



Hospices Cymru
Hosbisau Cymru

The Voice of Voluntary Hospices in Wales

Llais yr Hosbisau Gwirfoddol yng Nghymru

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Jocelyn Davies AM
Chair
Finance committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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16 September 2011

Dear Ms Davies

Welsh Government draft budget proposals for 2012–2013

I am writing on behalf of Hospices Cymru following your request for information to aid the National Assembly for Wales scrutinise the Welsh Government's 2012–2013 draft budget proposals.

Hospices Cymru is the voice of charitable hospices in Wales, working to achieve high quality care for everybody in Wales who is living with terminal illness and facing the end of life. Our members represent independently run local charities serving their communities.

Overall, it is clear that the indicative budget proposals for 2012–2013 reflect the priorities of the Welsh Government set out by the Welsh Labour Party manifesto and legislative programme announced on 12 July, with a large proportion of the budget allocated to the Main Expenditure Groups (MEG) for Health and Social Services, and Children.

Hospices Cymru welcomed the Labour Party's commitment in its manifesto to continue to prioritise end of life care, and that such care should be delivered in a balanced way, in partnership and using the expertise of both the third sector and the NHS. There has been considerable progress in improving palliative care in Wales in recent years. 'Dying well matters', the report of the Wales Palliative Care

Implementation board, demonstrates the significant progress in implementing the 2008 Palliative Care Planning Group report, and acknowledges the long standing contribution made by local charitable hospices¹. We hope that improving palliative care remains a priority for the new government.

There is a major challenge ahead to make sure people in Wales with life-limiting or terminal conditions are able to receive the best possible care, irrespective of where they choose to be cared for, where they live or what condition they have. As you will be aware, Wales currently has the oldest population in the UK, with a higher proportion of over-65s compared to the UK average, at 18.5% compared to 16.5%. This is set to rise by 2030 to a quarter of the Welsh population, compared to 22% for the UK average². As the population ages and people approach the end of life with ever more complex care needs, facilitating access to high quality palliative and end of life care will become ever more important. A spectrum of highly flexible and adaptive hospice and palliative care services, and the workforce to support this care, will need to continue to be available to meet this need.

Hospice care is one of Wales' greatest success stories. Across Wales, local charitable hospices provide care to more than 5,500 patients each year, alongside giving advice and support to other organisations such as care homes and the NHS. Hospices are owned by the communities that they serve, commanding widespread public support. More than half of people know someone who has benefitted from the care that hospices provide.

Investment in hospice care by the NHS is cost effective, and maximises the support provided to local people and helps the NHS to deliver improvements in care. Hospices contribute significantly to the health economy. In 2009, hospices in Wales spent £16.7 million on hospice and palliative care.³ For every £1 the Assembly Government invests in local charitable hospices, those hospices deliver around £4 worth of care for people with life-limiting and terminal illnesses and their families⁴. Local communities believe passionately in the value of their services and this belief is evidenced in the huge voluntary investment into Welsh hospices each year, with more than 70% of hospices' income coming from donations, legacies and trading⁵. Hospice care is also strengthened by the support of volunteers who give up their time and energy to support hospice care.

Historically, funding from health boards has been uneven and varied across the country and has not met the increasing role of hospices. Despite the pressure on public spending, it is vital that NHS investment in palliative care is sustained to ensure security and stability in the provision of care. We strongly recommend that

¹ Wales Palliative Care Implementation Board. *Dying Well Matters in Wales – 3 years on*. 2010. Available to view at: <http://wales.pallcare.info/index.php?p=sections&sid=50> (accessed 14 September 2011)

² BBC Wales. *More growth in older population in Wales*. 2010. Available to view at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-10871490> (accessed 14 September 2011)

³ Help the Hospices. *Hospice accounts*. London: Help the Hospices, 2010.

⁴ Ibid: 15

⁵ Ibid.

the Government commits to investing in the care that people receive at the end of life in the longer term. We have welcomed the progress of Baroness Finlay and the Palliative Care Implementation Group to develop a fair and equitable funding formula for core palliative care services. While the current funding formula for core service provision is fairer, as the Implementation Board Report acknowledges, current funding is far from fully funding core services⁶.

Hospices also need investment in capital development. We strongly recommend that the Welsh Government should consider a time-limited capital investment programme for hospice care which would enable local charitable hospices to help modernise the facilities they provide. Evidence from other parts of the UK demonstrates that such investment has a dramatic impact on the experience of care for people affected by terminal illness.

Hospices Cymru is pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the finance committee's consultation. It would be appreciated if, in future, Hospices Cymru could be added to the finance committee's list of consultees in order to continue this dialogue.

We look forward to continuing to work with you towards a better future for palliative care in Wales.

Yours sincerely

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⁶ Wales Palliative Care implementation Board. *Dying Well Matters in Wales – 3 years on*.2011.
Available to view at: <http://wales.pallcare.info/index.php?p=sections&sid=50> (accessed 14 September 2011)