

An Evaluation of the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Weekend and Bank Holiday Specialist Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Specialist Service

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Summary: Many non-emergency health services are provided Monday to Friday from 9-5pm, leaving core and emergency services to provide weekend care, traditionally Specialist Palliative Care (SPC) services developed in this way. Acting on the need for swift response to urgent referrals at weekends and bank holidays, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board commissioned a SPC Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) Service. Co-delivered by Macmillan, City Hospice and Marie Curie CNSs since 2010, the service provides weekend/bank holiday support to patients with progressive non-curable illnesses and their families, at home and in hospital, across the region. The weekend/bank holiday SPC CNS service model has evolved over time in response to clinical demand, internal service reviews and service improvements. CVUHB Specialist Palliative Care Service commissioned an evaluation of the weekend and bank holiday SPC CNS service to support decision making for its future.

Aims

To undertake an in-depth evaluation of the established service using a mixed method approach. The study objectives were to:

1. Measure and describe recorded service activities
2. Identify what aspects of the service work well
3. Identify challenges and improvement opportunities
4. Develop recommendations to support future service sustainability and development.

Status:

Submitted to the funder in August 2020 the Evaluation report has already influenced practice change. Of the ten recommendations the following actions were prioritised:

- A review of service processes/systems to optimise inter-organisational working has commenced.
- A minimum data set to improve service activity reporting has been collaboratively developed and implemented.
- A way to reduce CNS call management burden, improve remote access to patient information and enhance communication efficiency with out-of-hours GPs is being piloted through provision of an additional CNS each weekend working with the national 111 team and GP out-of-hours hub.
- The impact of the pilot intervention on CNS travel inefficiency through call triage and referral to other appropriate health care practitioners is also being assessed.

Research Networks: Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, City Hospice and Marie Curie CNS community palliative care services.