



Demelza
Hospice Care for Children

Bereavement Suite

APPEAL

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a bereavement suite?

A bereavement suite is a specially chilled room where a child can be laid to rest while funeral arrangements are being made. It provides a private space for parents to spend time with their child, for family and friends to visit, and have space to make any necessary arrangements or to receive bereavement support. There is also a quiet room which acts as a space for peaceful reflection. Families are experiencing the most difficult time of their lives; for those that want to use the bereavement suite we want to provide a comforting, peaceful space where they can feel at home, grieve in private or receive loved ones. The bereavement suite can be personalised with posters, family photographs and their own personal belongings.

How does Demelza support bereaved families?

Our care team help families to think about their wishes when their child is dying. Some may choose to come to our hospices for end of life care, and we will liaise with all professionals known to the child, ensuring they are cared for in the best possible way.

Memory making can be an important part of this time, and our team will support families in making these last days special, according to their own particular wishes. This is about spending time together as a family, reading books, listening to music and taking photos of the family. Demelza can also arrange for clay hand or foot prints to be taken and for memory boxes to be made where keepsakes can be kept and treasured forever. Whatever a family's wishes, our specialist care team can offer support, advice and practical help through a very difficult time.

Demelza will continue to provide practical and emotional support for the whole family. Our aim is to help families understand their loss and begin to face life, whilst remembering their child. Families will receive invitations to Bereavement Remembrance events held by Demelza, including a snowdrop planting in spring and candlelight event in winter.

What about support for siblings?

Having a brother or sister with a terminal condition or being bereaved can often be lonely, and having fun can seem difficult or almost impossible at times. The wellbeing of siblings is especially important to the family unit and it's vital they have the chance to express and deal with feelings of fear, loneliness, anger or confusion that could harm future health or development. Spending time with other children in similar situations, understanding more about their brother or sister's condition, taking part in group activities or individual therapy sessions, and can aid their understanding of what is happening and build positive experiences.

Why do you need money for the refurbishment?

The unique support we give comes at a price, and at present we're only reaching 20 per cent of the children that we could help. As a charity, Demelza is almost entirely dependent on people like you to provide the funds that keep our services going.

Recently at our Eltham Hospice, we have been fortunate to receive support in having an extension enabling us to make room to accommodate more visitors and store specialist equipment to enable us to provide care for more families in need. Both bereavement suites are in dire need of an update to make them more homely, comfortable and accessible. Currently both rooms are clean and usable, but they are basic, clinical looking and outdated for serving such an important purpose. We want to give families as much choice and comfort as possible so they can focus on spending precious time together in a place they can feel at ease.

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What if you don't raise enough money?

If we are not able to raise the full amount of money by the closing date of Sunday 23 June, we may extend the length of the appeal to try and raise the funds. Alternatively, we will revisit the project brief to determine what we could start working on as a priority to improve our bereavement suites with the total funds we have received. We will be keeping our appeal up to date with the total amount raised throughout the appeal as well as providing updates, the page can be visited at www.justgiving.com/campaign/bereavement

What if you raise more than the target?

If we are fortunate enough to exceed the target of £25,000, we will use any additional donations to make improvements at Demelza South East London where we think the money is most needed for us to provide our services.

When will you carry out the work?

The work to the bereavement suites will be carried out in late October providing the rooms are not needed for a child. As we have two bereavement suites, work will be completed in one leaving the other room free in case it is needed. Then work will transfer to the remaining suite. If the bereavement suite is needed, work will be held until the room is no longer in use as we do not want to cause any disruption to families using these services. The refurbishment works will take two to three weeks per room. We will be photographing and videoing the refurbishment works and will publish them on our social media channels.

How do you cater for different family's beliefs and cultures?

We know that 48% of families accessing Demelza South East London are from Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, which is very much representative of the communities Demelza serves.

We understand that a child's death has a wide impact, not just on their immediate family but socially and culturally, amid complicated cultural meaning. It is also important to understand that this is a time of tremendous vulnerability for families. We realise that ideas about death and dying are not universal across or within cultures. When talking with families, it is so important we convey openness, families rarely mind being asked about their faith or cultural practices around death and dying. **Post Death Care:** When considering cultural preferences, it is very important not to generalise, but most crucially ask families about their individual faiths/beliefs and how they would like to be involved in their child's care after death.

What Demelza aims to achieve is that parents, brothers and sisters and those who love the child find peace and build their story, continuing their lives with very positive memories of their child and, most importantly, with no regrets.

Is the bereavement suite just for families who are known to Demelza?

If a child was not previously known to Demelza the family would be offered the same facilities as a family that we had previously known. They would be welcomed to Demelza and whichever staff member is allocated to them, would explain exactly what we can offer, show them around the building and we would find out what memory making they may want done. We would find out from the referrer if there is any cultural needs we need to be aware of before the family arrive. We can signpost them to family support and therapies if it is something the family is interested in.

Who should I contact if I have a question about the Bereavement Suite Appeal?

Please contact **Caroline Lane, Head of Marketing and Communications** on **01795 845245** or **Emma Barnes, Senior Supporter Relations Manager** on **01795 845190**. Alternatively you can email us on caroline.lane@demelza.org.uk or emma.barnes@demelza.org.uk

Who should I contact if I would like to make a referral?

If you would like to make a referral then please visit: www.demelza.org.uk/refer, this page lists the criteria, the contact details and a link to our referral form. If you do not have access to our website, then please contact **Jennie Steer** or **Vicky Arnold** on **01795 845000** and we will provide you with the information.



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