each

East Anglia's Children's Hospices

making more possible

reaching further together

Care Strategy for 2026-2031

Foreword

East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH) has been supporting local children, young people and families with specialist care since 1989. Over that time, our hospices – The Nook in Norwich, The Treehouse in Ipswich and Milton in Cambridge – have become places where families find comfort, understanding and expert care when they need it most.

We're proud of the part we've played in shaping children's palliative care over many years, alongside families, our dedicated staff and many healthcare partners across the region. Today, that same sense of purpose and partnership sits at the heart of our new five-year care strategy for 2026–31: **Making more possible – reaching further, together.**

This strategy builds on the many strengths already within EACH. Families, employees and care partners have helped us identify not only what we do well, but where gaps still exist and where some families struggle to get the support they need. We are determined to make more possible by strengthening what we already have, expanding our reach and responding to the unmet need we know is out there.

Most importantly, this work has been shaped by the voices that matter most: families' lived experiences, the insight and expertise of our care team, and the views of partners who support families in the wider community. Their combined feedback has guided where we should focus our effort, resources and innovation in the years ahead.

We will also continue to champion the importance of fair, consistent and sustainable statutory funding and care commissioning. We know that clearer pathways, better funding and stronger partnerships will allow us to do even more – and we are committed to highlighting the value EACH provides to the NHS and the wider health and social care system. The work our team does every day has an impact far beyond our hospice walls, and we intend to ensure that contribution is recognised and understood.

Part of making more possible also means challenging common misconceptions about children's palliative care. Our hospices offer so much more than end-of-life care – from symptom management and short breaks to emotional support and help for the whole family. We will continue working to help ensure the public, and those families we can support, understand the full breadth of what we offer and the difference it makes.

While this strategy sets out our direction for the future, we remain firmly focused on the families who need us today. Alongside our long-term goals, our 'business-as-usual' services continue, delivered with the same compassion, commitment and expertise that families have relied on for decades.

Making more possible – reaching further, together, is our promise to grow, to listen, to challenge ourselves, and to make sure every child, young person and family who needs us feels supported, welcomed and never alone.

Kevin Clements – Chief Executive

Scan the QR code to watch a short film about our care service.

Introduction

It's been an exciting journey shaping our new care strategy for the next five years. From the very beginning, we wanted this work to be informed by – and genuinely co-produced with – the families we support, our employees and the communities around us. Their voices have been at the heart of every step.

To understand where we needed to focus our efforts, it was crucial for us to learn what matters most to the people who experience our care every day. We asked families, employees and healthcare partners to share their priorities, the challenges they face, the gaps they see and the moments that truly make a difference. Their honesty and experiences guided us throughout.

We invited everyone to join us on the journey. Whether someone has known EACH for many years or just a few months, every perspective has helped us see what's working well – and where we can do more or do things differently. And whether people offered a little or a lot, their contributions have shaped a future where we can make more possible and reach further for everyone who needs us, long into the future.

This strategy sets out how we will grow, develop and deliver our care over the next five years – built with families, not just for families. Every piece of feedback has been invaluable. The insights, experiences and voices of those we support, and those we have yet to reach, have helped shape a strategy that is real, relevant and rooted in what people told us they need most.

To get to this point, we carried out wide-ranging engagement and analysed the themes that emerged. The strategy is both co-produced and evidence-based, bringing together the lived and learned experiences of families, the expertise of our employees and the perspectives of our local communities. We aligned this with prevalence data, research and national guidance to ensure our direction is informed, balanced and forward-looking.

Our approach provides authenticity, ensures accountability, builds confidence and gives us a clear direction. It also ensures consistency across our three sites and aligns what we do day-to-day with the wider healthcare landscape.

Importantly, this strategy strengthens our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion – ensuring this is reflected in our culture, training and ways of working. It also highlights the need to continue investing in community engagement, making sure we have the right resources in place to listen well and stay connected.

As we move forward to deliver the strategy's seven key commitments, co-production will remain central. It's essential that our development work continues to circle back to the voices of families and colleagues across the whole organisation, and beyond – and we recognise that meaningful change takes time; the evolution of our care will unfold over years, not weeks or months.

What you will see in the pages ahead represents the shared hopes, ideas and priorities of everyone who helped shape it. Together, we are setting the foundations for a future where EACH can make more possible and reach further for the children, young people and families who rely on us.

Helen Finlinson, Director of Care

Understanding the need

Every family deserves the chance to receive the care, support and understanding they need. By looking closely at evidence, lived experience and national guidance, we can see we need to do even more for children and families.

