

## Develop a National Vision and Strategy for Bereavement Services in Wales

A recent Welsh Government funded study by the Marie Curie Research Centre in Cardiff University found that the largest challenge faced by providers of bereavement support was access to funding, followed closely by an inability to meet demand, and provide specialised support.

Long waiting times, and a North and South postcode lottery were also identified as major challenges for those accessing bereavement services.<sup>6</sup>

People of all ages benefit from pre and post bereavement support. The positive impact on their lives is significant.<sup>7</sup>

**We want the next Welsh Government to commit to a bereavement vision and strategy which delivers a universal approach across Wales with sufficient funding to ensure timely access to support when it is needed most.**

1. Marie Curie. (2013). *Death and Dying – Understanding the data*
2. Marie Curie. (2015). *Triggers for palliative care Improving access to care for people with diseases other than cancer*
3. Dixon, J., King, D., Matosevic, T., Clark, M., and Knapp, M., (2015). 'Equity in the Provision of Palliative Care in the UK: Review of Evidence', *Personal Social Services Research Unit London School of Economics and Political Science*
4. Marie Curie (2015) "Hiding who I am" The reality of end of life care for LGBT people
5. Care Quality Commission. (2016). *People from Black and minority ethnic communities a different ending: addressing inequalities in end of life care*
6. Marie Curie, Bereavement in Wales, 2020
7. ibid



## Excellence in End of Life Care in Wales

# Marie Curie Cymru 2021 Manifesto Priorities

Ahead of the elections to the Welsh Parliament elections in 2021, Marie Curie believes that all political parties and candidates should commit to the following key priorities to help improve the lives of those living with a terminal illness and their families and carers.

## Expectations at the End of Life

Since the foundation of the National Health Service, people have long held expectations of the care and support they should get throughout their lives. Over time this been underpinned by policy, targets and focussed resources. Waiting time targets and person-centred care are obvious examples of this reinforcement of expectation.

But when it comes to the most vulnerable time in our life, the end of our life, all too often people don't know what they should expect. As a result, it is difficult for them to have informed conversations with those supporting them and, in turn, difficult for them to make choices on the care they want to get, where they want to get it and who they want to receive it from.



Over 70% of people say they'd like to die at home, yet when the time comes yet around 50% of people still die in hospital in Wales.<sup>1</sup>

New thinking in health services has radically changed the experience of birth and the expectations that go with that – in location, environment and clinical practice – the same radical shift in thinking needs to occur in end of life care and support.

The next Welsh Government must embark on a programme which includes the following:

- Finding out from people of all backgrounds and characteristics, what they expect at the end of their lives
- Taking these expectations and using them to set minimum service standards, both in terms of access and quality
- Work across all functions of government to address expectations beyond those that can be met by the health and social care sector

**The next Welsh Government must identify people's expectations at the end of their lives. It must then take the actions and make the means available to meet these expectations within the lifetime of the next parliament.**

## **Ensure equal opportunity and access to palliative care, regardless of background, race, gender and location**

We know that of the 34,000 people who die in Wales each year, at least 75% would benefit from some form palliative end of life care.<sup>2</sup> But unfortunately, for many reasons, one in four people will not have access to palliative care.<sup>3</sup> That means over 6,000 people a year aren't getting the care they desperately need and deserve.

We already know that many people experience barriers because of who they are or where they are, and this is even more so for those with intersecting identities. The Marie Curie Hiding Who I Am

report highlighted barriers to care for LGBT+ people, including assumptions about identity and family structure, anticipating discrimination and lack of understanding.<sup>4</sup>

We also know that religious, cultural, language, socio-economic and ethnicity have all been identified as barriers to accessing quality care where and when it is needed.<sup>5</sup>

We must ensure that care and support in Wales is accessible to all people who live in Wales, regardless of identity and background.

**We want the next Welsh Government to commit to ensuring that everyone who needs palliative care will have access to it by the end of the next parliament.**