That’s how much trust I had in them.”

Joanne, Family Member



331

Wellbeing and Support sessions were facilitated by our clinical teams in 2024–25 helping people to manage their symptoms and improve their quality of life.

2,049

attendees took part in one of our Wellbeing and Support sessions last year, including Drop-Ins, Breathlessness Management and The Kirkwood Chorus.



8,132

calls were taken by our 'Connect with The Kirkwood' team in 2024–25, making it easier for patients, relatives, carers and healthcare professionals to reach out for help.

979

calls were made to our 24/7 Advice Line outside normal working hours and answered by our dedicated team.



10,459

phone contacts were facilitated with patients, families or healthcare professionals by our Community Nurses in 2024–25.

1,538

patients were supported by The Kirkwood Nurses in their own homes or care homes in 2024–25.

3,757

visits were made by The Kirkwood Nurses last year, helping patients to remain in their preferred place of residence.

347

The Kirkwood's Admiral Nurse made 347 visits to patients affected by dementia.

342

visits were made to patients living in care homes.

“We honestly wouldn't have gotten through that last week without The Kirkwood. They took over Dad's care at home.”

Samantha, Patient's Daughter

GARY'S STORY



When 62-year-old Gary, from Meltham, was struggling to breathe, rapidly losing weight, and told his condition was incurable, he believed his story was nearly over. He had reached his lowest point. Like many, Gary thought The Kirkwood was simply a place people went to die. But what he discovered was entirely different: a place that gave him back his strength, his confidence, and his will to live.

Gary's weight had dropped to six and a half stone, and every breath felt like a battle. "At that point, I'd had enough. he shares, "I was worn out. I couldn't breathe right, I couldn't eat properly. I'd given up. I thought 'this was it'."

At this point, Gary was in and out of hospital, struggling with what doctors eventually diagnosed as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Then came the news that his condition was incurable and

he was being placed on end of life care. He was devastated. "It's like someone pulling the floor out from under you. It knocked the wind right out of me."

When doctors suggested The Kirkwood, Gary assumed he was being admitted to die in peace. "I'll be honest – I thought I was being taken somewhere to pass away. I didn't know the other side of it, how much they do to support people like me. I see now that The Kirkwood is about giving people more life, not just helping them through the end of it."

Within a week of arriving, everything began to change. "They made me feel safe, and bit by bit, they started to build me back up. Within a week, I was eating again. I could talk more, and I was breathing a little easier. I felt like I mattered here. That makes all the difference in the world."

"I truly believe if it wasn't for The Kirkwood, I wouldn't be here now. They didn't just get my breathing better, they brought me back when I was ready to give up completely."

The team didn't just treat his symptoms; they gave him tools for living. "They taught me to stop, slow down, and listen to my body. They gave me techniques that actually worked. Instead of just struggling through each day, they helped me understand how to live better with what I've got."

Gary found clarity and deeply personalised care at The Kirkwood, a stark contrast to his hospital experiences. "In hospital I didn't feel like anyone was really seeing me. But here, they listened to me. They cared. They did something about it."

Even after returning home, The Kirkwood was his lifeline. When his condition worsened again, it was the Community Nurse who noticed. "They can tell when you're not okay. Sarah said to me, 'You can't fool me, Gary.' And she was right. They arranged for me to come back, and just like before, they turned things around."

"If it wasn't for The Kirkwood, I wouldn't be here now. They didn't just get my breathing better, they brought me back when I was ready to give up completely. They gave me something I hadn't felt in a long time: hope. That's more powerful than any medicine."



318

patients were admitted to our In-Patient Unit in 2024-25

25%

of our patients were able to go home following care on our In-Patient Unit.

15

the average number of days patients were cared for on our In-Patient Unit.

1,064


patients were cared for at the very end of life by The Kirkwood in 2024–25.

168

more people were cared by The Kirkwood at the end of life last year than the previous five year average.

87%

We helped the vast majority of patients in our care to avoid dying in hospital.



“You won’t find anything better than the care and kindness you get here. It’s not just about the medical care, it’s the way they look after you as a person, making sure you feel valued and comfortable.”



DID YOU KNOW?

95%

of people who provided feedback about their experience of The Kirkwood's care told us our services were excellent or outstanding.

We received 338 survey responses – from patients, families and service users – providing vital feedback which will help to improve the quality of our services.

338





709

service users accessed some form of support from The Kirkwood Counselling Team.

2,199

Pre-bereavement support contacts were made by our Counselling Team in 2024-25

1,708

Counselling sessions were facilitated by The Kirkwood Counselling team for those who were bereaved.

“The Kirkwood supported me and my family on the In-Patient Unit and has continued to after my mother died. I am grateful for all the help from you all.”

“Every single member of the team, be it staff or volunteer, is definitely part of The Kirkwood family and clearly loves being there. The Kirkwood isn’t just patient-focussed; it’s for all the family and loved ones too.”



The Kirkwood Movement

The Kirkwood is not a building, an In-Patient Unit or place of care. We are a movement of people. And our movement is vast.

In 2024-25

31,827

individuals, made up of patients, family members, carers, volunteers, employees, partners, donors and supporters helped The Kirkwood Support Life.





72,232

hours were donated by our dedicated team of volunteers in our shops and donation centres in 2024-25.

3,300

items sold on our eBay store were listed by volunteers, who give up their free time to support our Online Retail team.

853

volunteers gave their valuable time to help The Kirkwood Support Life in 2024-25.

22,916

hours were donated by volunteers at our hospice, supporting patients and helping our fundraising and support service teams.





16,523

individuals helped The Kirkwood Support Life by supporting one of our fundraising initiatives.





1,306

walkers joined us for The Kirkwood Memory Walk in 2024, helping to raise over £130,000 for patient care.

14,092

plays in our weekly lottery draw on the last draw of 2024-25.

436

donors made a monthly donation to support our care in 2024-25.

42,000

donated items were sold via our eBay Store in 2024-25 to raise money for patient care.

Social, Economic and Environmental Impact



286

The Kirkwood employed 286 individuals across the charity at the end of 2024–25, including Bank Staff, in various departments such as; clinical, medical, support services, income generation and retail.

79%

of our employees live right here in Kirklees, helping to make sure care is available for people in their local community.

14-89

We offer opportunities for volunteers of all ages and from all backgrounds. Our youngest volunteer is currently 14 years old, whilst our eldest is 89.

19

Our shops provide jobs and volunteering opportunities, making a positive impact on their local high streets.

THE KIRKWOOD SUPPORT LIFE

230

We helped to keep around 230 tonnes of clothes out of landfill sites in the past year – and that doesn't include items we

185,000

Around 185,000 bags of clothes and other donations were accepted by our shops in 2024–25, reducing waste and creating sustainable lifestyle options for our local community.





**THROUGH THICK AND THIN,
GIANT HUGS AND BOTTOMLESS
MUGS, THE KIRKWOOD SUPPORT
LIFE FOR ANYONE AFFECTED BY
A LIFE LIMITING ILLNESS, EVERY
STEP OF THE WAY.**

**THE
KIRKWOOD
SUPPORT
LIFE.**



Are you living with or affected by a life limiting illness like cancer, COPD, heart failure or Parkinson's? Whatever your condition, if you or someone you care about needs our help, we're here for you 24 hours a day.

**For advice and support, Connect with The Kirkwood
on: 01484 557 910 or visit: thekirkwood.org.uk**