Since 2018, demand for children's hospices in the East of England has continued to rise, with a projected overall increase of 24% by 2030.[1]

Babies up to the age of one, then teenagers, remain our largest age groups.[1]

The greatest predicted need for our care is among children and families living in areas of high social deprivation and ethnically diverse communities.[1]

The number of child deaths remains stable, and children are living longer with complex conditions, meaning families need our support for longer.[2]

Around 50% of families who could benefit from EACH are not yet accessing our support.[3]

Almost a third of child deaths happen suddenly, outside a known palliative care pathway, meaning these families do not currently meet our criteria for bereavement support.[4]

[1] Fraser LK, Gibson-Smith D, Jarvis S. 'Make Every Child Count' Estimating current and future prevalence of children and young people with life-limiting conditions in the United Kingdom York, UK: University of York, 2020.

[2] National Child Mortality Database. Child Death Reviews Data: year ending 31 March 2024. November 2024.

[3] East of England Children's Palliative Care Managed Clinical Network Point Prevalence Annual Data Collection Report, EACH, 2025.

[4] National Child Mortality Database. Child Death Reviews Data: year ending 31 March 2024. November 2024.

Scan the QR code to watch our family films

External factors we considered when agreeing our strategic commitments included:

- **Development of the NHS 10-year plan and its ambition around:**
  - More care to take place out of hospital settings.
  - The optimisation of digital solutions.
  - A focus on prevention as well as treatment.
- **Ongoing work to develop a new palliative and end-of-life care national modern service framework.**
- **The new category framework of conditions for identifying which children may benefit from palliative care.**
- **Continued need for a robust, long-term sustainable statutory funding model for the hospice sector.**
- **Ongoing economic uncertainty, as highlighted by the Charities Aid Foundation's (CAF) UK Giving Report 2026, showing that:**
  - The total amount given to charities has fallen by 10% over the past decade, driven by lower average donations.
  - There are six million fewer donors compared to ten years ago.
  - Despite this, health and children's charities continue to receive the highest levels of charitable giving from the public.

The importance of co-production

The best services are shaped by the people who use them. Co-production brings families, young people, communities and staff together as equal partners to design care that truly reflects real lives and real needs.

- Working side-by-side to design and deliver the best care possible.
- Creating genuine partnership — not just asking for feedback.
- Building trust, shared ownership and stronger relationships.
- Making our services real, relevant and reflective of lived experience.
- Ensuring decisions are based on real needs, not assumptions.
- Improving outcomes by listening to what matters most to families.
- Creating a more inclusive, insight-led and responsive service.
- Rooting everything in lived experience: “Nothing about me, without me.”

Scan the QR code to read our family stories

The engagement that shaped our aims and commitments

Listening closely to families, communities and staff has helped shape our strategy. Together, we identified what we do well, where families need more, and the opportunities that will allow us to grow, strengthen and innovate.

Strengths to build on

- Compassionate, family-centred care grounded in empathy and advocacy.
- Truly seeing every child and family as individuals.
- High-quality care delivered by a resilient, dedicated workforce.
- Strong teamwork, flexibility and a willingness to innovate.
- Impactful groups, events and peer-support networks.
- A highly capable education team and a respected hospice library service.

The gaps and opportunities

We can see we need to do even more for children, young people and families.

- Offering wider and more consistent bereavement support.
- Improving the reliability and capacity of short breaks for families.
- Making better use of our buildings, hydrotherapy pools, volunteers and community-based options.
- Simplifying processes such as admissions, discharges, communication and meetings.
- Increasing efficiency through digital tools and automation.
- Growing and diversifying our workforce and volunteer support.
- Strengthening community reach, partnerships and hospital-team collaboration.
- Improving continuity for young people transitioning to adult services.
- Developing nationally recognised, income-generating education and children's hospice library services.
- Making more possible with our specialist play, therapies, activities and experiences.

Our aims

To make more possible

Efficiency, capacity, data, technology and collaboration.

By making the very best use of our people, buildings, data and technology, we can offer more care and support to more families, more often.

