

Specialist Palliative Care in Cwm Taf Morgannwg



Why this matters

- Everyone deserves to be cared for with dignity and compassion at the end of life.
- Most people want to be at home or somewhere familiar — not in hospital.
- We want to make sure people get the right care, in the right place, at the right time.



What is this about?

- We are proposing changes to **specialist** palliative care for adults only.
- We want to improve how and where specialist care is delivered.
- This includes at home, in hospital and in specialist units.



The bigger picture

- Our population is growing and people are living longer, often with **multiple** health conditions.
- Around 35,000 people die in Wales each year: most are over 75.
- Demand for palliative and end-of-life care in the UK is set to increase by **42% by 2040**.



What is palliative and end-of-life care?

- **Palliative care** helps people live well with a life-limiting illness and helps manage pain and symptoms. It can be given alongside treatments like chemotherapy and some people receive it for years.
- **End-of-life care** is for the last stages of life, when someone is likely to die within 6–12 months, although this is very difficult to predict. It focuses on comfort, dignity, and personal wishes.

Who provides palliative and end-of-life care?

- **General:** Most people at the end-of-life receive care provided by GPs, nurses, hospital staff, and social care teams.
- **Specialist:** For some people with very complex needs (e.g. severe pain) they are cared for by specially trained teams called **Specialist Palliative Care**.

Specialist services in CTM

- Not everyone who dies needs specialist palliative care. 32% of people who died in CTM in 2022 were supported by the specialist team.
- CTM is split into three areas: Merthyr Tydfil/Cynon, Rhondda Taff Ely, and Bridgend.
- Each has a specialist unit with eight beds. 9% of people who died in 2022 had been a patient in one of these units.
- Most patients are supported through joint working between general and specialist teams.

Key challenges

- Too many people die in hospital. In 2023, 56% of deaths in CTM were in our hospitals.
- Many people in hospital die without loved ones present.
- In CTM, more people in the last months of life visit emergency departments than anywhere else in Wales.
- Those living in deprived areas are less likely to get specialist care and are more likely to die in hospital.
- CTM has more deaths per population than the Welsh average.

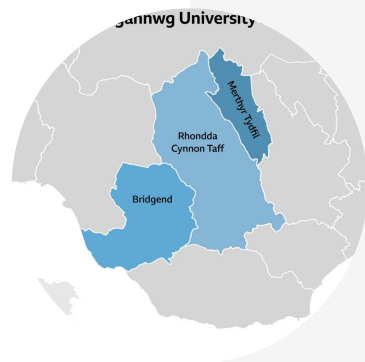
Health board challenges

Workforce

- It is very difficult to recruit specialist doctors across the whole of the UK, but especially in more deprived or rural areas.
- The current team is very small and covers a large area.

A shift to the community

- Most people want to be cared for at home
- CTM has more specialist beds than other areas and most staff are based in units.



Things we must think about

1. Listen to what people want.
2. Use resources fairly across all areas.
3. Tackle health inequalities.
4. Follow national standards.
5. Prepare for rising demand.
6. Recruit and keep skilled staff.
7. Make services affordable long-term.
8. Improve coordination between general and specialist care.

Plan

- Close the unit in Merthyr Tydfil/Cynon and keep the units in Y Bwthyn (Royal Glamorgan) and Y Bwthyn Newydd (Princess of Wales).
- Use resources to support specialist palliative care in other areas:
 - 1) Community: including Hospice@Home
 - 2) Community Hospitals: providing end-of-life care with support from specialist services.
 - 3) Acute Hospitals: develop rapid access to end-of-life care for discharge home and increase support for general wards.

Feedback

- Complete an online survey following the QR code.
- Send any comments to CTM.SPC_services@wales.nhs.uk
- Join the conversation via the health board's social media channels.
- Attend our public drop-in engagement session, where you will find out more about the proposals and ask any questions. Visit our website for details.

Thank you

