

Marie Curie has a serious message for the First Minister

A welcome message signed by more than 1,400 Scots has been delivered to the new First Minister, Humza Yousaf asking for the best possible end of life experience for all.

The end of life charity, Marie Curie, organised the delivery of the message to Bute House. Marie Curie provided care and support for 8,600 people in Scotland last year. The demand for the right care support and guidance for people who are terminally ill, as well as their families and carers, is growing.

Without urgent change the charity believes the people will die without full access to support. The charity's research shows that 95% of all those who die in Scotland may need palliative care by 2040. More than 60,000 people are predicted to die with a terminal condition.

Those who have been helped by Marie Curie included Hayley Smith's husband Matt.

Matt was diagnosed with stage four glioblastoma in July 2016 when he was just 28 years old. In October 2020, Matt was told he had one year to live. Before being referred to Marie Curie, Hayley was struggling to care for Matt on her own. She remembers "falling apart every day."

Hayley, 31, from Stepps, said: "I'd gone a whole year of Matt being very ill with no support. I was basically his full-time carer, had to shower him and everything, and was doing all the cooking, all the cleaning, still working in between. I had absolutely no support.

"Caring for Matt was exhausting mentally as well as physically. He used to have these seizures and I was constantly terrified that he was going to get hurt.

"But in July 2021, Marie Curie stepped in and I went from doing everything alone to having all this support.

"The Marie Curie Nurses and Healthcare Assistants really helped Matt keep his dignity. He had the 7-day service for a week before we got a call saying that there was a bed available at the Marie Curie hospice in Edinburgh.

"Seeing Matt in pain and being able to press a buzzer and have a nurse come through and give him medication straight away was invaluable. Having that instant care made all the difference towards the end of Matt's life.

"Marie Curie made the whole process just weirdly manageable. It sounds strange, but a hospice is like a good death, that's definitely what Matt got."

Amy Dalrymple, Associate Director of Policy and Public Affairs at Marie Curie Scotland, said: "Marie Curie welcomes Humza Yousaf MSP to his new post, and looks forward to working closely with the new First Minister to provide vital support and care for people living with terminal illness and their families and carers across Scotland.

"The First Minister's support is needed now more than ever, as terminally ill people are dying without the care they need. Marie Curie urges the First Minister to ensure equitable access to palliative care, and to commit to providing tailored physical, emotional and financial support for carers.

“Marie Curie believes that Scotland should be a place where dying, death and bereavement are talked about openly to support a better end of life for all; the new First Minister can be instrumental in delivering this much-needed change.”



More than 1400 of Scots have signed a welcome message to the new First Minister, Humza Yousaf MSP, asking him to ensure that people affected by dying, death and bereavement in Scotland have the best possible end of life experience including Hayley Smith. (Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY)



More than 1400 of Scots have signed a welcome message to the new First Minister, Humza Yousaf MSP, asking him to ensure that people affected by dying, death and bereavement in Scotland have the best possible end of life experience. Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY



The message was signed by Hayley Smith, whose husband Matt was cared for by Marie Curie Nurses at home, and at the Edinburgh hospice. Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY