

# Caring arm of hospice extends

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Swaffham and Litcham Home Hospice Support is increasing the care it gives and widening its boundaries to take in more villages.

In the past year it did 36 per cent more community support visits to patients' homes, reaching a total of 1,016.

Escorted trips by its volunteers to hospitals soared by 61 per cent, to 301.

Co-ordinator Debbie Harfield said: "It has been a hectic but exciting year for the home hospice due to the move to new premises and the increase in care we have given.

"We continue to offer a range of services – the core of which is still visiting and supporting patients while they are in their own homes and at day care and our art and craft group.

"I am aware that there is a lack of service provision for patients to the south west of Swaffham. We have started to take referrals from Marham, Boughton and Feltwell surgeries as the need arises. We hope to expand on this."

Mrs Harfield said the Cars with Care service had been very busy with a big jump in the number of escorted trips to hospital. "This service is much praised by patients and families who benefit from it," she said.

"Already this year we have taken four patients for courses of radiotherapy treatment at Addenbrooke's and Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals."

Total mileage driven by volunteers jumped 42 per cent to 43,233 miles.

Six new volunteers have swollen the total number to 26. But Mrs Harfield said: "We always need more volunteer carers and fundraisers."

Hospice chairman Simon Broke said: "I am pleased to say that several are coming forward and we are arranging the appropriate and correct training for them."

Induction training has been taking place at Tapping House Hospice at Snettisham to share resources and expertise.

Mrs Harfield said the bereavement group was still growing and now had 27 members. It was continuing to use the Catholic churchroom in Station Street as it was too big to meet at the hospice's new offices in Brocks Road on the EcoTech Business Park.

"We also offer bereavement visits to individuals – this support is offered immediately after a bereavement and also to others who may benefit from a one-to-one approach," she said.

Mr Broke praised the excellent work of fundraisers who support the hospice.