

Freedom of Information Request: Our Reference CTMUHB_299_21

You asked:

Fast Track Continuing Healthcare (CHC) funding enables people to be cared for outside of hospital at the end of their lives if their condition is deteriorating rapidly and may have entered a terminal phase. Guidance for Welsh Health Boards recommends that Fast Track CHC packages be commissioned within 48 hours of an application being made – this supports patients to be cared for at home or in the community and spend no more time in hospital at the end of life than they need to.

Fast Track CHC is crucial to ensuring seriously ill and dying people receive the appropriate support they need to enable them to leave, or prevent admission to, hospital. This is often the key factor that allows people to die in the place they choose. Delays to this process ultimately can mean people dying in hospital before a package of care is put in place, causing significant distress for those at the end of their lives and their loved ones.

We are looking into the provision of Fast Track continuing Healthcare in Wales and would like to make a Freedom of Information request in this area and seeks answers to the following questions please:

1. During the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 how many applications for Fast Track Continuing Healthcare did your health board / Trust receive?

We can confirm that the Health Board does not centrally record all of the required information. Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) University Health Board have only been recording fast track applications separately to the CTM community package application, in this last financial year.

To provide data for 2018/2019, 2019/2020 would involve a manual trawl and search of records which we have estimated would significantly exceed the 18 hours limit set down by the FOI Act as the reasonable limit. Section 12 of the FOI Act and The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulation 2004 provides that we are not obliged to spend in excess of 18 hours in any sixty day period locating, retrieving and identifying information in order to deal with a request for information and therefore we are withholding this information at this time.

However, we can confirm that CTM have received a total of 63 fast track applications for 2020/2021.

Please note that if a professional undertook an assessment and felt the individual was an eligible fast track patient, however, the package or care could be provided through core services such as District Nursing, specialist palliative care beds and other services, then the application may not be processed as no external service would be required or funded.

2. During the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 how many applications for Fast Track Continuing Healthcare did your health board / Trust fund?

Please see response to question 1.

2020/ 2021: 63

3. During the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, how many applications for Fast Track continuing healthcare did your health board / Trust reject?

Enabling individuals to return home with a safe and sustainable package of care or admission to a care home at the end stages of their life is something the HB are very supportive of and would not reject a fast track application.

4. During the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, what were the main reasons for rejecting Fast Track continuing healthcare applications?

Please see response to question 3.

5. What was the average time period in your Health Board / Trust in days/ hours from the point at which a Fast Track Continuing Healthcare application is received to the care package being provided for the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20. 2020/21?

We can confirm that the Health Board does not centrally record this information. To provide you with this information, would require a manual trawl and search of records, which we estimate would significantly exceed the 18 hours time and £450 cost limit set out within Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act.

However, we can confirm that the Health Board would agree a fast track application virtually within 24 hours of receiving the request

6. What was the average time period in days/hours from the point at which a Fast Track CHC application is approved to the care package being provided for the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20. 2020/21?

We can confirm that the Health Board does not centrally record this information. To provide you with this information, would require a manual trawl and search of records, which we estimate would significantly exceed the 18 hours time and £450 cost limit set out within Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act.

7. What arrangements were made by your health board / Trust in relation to Fast Track Continuing healthcare during the Covid Pandemic during the financial years 2020/21?

Fast track applications were prioritised through the Pandemic. Patients were discharged to a mix of settings including their own home and care homes, where our district nurse teams or care home teams in line with the individual would provide the care.