



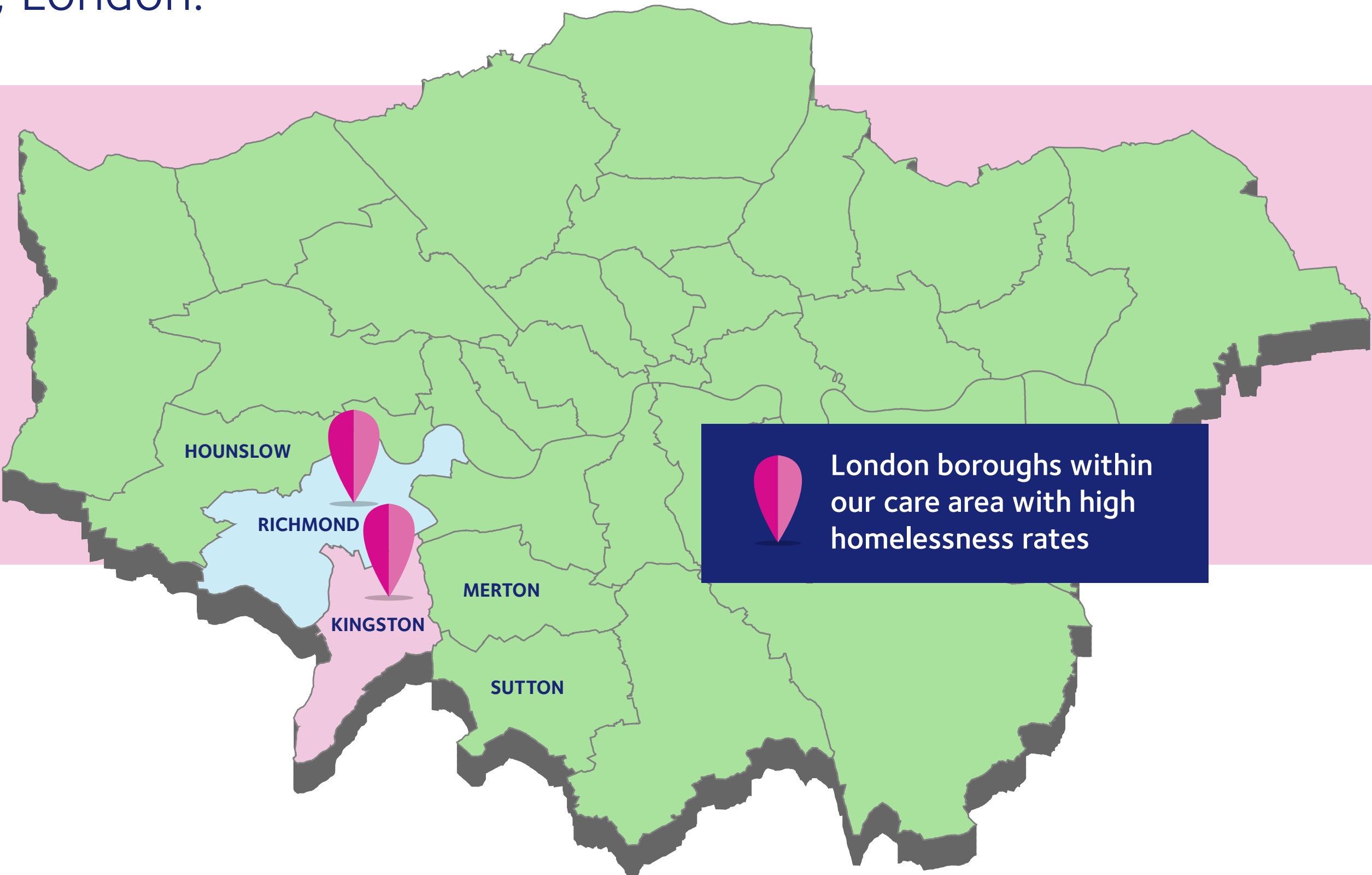
Opening the Door to Hospice Care for People Experiencing Homelessness



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Background

- People experiencing homelessness have a low average life expectancy (men 45 and women 43 years¹).
- Two of the London boroughs in our care area have high homelessness rates².
- Traditional referral routes miss many in need of palliative care³.