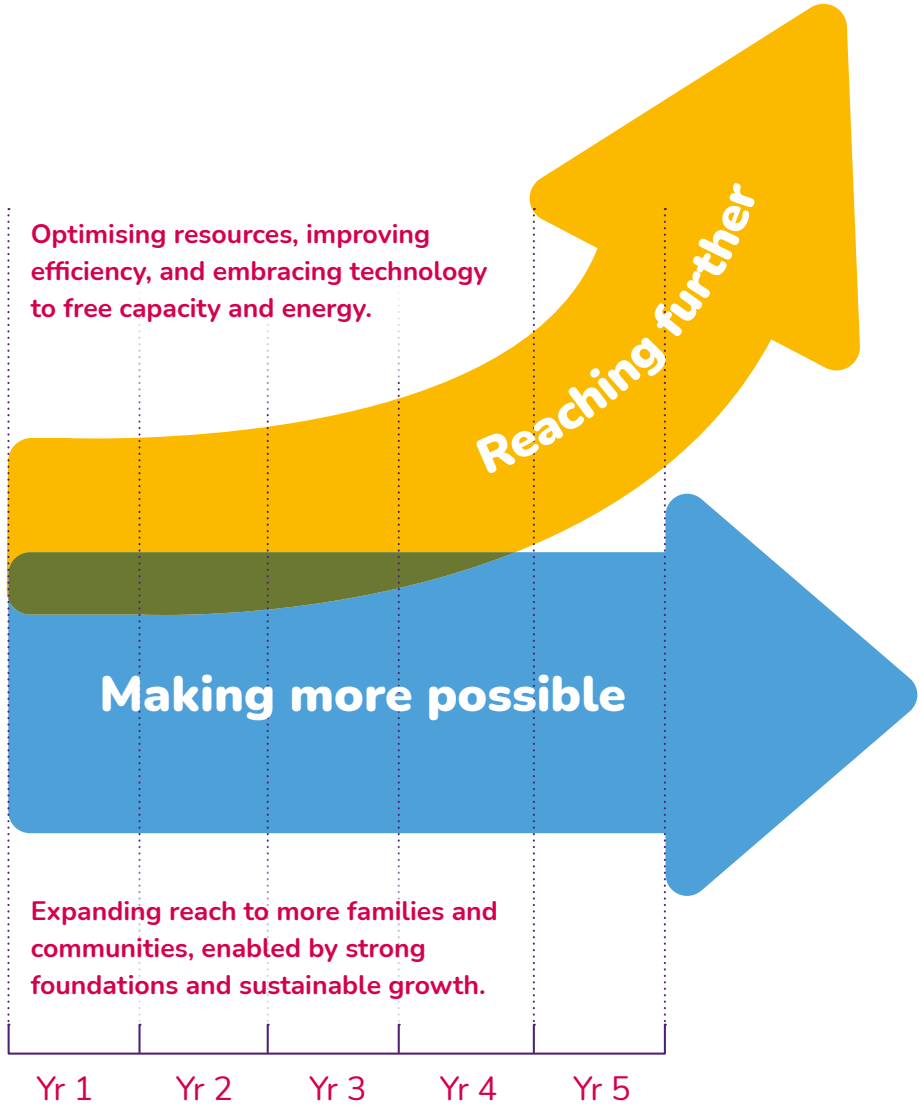
- Making the most of everything we have – people, spaces and resources.
- Maximising the care and support available to families.
- Running our buildings and facilities to their full potential.
- Transforming how we deliver care through smart use of digital tools and technology.

To reach further

Equity, access, impact and influence.

We want every family who needs us to feel seen, supported and able to access our care, wherever they live and whatever their background.

- Stepping out, growing and expanding our reach to more families.
- Reflecting community needs through fair and inclusive referrals and care activity.
- Connecting with families, professionals and communities to share, learn and improve.
- Playing a key role in shaping national and international children's palliative care.
- Expanding services and spreading excellent practice.



Blue arrow: Years 1–2: building strong foundations for future growth.

Gold arrow: Begins in Year 2, with outreach and growth accelerating in Years 3–4, supported by strong foundations.

We will make more possible with our resources

By using our time, energy, funding and facilities wisely so we can do even more for the children and families we support.

Using our workforce, processes, buildings and facilities as effectively as possible to increase reliability and capacity. Every resource we have is here for families – and using them well means offering more care, more often, to more people.

- Improving cost-effectiveness while protecting and enhancing the care we provide.
- Making full, everyday use of our hospice buildings for families, including expanding The Treehouse in Ipswich.
- Offering reliable, accessible short breaks that families can look forward to.
- Ensuring hydrotherapy pools are available and used daily.
- Championing the need for and importance of fair, consistent and sustainable statutory funding.

The Nook

The Treehouse

Milton

We will collaborate

By working closely with families, partners and our wider community so everyone receives joined-up, seamless support.

Strengthening partnerships with hospitals, community nursing, and neonatal and perinatal teams – building compassionate communities and avoiding duplication. Families thrive when services work together, making support smoother and more joined-up for everyone.

