

# Secure Hospice and Palliative Care for the future

## **The next Welsh Government must take urgent action to secure the future of hospice and palliative care:**

- ▶ **Establish a sustainable funding solution for Welsh hospices**, so more people receive the support they need closer to home
- ▶ **Tackle inequalities in palliative and end-of-life care across Wales**, especially in rural areas and for those facing financial hardship
- ▶ **Drive innovation and improve quality of care** by collaborating with hospices, improving regulation, and building a resilient workforce

**We believe every child and adult in Wales affected by dying, death, and bereavement deserves the best possible care. But increasing demand and rising costs are putting this care at risk.**

The challenge before us is stark. Demand for palliative and end of life care in Wales is soaring at a time when nearly 1 in 3 Welsh hospices are being forced to cut vital services.

Hospices are a cornerstone of Wales' healthcare system. They support over 20,000 children and adults affected by terminal illness each year, easing pressure on the NHS and providing vital, compassionate support in the community.

But they face major challenges. Palliative care needs are forecast to rise by 25% over the next 25 years.

At the same time, Welsh hospices are struggling year on year to meet the rising costs of employing their expert staff and spiralling cost of living pressures.

Nearly every hospice in Wales is forecasting a deficit this financial year.

This is unsustainable.

We need urgent action to continue delivering the best care, now and in the future.

# The next Welsh Government must act to ensure everyone gets the palliative care they need

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## 1. Establish a sustainable funding solution for Welsh hospices, so more people receive the support they need closer to home

- ▶ **Fully fund the essential specialist care provided by hospices:** Stop relying on charitable funding for critical care and make essential hospice services a guaranteed part of healthcare provision.
- ▶ **Guarantee hospice staff have pay parity with NHS colleagues:** Establish a national mechanism to ensure hospices can recruit and retain skilled staff by keeping pace with NHS pay awards.
- ▶ **Apply consistent hospice contracting arrangements:** Replace short-term agreements with five-year contracts. Include biannual reviews, guaranteed pay, and inflation-linked increases to align hospice services with NHS standards and strengthen workforce stability.

## 2. Tackle inequalities in palliative and end-of-life care across Wales, especially in rural areas and for those facing financial hardship

- ▶ **Improve data collection to address inequalities:** As many as 1 in 4 people, who could benefit from palliative and end of life care, do not receive appropriate support. Better data is needed to understand their needs and provide more targeted and appropriate services.
- ▶ **Create a National Commissioning Framework for Palliative and End of Life Care:** Guided by better data, design and commission services that proactively reach individuals and communities who are least likely to access existing care and support.
- ▶ **Improve financial support for people with a terminal illness:** Welsh Government should include people living with a terminal illness in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, ensure they and their carers have a minimum standard of welfare and social security advice, and provide consistent travel and accommodation support to access care.

## 3. Drive innovation and improve quality of care by collaborating with hospices, improving regulation, and building a resilient workforce

- ▶ **Strengthen partnership working to meet local need:** Support the development of a national hospice-Health Board partnerships model, based on equal decision-making and shared accountability aimed at driving innovation and improving access to services.
- ▶ **Streamline the regulatory regime for hospice care in Wales:** Address inefficiencies and duplication in Health Inspectorate Wales and Care Inspectorate Wales regulation by exploring tailored regulatory approaches in partnership with the hospice sector.
- ▶ **Build a resilient palliative care workforce:** Develop a palliative and end of life care workforce plan so there are the right staff, in the right place, with the right skills to meet growing demand.

# Hospice and palliative care in numbers



**£610m**

Spent a year on healthcare for people in Wales in their last year of life

**£515m**

of which is spent on hospital care<sup>1</sup>



**Over 35,000**

People die in Wales each year<sup>2</sup>

**up to 90%**

could benefit from palliative care<sup>3</sup>



**77,000**

Visits made by hospice care staff to people in their own homes in 2024-25<sup>4</sup>



**£30m**

Charitable hospice funds invested into the health and care system each year<sup>5</sup>



**1 in 5**

Hospital beds in Wales are occupied by people in their last 12 months of life<sup>6</sup>



**7 in 10**

Paediatric intensive care bed days in Wales are occupied by a child with a life-limiting condition<sup>7</sup>



**20,000**

Children and adults supported by hospices each year<sup>8</sup>



**800**

Clinical and care staff employed by hospice care organisations<sup>9</sup>



**1/3**

Of hospice funding comes from government<sup>10</sup>

1. Nuffield Trust, Health Economics Unit, Marie Curie. Public expenditure in the last year of life. London: Nuffield Trust; 2025

2. Office for National Statistics (ONS). 35,404 deaths registered in Wales in 2024

3. Marie Curie. How many people need palliative care? Updated estimates of palliative care need across the UK, 2017-2021. Data and evidence briefing. Marie Curie; 2023

4. Data from Hospice UK activity and data survey, 2024-25

5. Hospice UK. Data from Hospice Accounts Report 2023-24

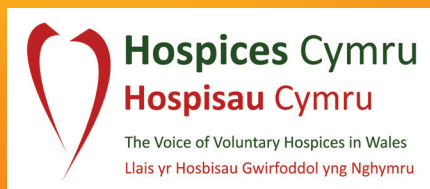
6. Marie Curie. Days in hospital people in last year of life: data request from the Last Year of Life Dashboard; Total NHS Wales bed capacity in 2023; Stats Wales; "NHS beds by organisation and year 2009-10 onwards"

7. University of York 2023; Children in Wales requiring Palliative Care: Trends in prevalence and complexity 2009-2029

8. Data from Hospice UK activity and data survey, 2024-25 and Hospices Cymru Members Survey, September 2024

9. Data taken from Hospice UK's Clinical Workforce Survey, 2024-25

10. Hospice UK. Data from Hospice Accounts Report 2023-24



## About Hospice UK

Hospice care eases the physical and emotional pain of death and dying. Letting people focus on living, right until the end. But too many people miss out on this essential care. Hospice UK fights for hospice care for all who need it, for now and forever. Hospice UK represents the community of more than 200 hospices across the UK.

## About Hospices Cymru

Hospices Cymru represents Wales' fifteen charitable hospices who provide essential care to more than 20,000 people affected by terminal illnesses each year. Our members work to ensure everyone has equal access to high quality holistic hospice and palliative care, delivered in their preferred place and which supports and cares for their family and loved ones.

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