

Prevent the closure of Ward 35

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Medi 2019
Petitions Committee | 17 September 2019

Reference: RS19/10339

Petition Number: P-05-896

Petition title: Prevent the closure of Ward 35 at Prince Charles Hospital

Text of petition:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to prevent the closure of Merthyr Tydfil's only dementia ward. Ward 35 at Prince Charles Hospital provides vital respite to the families and loved ones of local residents suffering with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Without this vital asset in place, there is a real threat of preventable harm coming to those most vulnerable. Many people are no longer able to look after family members with this condition as they require care themselves or are under pressure due to work and childcare commitments. Please consider the wider negative implications of this closure and the pain it would cause to many families, whose nearest dementia ward would be many miles away.

Background

In correspondence to the Committee dated 2 August 2019, the Minister for Health and Social Services states that Ward 35 at Prince Charles Hospital (PCH) and Ward 7 in Ysbyty Cwm Cynon were both established around seven years ago as part of Cwm Taf Health



Board's¹ strategic and modernisation programme on mental health services for older people. The purpose of creating the wards was to provide care for patients requiring hospital admission and a longer period of treatment prior to discharge.

The Minister notes that the Health Board has advised that the number of people requiring this type of care has since significantly reduced, with contributing factors including investment made to strengthen community services closer to home and also advances in treatment. For Merthyr Tydfil residents the number of patients requiring this care in a hospital is likely to be less than 10 people per year.

The Health Board is said to have identified a more holistic model of care based at Cwm Cynon, which also includes an extended day care service to support patients out of hospital. Further work is ongoing to explore an option of an extra care housing facility and extending services for patients.

The Minister acknowledges the concerns about the possible transfer of patients to Ysbyty Cwm Cynon following the closure of Ward 35 at PCH and the practical issues this might raise for some families. The Minister goes on to say that in recognition of the increased travel distance for families visiting Cwm Cynon, the Health Board has put in place a transport service, provided by the charity Hafal, to help them when visiting Cwm Cynon as part of the plans for Ward 35. The Health Board is now exploring the opportunity to extend this service for families.

A Wales Online [article](#) from February 2019 reported that Cwm Taf Health Board had confirmed that the ward would be closing. The article notes that some families claimed that the move could prove 'very unsettling' for the vulnerable patients and their families who would have to find alternative accommodation.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

The Health Board is now referred to as Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
