



End of life care feedback
May – July 2025

healthwatch
Isle of Wight

Content

P 3 – 5	Introduction
P 6	Timeline
P 7 – 18	What people told us
P 19 – 20	Conclusion
P 21	Next steps



Introduction

Introduction

Healthwatch Isle of Wight is your local health and social care champion.

We ensure that NHS leaders and decision-makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



We regularly collect feedback about health and social care services to help drive improvements.

In May, we began receiving a significant amount of feedback from people concerned about the potential impact of funding cuts to Mountbatten Isle of Wight. Due to the high volume of responses, we carried out a thematic review, the findings of which are presented in this report.

To ensure these concerns were heard, we also convened a meeting with commissioners from the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board. At this meeting, we shared anonymised feedback and highlighted the key issues raised by the Isle of Wight community.

Mountbatten Isle of Wight

Mountbatten Isle of Wight is a charity that provides specialist support for people with life-limiting illnesses and their families.

They offer the following services to Island residents:

- **Palliative and end of life care at home** – 24/7 coordination centre, specialist multidisciplinary care and support, 24/7 rapid response nursing and domiciliary personal care at end of life.
- **John Cheverton Centre** – provides specialist clinics, self-help, rehabilitation, therapies, groups and social support to live well in the last years.
- **Family & Bereavement Support** – Provides counselling and support for relatives, carers and children coping with loss.
- **Inpatient care** – 16 bed specialist inpatient care providing 24/7 care and admissions.
- **Whole Island lymphoedema service.**
- **Education & Training** – Works with health and social care professionals across the Isle of Wight providing expert education and training to improve palliative and end of life care knowledge.
- **Fundraising & Volunteering** – Runs local charity shops and fundraises 70% of funding to sustain its services.



Mountbatten Isle of Wight

Timeline:



May 25: It was made public that Mountbatten IOW's funding would be reduced by £527,000 this autumn and a further disinvestment of £1.4 million was planned for the 2026/7 financial year.



May 25: we began hearing from people who were concerned about funding cuts to Mountbatten services. People contacted us via letters, email, social media, telephone, via our online webform and through face to face engagement.



July 25: we met with Hampshire & IOW commissioners to highlight people's experiences and share people's concerns about the planned funding cuts.



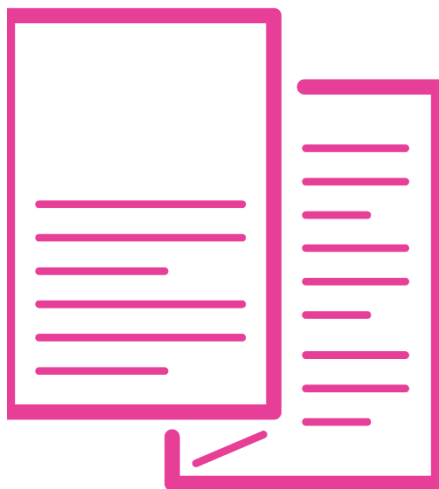
July 25: At the end of this month, it was announced that the proposed funding cuts would not be implemented this autumn and negotiations are ongoing regarding the funding for next year.



Impact
Full

What people told us

How people contacted us



We would like to thank the 188 people across the Isle of Wight who shared their end of life care feedback with us.

Method of contact	Number of people
Email	93
Social media	55
Letter	23
Face to face	9
Webform	8

Between May and July 25, we received 984 pieces of feedback. 19% was related to end of life care services.

Snapshot of themes

Personal testimonies – Many people shared their moving stories of how Mountbatten had provided outstanding care and support for their friends, families and for themselves.

Shock and distress – Many people shared how news of the funding cuts to Mountbatten Isle of Wight had affected them, with some expressing deep anxiety about what the future holds for their care.

Criticism of lack of understanding of the 'Island factor' – significant amount of feedback from people concerned that consideration was not being given to our 'special circumstances'

Recognition of additional services – The breadth of services provided by Mountbatten—most of them delivered directly in the community—is widely acknowledged and deeply valued by local people.





