

WHC/2016/004

WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Issue Date: 1 March 2016

STATUS: INFORMATION

CATEGORY: HEALTH PROFESSIONAL LETTER

Title: Care Decisions for the Last Days of Life

Date of Expiry / Review:

Annually

For Action by:

Health boards and trusts

Action required by:

1 April 2016

Sender:

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Enclosure(s): None (see hyper links)

Dr Ruth Hussey CB OBE
Prif Swyddog Meddygol/Cyfarwyddwr Meddygol, GIG Cymru
Chief Medical Officer/Medical Director NHS Wales

To: Chief Executives, NHS Wales
Cc: Health board and trust end of life care leads

March 2016

Dear Chief Executives

CARE DECISIONS FOR THE LAST DAYS OF LIFE

A key element of patient need, and those of their families, is good 'end of life' care. The purpose of this Welsh Health Circular is to highlight the importance of the continuation of patient care through to the very end of life, irrespective of physical or mental health conditions.

The updated policy is set out in the document *Care Decisions for the Last Days of Life*. This document, which will replace the current All Wales Integrated Care Priorities (ICP) for use in the last days of life with effect from 1 April 2016, is available on health board and trust websites.

<http://wales.pallcare.info/images/documents/Last%20days%20of%20life/CDLDoL%20Care%20Decisions%20V5.3.pdf>

Health board palliative care teams will lead on implementing the training package for the implementation of the Care Decisions for the Last Days of Life. This can be accessed using the following link

http://wales.pallcare.info/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=244

Background

The quality of care provided to a dying patient has a lasting effect on families and carers. Good quality end of life care and good communication between professionals and families supports individuals at the end of life and helps families to cope with bereavement.

It is important all health care professionals, regardless of specialty, consider the end of life care wishes of their patients as part of the basic care they provide to patients. The existing All Wales Integrated Care Priorities for use in the last days of life is being phased out and should not be used after 31 March 2016.

The refreshed document, Care Decisions for the Last Days of Life, has been developed by the Palliative Clinical Implementation Group with the support of

the end of life care clinical lead from each health board. The document has been informed by a trial and responses to a consultation.

Last year a sub group of the Palliative Clinical Implementation Group was established to develop an educational package to support the introduction of the document which was approved by the End of Life Care Implementation Board in September 2015.

Implementation

The aim of this Welsh Health Circular is to inform all health boards and trusts in Wales of the replacement of the ICP by the Care Decisions for the Last Days of Life with effect from 1 April 2016. We want to ensure that staff are conversant with its requirements and fully equipped to provide the level of consistent care appropriate to patients and those important to them in the last few days of life, and for local health boards and trusts to work effectively with their partners.

The Care Decisions for the Last Days of Life should be considered and put into practice alongside, and in conjunction with, key health publications such as Together for Health: Delivering End of Life Care - A delivery plan for NHS Wales and its Partners up to 2016 and the 2015 NICE guidance 'Care of the Dying Adult' to ensure the wishes of the patient and those important to them are accounted for.

This work will support the priorities set out in the End of Life Care delivery plan by assisting implementation by April 2016 and to take forward the End of Life Care delivery plan.

A training package has been developed by palliative care leads within health boards. Palliative care clinical leads will assist with the dissemination of this information.

Funding

Funding from the additional £10m announced last year for the ten delivery plans, has been made available to health boards and trusts who will be working with the voluntary sector to provide training for the roll out of the Care Decisions for the Last Days of Life. Your Directors of Finance will have received a letter with details of the funding received for this purpose.

If you have any general comments, please contact the Major Health Conditions Policy Division through Vivienne.collins@wales.gsi.gov.uk tel: 02920 825922. Or for specific information please contact Veronica Snow, Programme Manager, End of Life Care Implementation Board on 02920 196113 or 07540 806775.

Yours sincerely



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