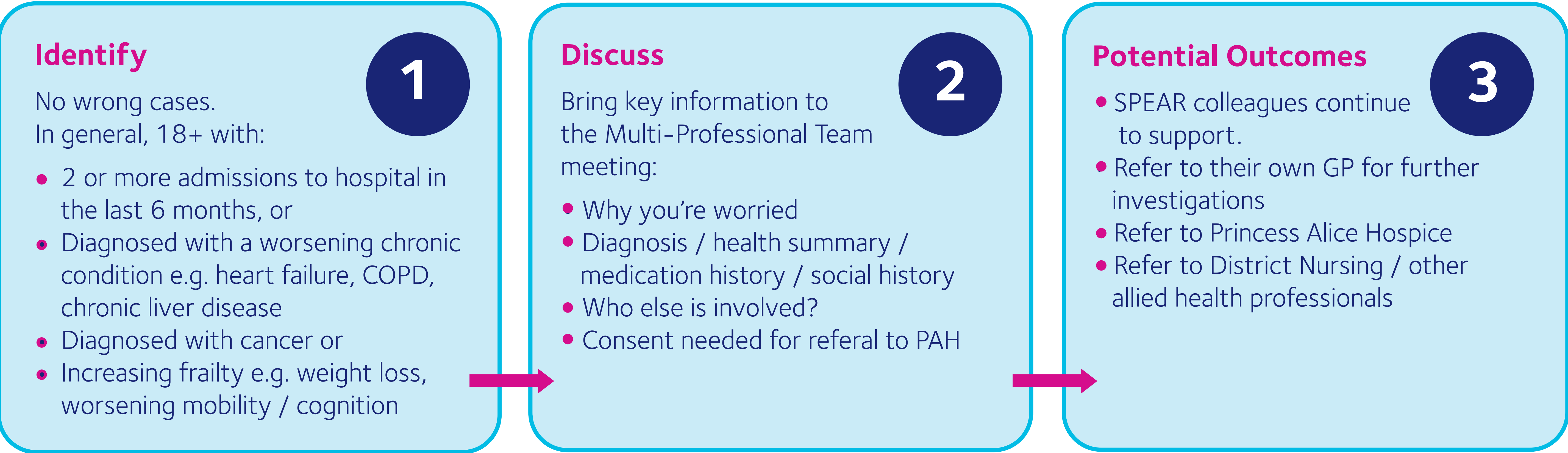
Aim

To improve access to palliative care for people experiencing homelessness in two London boroughs.

Methods

- Hospice UK grant secured.
- Multi-professional team formed (consisting of nursing, social work, medical and homelessness charity keyworkers)
- Clients in need of specialist palliative care were identified by the homelessness charity using agreed criteria and “identifying clients of concern” tools⁴.
- Consent gained before formal referral.
- Anonymous discussion for support for clients not referred to specialist palliative care.

Multi-Professional Team Process



Results

- 10 meetings (February 2024 – April 2025)
- 13 clients triaged and advice given
- 3 supported by Hospice
- 1 matched with a Compassionate Neighbour
- 2 clients died, 1 in preferred place

“He died peacefully...thanks to your advocacy, he died somewhere...safe and warm...unlike the environment he was used to after years of rough sleeping.”

SPEAR, Housing First Team Leader

Conclusion

- Approach is opening access to hospice care
- Collaboration and flexibility were key to the success of this project
- Princess Alice Hospice is working with partners including the South West London Integrated Care Board, the Drug and Alcohol Deaths Panel, and local community groups to provide support earlier

Next steps

- Build a “Community of Practice” amongst wider partners as part of the NIHR funded research study IMPROVE
- Explore bereavement needs and how the hospice can support

References:
¹ Office for National Statistics, 2021. Deaths of homeless people in England and Wales
² Hart A, Pennington J, 2024. Shelter: Homelessness in England 2024
³ Shulman C et al, 2017. End-of-life care for homeless people: A qualitative analysis exploring the challenges to access and provision of palliative care. *Palliative Medicine*. 2017 Jul 3;32(1):36–45
⁴ Homeless Palliative Care Toolkit, 2025. www.homelesspalliativecare.com