



## Media Release

**Date:** 12 May 2020

### **Dying Matters Week – 11 to 17 May 2020**

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This week is 'Dying Matters Awareness Week', a national initiative with the aim to help people talk more openly about dying, death and bereavement, and to make plans for the end of life which we have marked in Guernsey for the last seven years.

This year the theme for the week is 'Let's talk about it'.

Due to the restrictions of COVID-19, arrangements for Dying Matters Week are slightly different to other years. This year, the following resources have been shared to promote the week locally:

- The document 'Remembering in love' has been reproduced with the kind permission of St Margaret's Hospice to provide support for those that cannot attend a funeral. It may help with reflecting on and celebrating the life of a loved one offering ideas for readings, poems and prayers to use at home on the day of a funeral you can't attend.
- The Shared Hearts Project will be launched reaching out to our community to knit a pair of hearts which can connect families where a loved one dies in our care without family present. The hearts can act as a bond through separation. Whilst particularly relevant as HSC and the community contend with COVID-19, this project will continue as services return to business as usual in the coming months.
- BBC Radio Guernsey's 'Guidelines' will be taken over for a week with personal stories of experiencing bereavement, spoken by actors.

The 'Remembering in love' and Shared Heart Project documents are available to download from <https://covid19.gov.gg/support/loss>.

Linda Le Vasseur, Hospital Chaplain said:

'We know it is hard for people to talk about dying and death despite it being the one certainty in life.'

For people to talk about their wishes as they come to the end of their lives, they need someone to listen. We owe it to the people we love to listen to their thoughts on death, grief and funerals in order that we can support their wishes when the time comes.'

HSC works in partnership with Guernsey Bereavement Services (GBS) who have been working since the start of the COVID-19 crisis to reshape its services so that it can continue to provide counselling, information and advice at this incredibly difficult time.

GBS Manager Clara Le Vallee explains:

"I would encourage anyone who is experiencing loss and needs help to understand and manage their feelings to get in touch with us now to chat it through and see how we can help. The service is completely confidential and tailored to each individual."

**Ends**