

Media release – 10 September 2024

St Christopher's Hospice chooses Ashtons for medicines supply and pharmacy services

The 'first modern hospice' will benefit from expert medicines review and audit to support its commitment to world-class palliative and end of life care

St Christopher's Hospice has chosen Ashtons to provide it with medicines and pharmacy services in support of its commitment to offer world class palliative and end of life care to everyone who needs it.

St Christopher's, which is widely recognised as the first, modern hospice, used to be supported for pharmaceutical services by an NHS trust. The move to Ashtons will ensure that it can continue to source the medications that it needs while accessing specialist audit, advice and support.

Ashtons will supply a pharmacist and a pharmacist technician five-days per week and back this up with its 365-day-a-year out-of-hours information service.

Amanda Mayo, care director at St Christopher's, said: "The supply and regulation of appropriate medications is an important issue for hospices.

"Our patients can be on complex drug regimes that change rapidly as their conditions change, so our staff need to know that they can draw on expert pharmacy advice when they need it.

"By working with Ashtons, we can be confident of securing the resilient medicines supply and pharmacy service that we need. We are already working closely with Ashtons and feel confident that their staff will soon be effectively embedded in our team."

St Christopher's Hospice was founded by Dame Cicely Saunders in 1967 and now provides care and support for people across the five London boroughs of Bromley, Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham, and Southwark.

It operates three wards at its base in Sydenham and an extensive range of day care services, including clinical care and creative and complementary therapies. It is also committed to education and research.

Lesley Spencer, palliative care ambassador for Ashtons, said: "It is a privilege for Ashtons to be able to work with this world-famous hospice in London.

"We will be delivering a more resilient service, by making sure they have access to the medicines they need and having more trained staff in place to advise on all aspects of medicines management.

"Ashtons is committed to working in palliative care, so this is also a great opportunity to upskill our pharmacists and spread expertise across our team."

Ashtons has its roots in a community pharmacy established in Brighton in 1995. Over 40 years, it has expanded to offer pharmacy services to care homes, mental health hospitals, and hospices.

It now has a team of 60 clinical pharmacists who provide audit and advice services to healthcare organisations, supported from its head office in Brighton. Its services comprise: medicines supply, medication review, audit and regulatory compliance, and e-learning and training.

Ashtons also has a strong commitment to digital. Customers can access its services through a Virtual Hub while visiting pharmacists report back through Ashton's Live View, so organisations can see audit information and advice live and in real-time.

Ashtons also provides the e-Works electronic prescribing and medicines administration system to hospices, care homes, mental health facilities and other organisations that need a modern, cloud-based, EPMA.

Karen Higlett, Ashtons lead pharmacist, palliative care, said: “We are looking forward to working with St Christopher’s to make sure they get the most out of the holistic package of pharmacy services that we offer.

“We expect to be advising on medicines reconciliation, attending ward handover meetings, supporting discharge, advising on policies, audit and regulatory compliance, and helping staff to develop their own skills.

“It’s all about working with the St Christopher’s team, to make sure they can make the best and safest use of medicines to support the people in their care.”

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About Ashtons

Ashtons is a leading provider of bespoke digital-first medicines management solutions, dedicated to revolutionising healthcare delivery through innovative digital solutions. Ashtons' range of specialist services and software solutions has been continually refined since 1995. Our services are delivered nationwide by our team of over 60 clinical pharmacists, supported by our experienced support team.