

Stick in the sheet attached below and highlight the changes in one colour and the continuity in another. If you do not have access to a printer then create a table with change on one side and continuity on the other and fill it in.

Caring for the Sick: Change and Continuity

Highlight the things that stayed the same in one colour (Continuity) and the things that were different in another colour (Continued)

Change

Continuity

Hospitality

Before the early 16th century, travellers, pilgrims, the elderly, and a few sick people would have attended hospitals for food, shelter and prayer. A patient in a 16th-century hospital could expect:

- A good diet
- A visit from a physician.
- Medication- many hospitals had their own pharmacies and an apothecary to mix the medicines.

However, the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 dramatically changed the availability of hospital care. Since the vast majority of hospitals were connected to the Church, very few were available to stay open after the dissolution of the monasteries.

Some smaller hospitals opened to fill the gap left by the dissolution of the monasteries, funded by charities, but there was a big change in the amount of medical treatment provided by hospitals.

Many hospitals reopened without their religious sponsors. However, it took a long time for the amount of hospitals to return to what it had been before the dissolution of the monasteries.

Pest Houses

One change in hospital care in this period was the change of hospitals that specialised in one particular disease. There was a growing understanding that disease could be transmitted from person to person (even though people didn't understand how or why this happened). This meant that new types of hospital began to appear that catered only for people suffering from plague or pox. These were known as pest houses, plague houses or pox houses.

Traditional hospitals would not admit patients who were contagious, but people suffering from serious, contagious diseases had to go somewhere or risk infecting their families.

Community Care

Local communities were very close-knit, which meant that there were plenty of people around to give advice and even mix remedies.

Women continued to play an important role in the care the sick. They usually mixed and sold simple herbal remedies to purge the body or cure an ailment. Records suggest that they were very popular, probably because they were cheaper than going to a licenced physician or apothecary.