



## Specification for recognition of learning considerations across programmes at Irish Hospice Foundation

### Background and Call Aims

#### Background

Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) engages in training and education to support its mission to work towards the best end-of life and bereavement care for all (See Appendix One for 2024 activity, in 2025 will have new programmes for facilitation and a new eLearning in Dying Well at Home).

Our training and education provision runs from basic to advanced level depending on the topic area and target audience. We consider levels of training in line with the 2014 *Irish Palliative Care Competence Framework* and our bereavement training and education is based on earlier documents including the 2011 *Shaping Bereavement Care* from the Scottish Department of Health, and the 2008 review of bereavement services in Ireland by Petrus Consulting, commissioned by the National Office for Suicide Prevention and the more recent Adult Bereavement Care Pyramid (2020).

Consistent with both the palliative care competence framework and the levels of palliative care as outlined in policy our training and education is based on the assumption that:

- **All** people require education and awareness about death and grieving
- **Some** people, because of their professional or community roles, require more advanced training to meet specific competencies and
- **A Few** people require specialized education because of their work and the complexity of the need they serve.

In addition to providing training and education, we are strong advocates for appropriate end-of-life and bereavement education to be incorporated into relevant undergraduate curricula for professionals in health, social care and psychosocial professions.

Finally, much of our training is supported by development programmes in healthcare and bereavement arenas (for example Hospice Friendly Hospitals, Caru, Dying Well at Home, Bereavement Development).

The design and delivery, current accreditation, quality considerations and cost models underpinning IHF training processes are given in Appendix Two.

## Strategic focus on accreditation and quality

IHF programmes operate across sectors – health, community and commercial. Our goal for recognition/accreditation/ validation is to ensure that our training and education are relevant to individual life-long learning, to organisational priorities for excellent care, particularly end-of-life and bereavement care and to national policies. We want to promote quality programmes which are transparent in construction and content and which are linked to visible impact as defined by a series of agreed parameters and metrics.

Accreditation can validate portions of individual learning which promote a lifelong learning approach where individuals can accumulate and demonstrate the worth of their formal learning. Accreditation or certification can also be applied to programmes or services which organisations engage in to achieve a quality mark of excellent practice.

In Ireland QQI sets out clear standards and practice for accreditation in the education and training sector. Other certification mechanisms include the National Standards Authority of Ireland, which include management standards for delivery of services.

<https://www.nsai.ie/about/> .

While the Health Services Executive commissions training, much of this is weighted towards QQI, stretching from level 5 to 9. Continuing Professional Development credits are awarded by various professional bodies including the Nursing and Midwifery Board, Irish Association for Social Workers, ICGP and RCPI.

Internationally, specific to death, dying and bereavement the American Association for Death Education (ADEC) offer ‘thanatology’ certification.

[https://www.adec.org/page/Earn\\_Certification](https://www.adec.org/page/Earn_Certification)

IHF is not a designated awarding body, nor QQI registered. Level 9 programmes are run through RCSI in association with Irish Hospice Foundation adhere to RCSI quality and academic standards.

IHF wish to undertake a strategic scoping exercise which allows us to consider the relative merits of a range of recognition of learning options. This exercise should include an assessment of the 'why' for accreditation in the Irish context and an overview of accreditation models. Any consideration of accreditation models should also consider issues of scalability, work processes and value for money. In scope the work should focus on healthcare; voluntary and management sectors to map onto IHF work in healthcare, bereavement and workplaces. The outcome of this work should set the foundations for future decision-making on accreditation at IHF and may lead to a more specific project outlining accreditation routes for individual courses, or suites of courses.

## Aims of this project

Aim 1: Analyse the strategic merits of accreditation in end of life and bereavement education and training

- Map the main policy trends and influences on education and training in end of life and bereavement training in Ireland, focussing on the role of accreditation.
- Outline accreditation models which could apply to end of life or bereavement training in healthcare, voluntary and management sectors.
- Conclude on the relative merits of accreditation and implications for an organisation such as IHF with respect to scalability, partnership and value for money.
- Prepare a report that can act as a basis for decision-making for a phase two project on accreditation of individual programmes

## Deliverables

- An analysis of where the demand for recognition of learning comes from in relevant sectors;
- An analysis of strategic choices and best training recognition options for IHF (e.g. .develop a function; engage in partnership)
- A framework contingency approach to training and education recognition based on levels of specialty (reflecting all, some, few levels of learning need and response)

## Timeline

We expect this work to commence in August 2025 and to be completed no later than mid-November 2025.

