**Semi-structured Interview Guide**

**Background**

The multidimensional needs of patients with advanced cancer and their carers are well recognised and meeting these needs in a timely way is a priority for health and social care services. Patients with NYHA stage III & IV heart failure live with physical symptoms such as dyspnoea, fatigue and swelling, which impact on functional ability and are associated with dependency on others, social isolation, anxiety and depression. We want to hear your thoughts on how well equipped local health and social care services are to meet the needs of community-based *patients experiencing symptoms and associated problems as result of heart failure*.

**Interview Schedule**

1. Do you have many patients currently who would meet the description above (in italics)?
2. It has been suggested that patients with heart failure have significant emotional, practical and social care needs, in addition to medical needs, and that these may peak at or following each acute decompensation. Do you feel that available services address these needs adequately?

Possible follow-up questions:

* Can you access specialist advice from a cardiologist when needed?
* Can you access Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy services to maximise independence and mobility when needed?
* Are there adequate services to meet the care needs of patients and respite for lay carers?
* Do patients seem to have had opportunities to discuss their condition, what to expect in the future and their care preferences?
* Are services available to promote the wellbeing of patients and carers, including psychological support and maximising quality of life?

1. What do you see as the most important gap in services for community-based patients with symptomatic heart failure?
2. What do you feel is well done/works well (locally)?
3. Do you feel that referral to Specialist Palliative Care Services would be useful for some patients, other than in the last weeks of life?

Possible follow-up questions:

* 1. Which of the following services do you feel might be useful? Community Nursing Team, Outpatient Medical Clinic, Day Therapy/Hospice, Inpatient admission.
  2. What are the barriers to referral?
  3. In your opinion or experience, how might SPC services helpfully contribute?

1. Do you have any other comments that you would like to make?