



buying my mum new nighties, and the morning she died they put a new nightie on her. I could hear them talking to her, saying 'Look Bea, your daughter's bought you another new nightie!' That morning they nursed her and cleaned her, and then they went. Within two hours of them going, she had died. So I phoned the team and they took charge of everything. They sent the nurses back, and they stayed with me for quite a long time. **They sorted Mum out and I felt like I was the only one that was important to them at the time. That was a huge comfort to me.** There was no rushing, there was no 'we've got to move on to another patient'. They made sure that I was ok before they even considered leaving."

"I don't know how to thank Phyllis Tuckwell. The biggest message I have is to not be frightened about Hospice Care. Nobody's going to take anything away from you, nobody's going to say they're in charge - they're just going to help you through a very difficult situation and be there for you. When the doctor first came out to see us, I thought that Mum only had a couple of weeks left, but she went on for another eight weeks. I put that down to the care those nurses gave her, that I got those extra weeks with her that I maybe wouldn't have had otherwise. They are such special people. Three of them came to my mum's funeral and I feel very lucky that they found the time to do that. As much as they were there for my mum, they were also there for me. They were there to make my mum's life better for the short period of time she had left, but they made sure that they focussed on me too, and they still focus on me a year down the line. I've been to a few services at the Hospice and I've cried and cried, but I've always had a comforting hand find my hand. **They're there for you, they know what you're going through.** I get my strength now by coming and saying hello to the nurses. It's comforting, knowing that they still remember me and still think of my mum."

We are privileged to care for people like Beatrice and her family, at probably the most difficult time in their lives, but we can only do this with the generosity of our local community.

We have to raise over £20,000 every day in order to provide care, free of charge, to our patients and their relatives.

For further information about how to support Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care, contact our Fundraising team on:

**01252 729446**  
**support@pth.org.uk**

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Our patients are inspiring...

**"They treated her like one of their own."**



### **Beatrice and Sue's Story**

Receiving care from our Hospice Care at Home team.

**Phyllis Tuckwell**<sup>®</sup>  
Hospice Care  
...because every day is precious

# Beatrice and Sue's Story



**Sue had been nursing her mum Beatrice for five years when things finally got too much for her and she needed some help.**

*"Mum had got progressively worse in quite a short space of time," says Sue. "She had breast cancer, dementia, osteoporosis and was double incontinent. She*

*couldn't walk anywhere on her own. I was almost having to carry her to the bathroom to clean her, and to the bedroom. Once she had become bed-bound it was very difficult for me to care for her on my own. I couldn't nurse her in the way she needed to be nursed. I'd looked after her for five and a half years; I felt that I should have managed. But there comes a point when you just can't do it on your own anymore."*

Sue phoned her mum's doctor, who came out to see her. *"She said it was time for us to get some help,"* says Sue. *"Within a day the Phyllis Tuckwell nurses turned up, and from then on **they were my angels, and my mum's angels.**"*

Beatrice was cared for by Phyllis Tuckwell's Hospice Care at Home (HCAH) nurses, who visit patients who have chosen to remain at home in the last weeks of their life. They provide compassionate nursing care for patients and offer emotional support to their relatives, too.

*"Mum always wanted to stay at home,"* says Sue. *"She never wanted to go into a home or a hospital. She would hold my hand and say 'I don't want to go anywhere'. Even though she had dementia, she knew she was in her own home, she knew where she was. She'd say to me 'Sue, don't let me go.' So I promised her that I would look after her at home. But when the nurses started visiting, I was worried that they might not allow me to keep her at home, but it was fine. **The nurses wanted Mum to stay where she was happiest and they did everything they could to make sure she could stay there.** I was able to keep my promise – but only because of them. Without them I don't know what would have happened.*

*Because of them, I could say 'Mum, it's ok, you're not going anywhere because the nurses are coming here'.*

*"They visited twice a day,"* continues Sue. *"When they first arrived I was very defensive, because I wanted to care for Mum myself, but they couldn't have done enough to reassure me. They knew what I was going through. They spent a few hours with me, telling me what to expect and not to feel pushed out, because I didn't want to feel pushed out, I wanted to still be part of my mum's care."*

**"When they came, there was no rush, there was no time limit.** They used to turn up and I would go and sit in the lounge and read, while they nursed my mum. They used to love coming to see her; even in her condition she could still make them laugh. There was a nurse called Pat and she always had cold hands, and my mum would say to her 'You've got cold hands!', and Pat would call out to me 'Sue, I'm getting told off again!' There was always that joviality. When the door went in the morning, we used to say 'our angels are here', and I do feel strongly that's what they were. **I knew the care that they were going to give to my mum was going to be second to none.** They loved her, they cuddled her, they treated her like one of their own, and they did the same to me. They were never short of a hug. **They took all my concerns away.**"

*"Before they started coming I'd had a lot of anxiety. I used to get a heavy feeling in my chest every time I came to nurse my mum, because I wanted her to get better but I knew I couldn't get her better. It was the stress of caring for her, trying to keep her in her own home, and constantly thinking about how I was going to get through the next day. But one morning, two or three days after the nurses had started visiting, I drove to Mum's house and for the first time in a long time I didn't have that heavy feeling in my chest. I knew it was because I'd made the right decision and the right people were looking after her. **I couldn't have wished for anything better.** And although they were there to nurse my mum, they were there for me as well. When they arrived each day, the first thing they did was ask if I was alright and how the night had been. I never once felt that they were in a hurry or that I was a burden to them. I remember them saying that they were going to give*

*me back the quality of time with my mum that I needed, that I hadn't had for a long time, because the time I had spent with her I had just been nursing her constantly. And I did get that time back. They took all of that pressure away, so I could feed my mum without any worries, do her tidying and dusting, and sit and have a cup of tea with her. I always thought I could cope on my own but, as soon as the nurses started visiting, I realised I couldn't do it without this extra help."*

Sue was still involved in Beatrice's care. *"In the mornings, I would give Mum her medication before the nurses arrived,"* explains Sue. *"That way she'd had it in plenty of time and wasn't in any pain when they arrived, which meant that they could see to her straight away. We worked together. It made me feel that I was still helping her; it made me feel important. Even though I couldn't do the hands-on nursing anymore, I was still part of it."*

*"Mum loved being at home. We got her a hospital bed and she was so comfortable. I knew she felt safe there, because she slept so well. She loved having photos of the family all around her, but because she was bedbound she wasn't going in her lounge or dining room anymore, and that was where her memories were. So I brought all of her photos into her bedroom. The nurses were laughing, because I put holes everywhere! I filled the whole bedroom wall with photos. The nurses loved looking at them too, which was really important to me because **I felt like they were part of my family.**"*

As well as visiting her twice a day, the HCAH nurses referred Beatrice to Phyllis Tuckwell's Patient & Family Support team, who arranged for carers to visit her around midday each day, to help. *"I didn't need to do anything,"* says Sue. *"The next thing I knew, they were there!"*

As Beatrice became more poorly, our nurses suggested to Sue that a night nurse sit with Beatrice during the night a couple of times, to respond to any care needs which she may have. This service is sometimes offered when a patient is very ill, usually in the last days of life.

*"On the morning that Mum died, the nurses came as usual,"* says Sue. *"I remember hearing them laughing with her. I used to hear that a lot. I would be sitting in the lounge reading a book, and I would hear them. I was always*