## Further information

Further information on IHF programmes is available here [www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

## Application process

Please send an application to [orla.keegan@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:orla.keegan@hospicefoundation.ie) detailing the following

- Approach to each requirement of the brief above
- Full costing of project
- Timeline for project
- An account of previous work you have conducted in relevant areas
- Two referees who can be contacted

An interview process may be employed with eligible candidates.

Submit applications by COB **Monday July 21<sup>st</sup> 2025**

## Criteria for assessment

Quality of approach outlined

Clarity

Educational integrity

Pragmatic considerations

Monitoring and project management

Value for Money

Previous experience

**Budget: maximum €5,000**

Appendix one: IHF training and education courses and courses in development 2024

EDCUATION AND TRAINING IHF to END OF YEAR 2024			
Education/ training rogramme	Level	Target (Oranisation)	Target (Work/community)
Final Journeys	1 ALL	Hospital	Health & support staff
Paediatric Final Journeys	1 ALL	Paediatric Hospitals & Wards	Health & support staff
Final Journeys Private Hospitals	2 ALL	Hospital	Health & support staff
Practical Language & Phrases for End-of-Life Conversations in a Hospital Setting (WS1)	2 SOME	Hospital	Senior Health staff (medical/nursing/AHP)
Practical Language & Phrases for End-of-Life Conversations in a Hospital Setting (WS2)	2 SOME	Hospital	Medical Interns
Caru Workshop 1	2 ALL	Nursing Homes	CNM, nurses, HCAs, household, catering, admin, management, multitask attendants, chaplaincy, HSCP - all nursing home staff; direct care staff and support staff
Caru Workshop 2	2 ALL	Nursing Homes	AS ABOVE
Caru Workshop 3	2 ALL	Nursing Homes	As above
Caru Workshop 4	2 ALL	Nursing Homes	As above
Community bereavment talk	1. ALL	Community	General Public
Grief in the Workplace employee talk	1. ALL	Work settings	all employees
Grief in the Workplace employee workshop	1. ALL	Work settings	all employees
Grief in the Workplace managers' workshop	2. SOME	Work settings	Managers
Grief in the Workplace HR workshop	3. FEW	Work settings	HR Managers
17 Bereavement Workshops	2. SOME	Health/ Social Care/ Community	Various - mental helath, community development, educaiton, helathcare professionals

Level 2 Bereavement Providers eLearning <b>PILOT</b>	2.SOME	Community/ Voluntary/Social/ Health	Bereavement volunteers, some nurses, clinicians
Counselling / psychotherapy	3. FEW	Primary Care	Psychotherapists & Counsellors
Counselling / psychotherapy	3. FEW	Health/ Social Care/ Community	Psychotherapists & Counsellors
Prof Cert Children & Loss	3. FEW	Health/ Social Care/ Community	Childcare Professions
MSc Loss & Bereavement/ Clinical Practice Year 1	3. FEW	Health/ Social Care/ Community	Mental health professions; helath/ social care community
MSc Loss & Bereavement/ Clinical PracticeYear 2	3. FEW	Health/ Social Care/ Community	Mental health professions; helath/ social care community
Men's shed	1. ALL	Public	Public
Arts, Grief, and Loss: Skills & Info Exchange	2.SOME	Community/ Health / Arts	Mental health professionals, artists, community development
Arts & Culture - Bereavement & Grief	2.SOME	Community/ Health / Arts	Mental health professionals, artists, community development

#### New offerings in 2025

- Dying Well at Home eLearning members of the public and professional providing care in the home
- Think Ahead workshops
- Level 1 workshops on childhood bereavement for Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSCs)
- Undergrad End Of Life communication skills workshop

## APPENDIX TWO

### Irish Hospice Foundation training and education activities

#### Design and Delivery

Design and delivery of IHF courses, is based on adult learning principles. Recently designed or revised courses follow a structured development and design process which identifies the rationale / case for the course, the target audience, the learning needs identified and the course objectives - before going on to develop specific learning outcomes and learning strategies. [Planning a Course IHF\[Template\].docx](#)

Training is delivered in online, face to face, blended and eLearning formats. We also use a *Train the Trainers* system in some programmes. We host our eLearning courses on our own Learning Management System (LMS).

True to our mission, much of our training is available only as part of a wider end-of-life or bereavement care capacity-building initiative; i.e. attendance at the training is organizationally sponsored aiming to develop critical mass and skill development across the setting. For example:

- Culture change programmes such as Hospice Friendly Hospitals incorporate Final Journeys training, for all HSE employees
- Quality Improvement programmes such as CARU, which engages in end of life and bereavement care improvement in nursing homes
- Bereavement Care eLearning for bereavement support organisation staff or volunteers providing bereavement care at Level 2
- Specialized grief psychotherapy training for national counselling services
- Grief in the workplace provides training for employees, managers and HR professionals

In addition to organizational training programmes interested individuals attend our bereavement and loss workshop training.

Our RCSI postgraduate Level 9 *MSc in Loss & Bereavement* and Professional Certificate in Children & Loss are attended by a mixture of sponsored and self-funded participants. These are QQI Level 9 courses accredited through RCSI and NUI.

#### Accreditation

Many of IHF's education & training courses are not currently accredited. Those that are, follow one of two channels: CPD or for postgraduate education, QQI through RCSI.

#### Professional Accreditation as CPD

Healthcare training programmes and relevant bereavement workshops are submitted to the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) for review, requesting Category 1 accreditation. Accreditation lasts for a period of 3 years.

Certificates of attendance are issued following training, for professions who self-declare their CPD (eg social workers for Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW) and counsellors psychotherapists for the Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (IACP).

An application is in progress for CPD accreditation from the Royal College of Physicians (RCPI), for the new *Practical Language & Phrases* course aimed at junior doctors.

## QQI Accreditation

Our postgraduate programmes are accredited as Level 9 programmes under the National Qualification Framework. Each programme was reviewed through the Academic Qualifications Committee at RCSI; the Academic Council; the RCSI Medical and Health Sciences Board and the NUI Senate to determine that the Learning outcomes and proposed modular structure, delivery modes, assessment and curriculum met the appropriate knowledge, skills, etc for a Level 9 education programme.

The rationale for developing these programmes to this level rests with the established lack of formal education in undergraduate curricula and the requirement for specialization in bereavement in both clinical and non-clinical spheres.

## *Note on Licensing*

Some courses, eg Final Journeys are provided 'under license' to the HSE. This is seen as a way of ensuring the training is delivered as intended, in order to meet the agreed learning outcomes. Trainers who are trained in programme delivery, must agree to run it as intended.

## Quality

Postgraduate courses are run in association with the RCSI and as such follow the quality procedures and processes outlined for all postgraduate courses in that university. Academic and teaching development supports & guidance, are provided through IHF representation on the Graduate School of Health Management Teaching and Learning Committee and Academic Committee. Standardization of postgraduate courses is guided by the Postgraduate Programme Managers Committee at RCSI where IHF is represented.

Academic quality is supported by accepted procedures including moderation, external examiner appointment and Examination Boards hosted at RCSI and NUI.

In terms of other IHF courses, and as noted above, development of courses includes an explicit approach intended to assure educational quality. All courses are evaluated using a template based on the Kirkpatrick Model, though to date only the *Reaction* and *Learning* levels (Levels 1&2 of 4), have been prioritized.



During 2025 we are developing standardized train the trainers approaches, beginning with those training and information sessions aimed at the public through the Think Ahead and Grief in the Workplace programme.

We are working towards regular standardized reviews for all courses, incorporating learner feedback, environmental changes, policy changes etc. Given this variety an organization-wide policy for education and training is required.

## Cost Models

IHF courses are funded in a range of different ways.

- Commissioned through SLA with statutory body, to cover costs
- Fee-paying commercial, to cover costs with any surplus reinvested
- Grant funding and fundraised sponsorship

## References

Petrus Consulting, Bates, U., Jordan, N., Malone, K., Monahan, E., O'Connor, S., & Tiernan, E. (2008). *Review of General Bereavement Support and Specific Services Available Following Suicide Bereavement*. Dublin: National Office for Suicide Prevention.

Dept of Health (2024) *National Adult Palliative care Policy* Dublin: Dep of Health

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