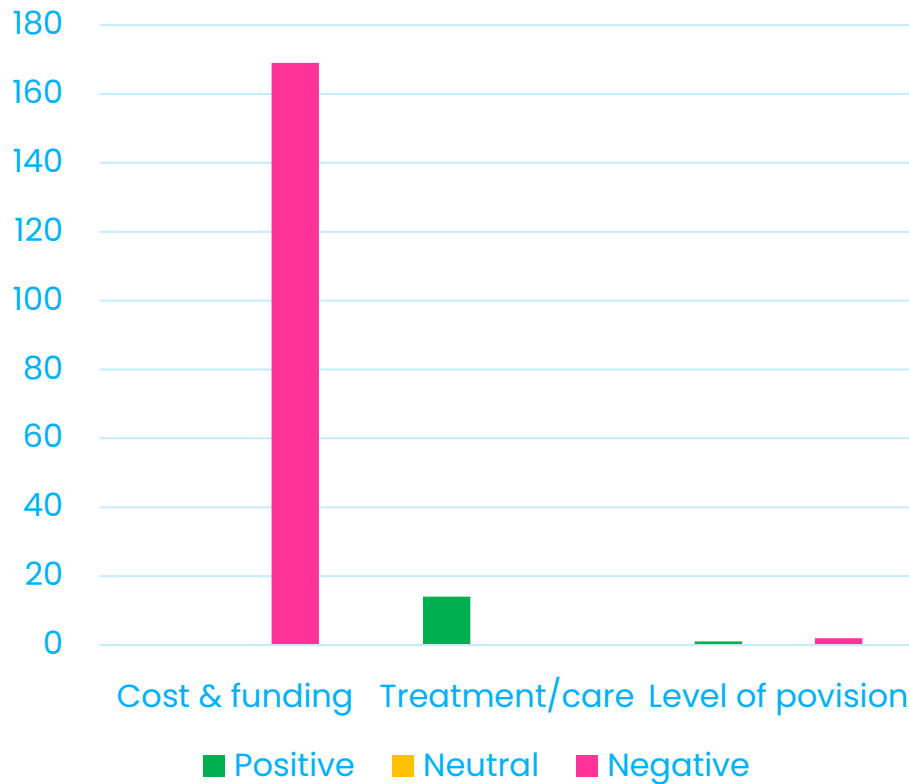
Snapshot of themes

- **Lack of engagement** –A lack of engagement with Mountbatten and the wider Isle of Wight community has been highlighted as a cause for concern, with many Islanders feeling their voices have not been heard.
- **Impact on others services** –People told us they are concerned about the impact on other services, such as GP services, ED and the ambulance service, should funding to Mountbatten be reduced.
- **Elderly population being overlooked** – Concerns were raised about the demographic makeup of the Island and in particular, the needs of older people.

“All being well, I intend to live the rest of my life on the Isle of Wight and I truly hope that if I or anyone I care about ever needs the services of Mountbatten, that it will still be here and able to respond. People are dying longer over a much more protracted period of time and our local hospital is ill-equipped to manage the potential tsunami coming towards us.”

Main feedback themes

Primary feedback themes



169 of the 188 people who contacted us, were most concerned about the lack of funding for Mountbatten and the impact this would have on Island residents.

"I have stage 4 secondary lung cancer. This is devastating news."

Many people also shared personal stories about the positive care and support they, or their family, friends, and neighbours, had received at Mountbatten.

Personal testimonies

63 people shared their personal experiences of Mountbatten, with many describing the care and support they had received:

“When my husband was diagnosed with MND it was the hospice and what they offered which was so very important to us. The respite opportunity, the physio, the opportunity to see a doctor, the ability to discuss future needs...the amazing home care teams I could go on but none of these facilities were offered anywhere else.”

“I sadly speak from personal experience of Mountbatten as in March 2020 my beloved Husband died at the Hospice following a brutal cancer diagnosis.

It was only when Mountbatten, and their palliative care expertise, were involved that his pain was finally managed. The NHS did their best, but the difference in care was like night and day.”

“ Nobody wants to go through what I have been through but the care and compassion shown by Mountbatten's staff and volunteers made and continue to make that never-ending journey bearable.”

Shock and distress

119 People described the range of emotions they felt when hearing the news of the planned funding cuts. Several people commented that they have a terminal illness and are now very concerned about their future care, particularly at the end of their lives:

“I am devastated to see that the funding for our incredible Hospice is being significantly reduced.

My Son passed away there at just 33 years old. The Hospice looked after him as one of their own and allowed him, his wife and (children) to make some precious memories all whilst being supported.”

“I am currently being treated for terminal cancer and know that at some time I may need the support of Mountbatten. Knowing what an amazing facility it is and the level of care and commitment from all the staff has given me comfort to know when my time comes I will be well cared for. I am now frightened that this facility, as we know it, will deteriorate and I will end up dying in some soulless hospital ward.”

The 'Island factor'

People told us how they felt they were already disadvantaged by living on an Island:

"This decision disproportionately affects Isle of Wight residents. The proposed funding model doesn't take into consideration how the cuts will affect a demographic which already has less access to healthcare overall."

