

## **IMPROVE END OF LIFE CARE, URGES CLINICIAN**

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**END OF LIFE CARE** in Leeds needs to be improved as the number of deaths each year is due to rise by a quarter over the next two decades, a leading health expert has warned.

Dr Mike Stockton, a clinician in palliative care, claims more needs to be done to help people reaching the end of their lives to die “good deaths” among loved ones and not in hospital.

He was speaking to the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board, adding that, with such a high number of people born between 1945 and 1965, known as “baby boomers” the number of deaths in Leeds is expected to rise during the next 20 years.

He said: “Death is an inevitable part of our existence, and an important stage in our lives. A good death varies from person to person and culture to culture, but on the whole people wish to feel comfortable, be free from pain, be safe and secure and surrounded by the ones they love.

Many people do not get access to the right care at the right time before they die. More than half of the complaints to the Health Services Ombudsman are about people at the end of their lives and half of these are upheld.

“It’s a phase where there is a risk of getting it wrong and we only have one chance to get it right.”

He said Leeds “is a great place to live and a great place to grow old, but we need to make it a great place to die.” He said there were more than 6,850 deaths per year in Leeds and that there was an 11 per cent reduction in the number of people dying in hospital over the past decade.

But he warned that the annual number of deaths per year in Leeds was expected to rise by 25% by 2040, and that capacity needed to increase to keep people out of hospital at the end of their lives.

He added: “If there is no change in the current community capacity, the trend of people dying out of hospital will start to reverse and people will go back into hospital.”