

# Kevin and Laura's Story

When Kevin needed specialist care, Farleigh Hospice was there for him and his family. His daughter, Laura, explains how important this was to them all.



Hayley, Laura and David with parents Debbie and Kevin

"My Dad, Kevin, was a very kind, caring and thoughtful person. Our family was everything to him and he adored his grandchildren.

He was a commissioning engineer, working on robotics to help pharmaceutical companies develop new medicines, and travelled the world with his job. Everyone liked him and he'd do anything he could to help others.

About 15 years ago, Dad was diagnosed with a rare, non-treatable type of cancer in one of his kidneys. It was removed and he was fine for several years before cancer cells reappeared in that area and his liver, then spread to his stomach lining and omentum (the structure connecting the stomach and other organs in the abdomen). He was on trial drugs which couldn't cure it but slowed it down, giving him more time.

Dad had a very logical mind but he became more spiritual and open to complementary therapies. I used

to do reiki on him which he found very relaxing, helping him to keep a positive mindset throughout his illness and the side effects of these treatments.

Eventually, they couldn't hold back the cancer - his liver stopped working properly and he was getting weaker and in a lot of pain. In October 2023, he was told that there was nothing else that could be done and it was suggested that we contacted Farleigh Hospice.

When I heard the word 'hospice', I only thought of end of life care, but the charity provides much more than that. Farleigh arranged for Dad to have personal care at home as my Mum, Debbie, couldn't lift him. Twice a day, Farleigh's carers would come in to wash and dress him.

They were amazing and always very friendly and understanding. If Dad didn't want to chat or have his hair washed one day, that was fine and, if Mum was feeling wobbly, they'd talk with her so she didn't

get overwhelmed. Farleigh Hospice focuses on the whole family, not just the patient, which is really special as it's very hard to see your loved one so unwell.

Dad got weaker, sleeping much more and not wanting to eat, so we were concerned. He was admitted into Farleigh's Inpatient Unit on Christmas Day 2023. We didn't know if he was going to pass away there or if this was to help manage his symptoms and then he would be back home. We were upset and very worried.

Farleigh's care was amazing from the moment we got there. There's something very peaceful and uplifting about the hospice - it has such a positive atmosphere, even though you know there's going to be a sad outcome. Everyone made us all feel so comfortable and even gave Mum and Dad Christmas dinner.



Debbie and Kevin



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Dad stayed there for a couple of weeks and then Farleigh continued to help care for him at home. In February 2024, he was readmitted for end of life care.

He had round-the-clock care and pain management at the hospice but it didn't feel clinical, like a hospital - it was a lovely environment. Everyone there was so accommodating to Dad's needs and he could continue the things he enjoyed, including our reiki sessions. He had a big room which meant me, my brother David, my sister Hayley and our family could visit him.

Farleigh's care took the pressure off of Mum. She was able to sleep there and they could do normal things as a couple again, like having their meals together.

My husband, Duncan, and I took our children, Oli and Jake, to see Dad at Farleigh. It was upsetting for them to see their grandad looking poorly but we could be together with him and my Mum, which was lovely. Those family moments were massively important to us all.

I would push Dad around Farleigh's gardens in a wheelchair to get some fresh air. He loved feeling the sun on his skin and looking at the fish in the little pond. We also spent time in the Sanctuary room which is a beautiful, peaceful space. Sometimes we'd be sitting in silence, sometimes in tears and other times we'd have a chat - whatever he needed at that point.

He said that he wasn't afraid of dying and I don't think he would have had that acceptance if he'd been cared for anywhere else.

Dad passed away on 20 February 2024. It was very peaceful - he was surrounded by his loved ones with calming music and his favourite songs playing.



**Santa Fun Run in memory of Kevin**

Over 300 people came to his funeral which is a testament to just how amazing he was.

Dad was only 64 when he died which is very hard for us to cope with and Oli, who is nine, and Jake, who is eight, have been struggling with their grief. Oli said he wanted to do something to help others like his grandad, so Duncan and I decided to take them on Farleigh's Santa Fun Run. Dad loved to exercise when he was well, so the run felt like the right thing to do for him.

I felt quite anxious when I went to the hospice to collect our Santa suits for the fun run. I was able to go into the Sanctuary and I found it very healing to sit there, peacefully thinking of the conversations I had with Dad, before walking around the gardens. It really helped me. The Santa Fun Run was an amazing event and quite emotional too. Mum was there at the finish line to support us. We wanted to raise £500 for Farleigh but actually raised over £2,350 to say thank you to this fantastic charity.

Farleigh Hospice's care made a huge difference to my Dad and our family. The amazing staff were so calm and kind to us all. They tailored their care to meet his individual needs and treated him with dignity. They took away all of the stress and anxiety and made sure he was comfortable, giving him the best possible end of life. We will always be very grateful."

**You can help Farleigh Hospice to care for more people like Kevin by fundraising for us. For more information visit [farleighhospice.org/events](https://www.farleighhospice.org/events) or call 01245 457411.**