"There are many reasons why the island needs this service more than other areas of the country. The Isle of Wight has an increasing aging population compared with Hampshire and the need for end of life services is naturally higher. Islanders deserve to have a good death, if they want to in their own home, supported by loved ones and trained health professionals. These cuts are being put through on the principle of fairness and equity - fairness is not about providing everyone with the same, it is about providing resources where there is most need."

"It's not like any other hospice is easy to access for those of us who live here. We have no other option, and to withdraw funding from such an essential service and valuable community service is callous and disrespectful.."

Recognition of additional services

28 people mentioned the range of services that Mountbatten offer within their feedback, particularly valuing the services offered within people's own homes and the counselling service which is available to all Island residents:

"I attend the lympoedma clinic there and it's a life saver."

"As (relative) has had MS for over 40 years, its become a much needed time at hospice/day centre. It is a lifeline for us both as it is so many other people."

"To receive a terminal cancer diagnosis is devastating. We all struggled to compute it and then we had to try to come to terms with it. If Mountbatten IW hadn't been there for us, I really don't know how we all would have coped. Not only were they there providing nursing care for my husband, first at home and then latterly in-house they also supported me and our children during this dreadful time."

"Their services for young people go far and beyond to enable youngsters and their families to enjoy their last moments together. Their art therapy sessions and art related activities provide a wonderfully supportive environment for those suffering from cancer."

Lack of engagement

People raised concerns about a lack of consultation and engagement with local communities, expressing that they did not feel their voices were being heard:

“This decision, made without meaningful consultation or engagement with the hospice, threatens the future of a facility that is not only essential but irreplaceable for Islanders.”

“We are often as an island forgotten or neglected because we are cut off from the mainland.”

“What consultation has there been, not just with the hospice over the effect this will have, but with the very community which will suffer the devastating consequences?”

“Clearly no thought or respect has been given to us as a community.”

“Removing this funding is not just cruel, it’s dangerous. This cannot be allowed to happen. The ICB must listen to the people this will impact most. We need this hospice.”

Impact on other services

Concerns were raised that cutting Mountbatten's funding could place additional strain on other services. Many felt that GP practices and hospitals, already under immense pressure, would struggle to cope with any further demand.

"This decision will have devastating consequences. Families in crisis will be left without the 24/7 support they rely on. St Mary's Hospital, already overwhelmed and under-resourced, cannot absorb the additional pressure."

"What on earth is going to happen if the Hospice cannot continue. The NHS is stretched beyond belief and would not be able to offer the same end of life care and support for the families of those suffering. It would be ridiculous to expect people to use mainland facilities."

"Apart from the distress it will cause to those who are being cared for by the hospice, this will place a huge extra burden on the NHS and the Council who will have to take up the shortfall."

"This decision will have devastating consequences. Families in crisis will be left without the 24/7 support they rely on. St Mary's Hospital, already overwhelmed and under-resourced, cannot absorb the additional pressure."

Older population being overlooked.

People highlighted the Island's changing demographics, noting the growing older population and the resulting increased need for specialist end-of-life care.

"The Island has a higher proportion of cancer victims than mainland UK and 27.8% of the local population is aged 65+ (significantly higher than the 18.2% of residents in England). It is well known that cancer is a disease more common in older populations with incidences rising with age, meaning a hospice is more needed here, not less."

"We have an ageing population, many with complex pain needs... they should be ashamed."

"The hospice does great outreach work in the community, we can't forget about our older population."



Douglas Bader
Rehabilitation Centre

Conclusion

Conclusion

The proposed funding cuts to Mountbatten Hospice generated a strong and emotive response from the Isle of Wight community.

People described Mountbatten not only as a palliative care provider but as an essential lifeline. They highlighted the organisation's critical role in end-of-life care, specialist clinics, counselling, family support, and wider emotional wellbeing services.

Concerns were raised about the sustainability of Mountbatten under reduced funding, with particular anxiety expressed by those living with a terminal diagnosis.

In addition, people noted the potential wider system impacts should Mountbatten be required to scale back its services, including increased pressure on GP practices and St Mary's Hospital.

Next Steps

We plan to follow up this thematic report:

- We have scheduled a meeting with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board commissioners in early September to share feedback, outline people's concerns, and seek an update on funding for the next financial year.
- We will continue to represent and highlight people's views and experiences, and have requested that commissioners provide a communication and engagement plan to set out how they will listen to and respond to local feedback.



For more information

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