

A Scoping Survey of Bereavement Support Services in Wales

Lead: Prof Anthony Byrne / Dr Emily Harrop

Funder: End of Life Care Board in Wales

Researcher: Dr Cynthia Ochieng

Email: harrope@cardiff.ac.uk

Summary:

One of the priorities of the End of Life Board in Wales 2017-2020 was for health boards to review the settings and capacities of their bereavement services with an aim that the needs of the bereaved are met. This scoping survey, conducted on the request of the End of Life Board, provides detailed information on all bereavement services available, including their planning and delivery in different areas within Wales.

Aims:

This study gathered information on structured bereavement services available in Wales. The specific questions for the review included:

- Are there regional variations in bereavement support across Wales?
- Which groups of bereaved people are supported by these bereavement services?
- Which of the NICE Components of bereavement support are provided by these services?
- How are bereavement services assessed and what performance indicators are used?
- What are the gaps and challenges in bereavement support provision in Wales?

Methods:

The survey content was developed through a combination of literature review of other bereavement scoping studies and relevant surveys as well as consultation with bereavement care experts, healthcare professionals and academics with an interest in bereavement care.

A link to the on-line survey was sent to all services identified as offering some level of structured bereavement support based in Wales. The survey contained open and closed questions, utilising Likert scales and free text boxes to gather information on topics which included service delivery, referral pathways, funding, staffing and gaps and challenges.

The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, and the free text data was analysed using a thematic approach.

Recruitment: Researchers approached potential participants from bereavement services databases, Local Health Boards, the Childhood Bereavement Network and key organisations.

Sites: Not applicable

Results:

Welsh Government have posted the full report at <https://gov.wales/scoping-survey-bereavement-services>

256 responses were received, including:

Charities (n=64), Councils (n=13), Private Practitioners (n=2), Schools (n=1), Criminal Justice (n=8), GP Practices (n=90), Hospices (n=13), Hospitals (n=58) and others (n=7). 74 of these provided bereavement care, the others referred onto the services.

The results of the survey identified that more bereavement services were available in the South East of Wales, with the least number being available in the North and West of Wales. The findings also showed that across Wales, there were more bereavement services available to support bereavement following adult deaths, compared to bereavement following the loss of children, infants and in pregnancy. Respondents also identified a number of gaps and challenges relating to the prioritisation and resourcing of services. A key consideration from the results therefore is the development of a national framework for bereavement care.

Research Networks: Welsh Assembly Government, End of Life Care Board in Wales