The aim of this presentation is to share our experience and learning of DNACPR through our service.

Like most health charity helplines, we received an increase in calls during the pandemic, a significant proportion of which related to CPR. As a result of this, we carried out some research which included analysing 3 years worth of information line calls to our service. CPR related enquiries rose notably in 2020 – amounting to 13% compared to 6% in 2019.

We then surveyed around 2000 people to find out more about the problems they were facing:

       Only 37% were aware that a DNACPR decision is made if a clinician thinks that attempting CPR will do more harm than good

       Only 35% were aware that a patient will still continue to receive other care if a DNACPR decision is made

       Crucially - if a healthcare professional were to raise the topic of a DNACPR decision with them, more than three-quarters (77%) of people would either welcome the conversation or be willing to explore the topic even if it worried them

Most of the people who call us already have a clear understanding of what quality of life and a good death means to them which often includes a strong wish not to have their lives artificially prolonged in any way.

Many people told us how grateful they were of the time clinicians spent with them to discuss their treatment options and the pros and cons of CPR.

However, a worrying theme we found was the lack of respectful and honest conversations between clinicians and individuals about their relatives situation and the likely outcomes. Instead of reducing anxiety at the end of life, poor communication caused significant levels of distress and mistrust.

*A key overall finding from this research is that people consistently expressed that it wasn’t the decision to withhold CPR itself that caused upset but the lack of communication about why the decision had been made and what would happen.* When people have clear and timely DNACPR conversations it gives them the opportunity to ask questions and explain what matters to them which ultimately leads to a better experience.