This was the third session in our series about commissioning. In the previous two sessions we have looked at commissioning models across the UK and talked about some of the cross-cutting themes for hospices. One of the key themes that has emerged is the importance of population health approaches and understanding the needs of our communities. In this session we heard about different approaches to population needs assessment and how this can help inform, plan and develop services.

PopNAT - Jonathan Graham and Ian Appleby (Gavurin)
PopNAT presents population data from a range of sources in a clear and concise way, so that care providers and stakeholders get more understanding of local need. It is intended to provide a foundation for decision making. A new version has just been released, with several improvements that were informed by focus group sessions. Features include:

- filtering data by geographical area (including the new Integrated Care Systems in England)
- creating 'study areas' and dashboards which can be shared via a URL link
- being able to study trends
- improved guidance about how to interpret, compare and use data.

More information about how to use the features is available under ‘Take the Tour’ on the PopNAT homepage.

At the moment PopNAT only includes adult data, however Gavurin confirmed that it should be possible to add more datasets (for example about children) in the future.

Access PopNAT 2.0

Deep dive into end of life in Birmingham – Luke Heslop (Service Lead for Evidence, Birmingham City Council)
Local authorities have a statutory duty to carry out a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), through their Health and Wellbeing Board. This should assess the current and future health and social care needs of the local community. Birmingham’s Health and Wellbeing Board recognised that they needed to tackle some wide disparities in health outcomes, which required a more in-depth look at inequalities of care than was possible in the overarching JSNA. They established a rolling programme of ‘deep dive’ reviews, including a deep dive into end of life.
The deep dive looked at local and national policy and data; epidemiological evidence; local services and people’s lived experience (especially those of people who experience inequalities). A key output of the research was a visual map, showing the train stations in Birmingham and life expectancies in each area. This is a powerful way of demonstrating health inequalities.

The findings fell into three key themes:

- premature and avoidable deaths in Birmingham
- opportunities for improved end of life care by service providers (including 24/7 services)
- demand for carer support and bereavement services.

The deep dive report makes recommendations about each of the key themes, which were accepted by the Health and Wellbeing board. They will be implemented by the ICS.

The report highlighted the experiences of carers, so the Health and Wellbeing Board has commissioned a further deep dive looking at carers’ needs.

Read the Deep Dive report into the End of Life in Birmingham

Needs assessment at Derian House Hospice - Lynn Grayson, (Director of Clinical Services) and Vanessa Spinks (Head of Governance and Compliance, Derian House Hospice)

In 2020 Derian House employed DJS Research to find out whether their services met local needs. The researchers interviewed 100 families and contacted 19 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), including making Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

Results from families showed some areas of key need, including respite care; hydrotherapy; the holiday lodge and emotional support/wellbeing services. The hospice was able to improve and adapt services accordingly.

Results from CCGs showed that the approach to palliative and end of life care (PEOLC) was patchy across the region. The FOIs found that many CCGs did not have a strategy for children’s PEOLC. However they welcomed the opportunity to discuss this with the hospice and some used the results of the research to inform their strategy development.

CCGs were asked for a list of services they would like Derian House to provide. The hospice already had some of these services, which highlighted the need to raise awareness.

The hospice created an infographic showing where the gaps are across the region. This helped them to demonstrate their case to commissioners and make recommendations about what commissioners needed to do.

As a result of this work, commissioners are much more supportive of the hospice. The hospice is now seen as a key provider in the region and has seen an increase in statutory funding.