- Deepening connections with care partners to widen access and increase appropriate referrals.
- Enabling the EACH team to be present in acute hospitals to meet and engage with families.
- Ensuring perinatal and neonatal families can easily access our care and support.
- Working in partnership with hospital teams to support timely discharges back into the community or hospice care, particularly for children and young people with complex needs and/or long-term ventilation.
- Playing an active role in integrated neighbourhood teams to enable care to be delivered closer to home.
- Joining forces with others whenever it benefits families.
- Helping build compassionate communities by:
  - focusing on the strengths and assets of the wider community,
  - creating connection and understanding,
  - providing sustainable support networks,
  - and equipping communities to confidently support families and each other.

We will enhance care through technology

By using simple, helpful technology to make care easier, more connected and more personal for families.

Improving digital automation, systems and workflows so we can work efficiently and effectively. Technology should make life easier, and we will use simple, user-friendly tools that free up more time for care and connection.

- Making confident, data-informed decisions to improve services.
- Reducing time-consuming processes through automation and smart systems.
- Creating integrated digital tools that work together smoothly.
- Designing family-friendly solutions that make accessing support straightforward and stress free.

We will co-produce care

By shaping care with families and communities, listening to what matters most and planning support together.

Involving families and communities from the very beginning – not just in consultation. Children, young people and their families have invaluable lived experience, and by working as equal partners we can shape care that truly reflects what matters most.

- Co-producing care within a clear and supportive governance framework, including a dedicated EACH engagement group, and providing timely feedback.
- Working with communities who don't currently access our services to understand their needs and how we can expand our reach.
- Training our team to live the culture of 'Nothing about me, without me,' guided by real lived experience.
- Ensuring families' voices lead the way – shaping decisions, not simply approving them.

We will be inclusive

By welcoming every child, young person and family who needs our support, making sure no one is left out.

Reaching out and extending care to everyone who needs us – including families needing bereavement or transition support and those in under-served communities. Every family deserves equal access to support, and we will reach further so no child, sibling, parent or carer feels overlooked.

- Ensuring bereavement support is available to all families who need it.
- Supporting siblings up to age 18, even when their brother or sister has moved to adult services.
- Strengthening links with adult care services to close gaps and ensure smooth transitions.
- Reviewing our referral pathway to ensure eligibility criteria reflects the changing prevalence.
- Establishing local community connector roles at our hospices to build trusted, meaningful connections with communities.

We will enable belonging

By creating places where children, young people and families feel safe, valued and truly part of a community.

Expanding access to groups, peer-support, complementary therapies and full 'open-door' engagement. Belonging gives families strength, and we will create warm, welcoming spaces where everyone feels included, supported and connected.

- Offering fair and consistent groups and events across all three hospices.
- Ensuring peer-support opportunities for families for every community we serve.
- Expanding our 'open-door' offer with complementary therapies and peer support.
- Embedding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion into every aspect of care and support.

We will advance children's palliative care

By keeping improving so families receive the best, most compassionate support possible.

Building our research capability, advanced clinical roles and fair access to training, strengthening our impact locally and beyond. We want every family to benefit from the very best knowledge, skills and compassionate practice – wherever they live and whatever they face.

- Leading and sharing research that helps shape the future of children's palliative care.
- Developing advanced clinical practitioner roles to support multidisciplinary, non-medical-dependent service delivery.
- Delivering equitable and income-generating education opportunities across our communities.
- Growing a respected, nationally recognised income-generating children's hospice library service.

Reviewing and co-producing our next strategy

Evaluating our strategy - assessing progress, achievements and emerging needs to create our next strategy with families, employees and communities.

Doing more and expanding

Phasing our expansion - to reach further.

Building the foundation

Optimising everything we have - to make more possible.

Our commitments

1. We will make **more** possible with our resources.
2. We will **collaborate**.
3. We will enhance care through **technology**.
4. We will **co-produce** care.
5. We will be **inclusive**.
6. We will enable **belonging**.
7. We will **advance** children's palliative care.

Through this strategy, we promise:

- To put co-production at the heart of our care.
- To use our resources sustainably to meet families' needs.
- To reach more families who need our support.
- To work in partnership across hospitals and communities.
- To deliver equitable care and support across our region.
- To extend our impact for children, young people and families.
- To be ambitious in shaping the future of care.

Our five-year journey

A marathon, not a sprint – steady steps that take us further
Get ready, get steady, go... and go even further.

making more possible

reaching further together

East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH)

The Treehouse (Suffolk and Mid & North East Essex)
Milton (Cambridgeshire and West Essex)
The Nook (Norfolk)

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