



Dear Colleague,

25/10/2022

On Friday, I was fortunate to join some members of the Health Board's Inclusion Service Team at a hostel for the homeless where some of their inspiring work is undertaken in partnership with colleagues from Cardiff Council. I then went onto HM Prison Cardiff where I spoke to some of the inmates about their experience of the healthcare and support they had received whilst in prison, as well as some of the Prison Healthcare Team. This builds on a discussion that took place earlier in the week at the Senior Leadership Board meeting where papers were presented outlining the impacts on the health of those experiencing disadvantage and/or marginalisation.

Some of the data is stark, particularly in terms of life expectancy, for the most vulnerable and excluded such as those experiencing homelessness and time in prison. I felt inspired by the commitment of my colleagues and their aspirations for the outcomes of those they provide care and treatment to. Aside from the very worthy humanitarian aspects of addressing the impacts of inequality, it also makes good sense to work with members of our population to prevent long-term impacts and crisis, as this also supports better use of resources and mitigates demands for health and social care in the future.

I'm going to spend more time in the coming months exploring how I can support this work more deeply and I'll keep you all informed of progress. In the meantime, I'd like to thank everybody for the work you do to support the most vulnerable individuals in our community and for being so welcoming and offering such a great insight into your work.



Last week, it was exciting to see members of the Gynaecology Oncology Team sharing updates as they travelled to Strasbourg in France to receive vital training as part of the National Robotic Assisted Surgery Programme. They are the first team globally to embark on a new and refined outcome-based training pathway by CRM Robotics.

Having undertaken a period of training, including online modules and med-tech virtual reality simulations, the Team has travelled to a research facility to gain practical training experiences ahead of the first patient cases. This builds upon the success of the work colorectal teams have been driving forward with the CMR Versius Robot. State-of-the-art surgical robots are now helping to treat cancer patients, improving outcomes through less-invasive, minimal access surgery.

Additionally, I am also really proud of the work teams have been undertaking in our Health Board to improve methods of managing Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions such as osteoporosis and arthritis, which cause severe long-term bone and joint pain.

By partnering with leisure centres, teams are working to deliver care in our local communities, supporting people with arthritis to live well by offering discounted gym memberships.

The Health Board is also pleased to be working with Swim Wales to develop water-based activity programmes. These programmes will support people on orthopaedic waiting lists to avoid pain and prepare them for surgery through self-guided exercises via an app.

The Welsh Government 'A Healthier Wales' strategy is working with every Health Board in Wales to transform care for patients with MSK conditions.

It is wonderful to see colleagues excited by innovation and new technologies and working so hard to make real changes to the way care and treatment is provided to patients, despite the many other priorities and pressures. The projects and innovations I have described

above are just some of the many examples taking place across the Health Board. They are all going to be absolutely vital in supporting recovery from the pandemic and improving patient outcomes. Importantly, this kind of work can also lift our spirits and provide an energising diversion from more routine activities and can have the great added value of boosting morale, so I really encourage you to get involved if you get the opportunity. I do hope you all have a good week and thank you all for all that you do every day.

Best wishes  
Suzanne

## Celebrating success at the NHS Wales Awards



Last week, a Cardiff and Vale University Health Board project won the award for 'Delivering Higher Value Health and Care' at the NHS Wales Awards 2022.

Over the last six years, the Health Board has developed a new Supportive Care service to deliver better palliative care input to patients dying from advanced heart failure. The aim was to develop a new approach and to overcome many of the previous referral barriers which included; improving patient

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quality-of-life, lessening time spent in hospital away from loved ones, reducing in-hospital deaths and helping many more patients to die at home.

From 2016-2020, 236 heart failure patients were referred to the Supportive Care service, with 85% of service users reporting they would recommend the service to someone else in the same position as themselves. Introduction of the service resulted in a statistically significant reduction in heart failure-related admissions.

This model of care also enabled more advanced heart failure patients to die at home, almost tripling the proportion of home deaths and reducing hospital deaths by up to one-third when comparing 2016 to 2016-2020 overall, with inpatient deaths approximately 50% lower than usual anticipated rates.

Congratulations to everyone involved with 'Supportive Care: A value-based approach to palliation in advanced heart failure'. [Read more about the NHS Wales Awards winners.](#)

## First SWAN Clinic opens at UHW

A major and exciting new clinical initiative, Britain's first SWAN (syndrome without a name) Clinic, has opened at the University Hospital of Wales — offering hope to children and adults with syndromes so rare they don't have a name or diagnosis for their complex condition.

Commissioned by Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC), the SWAN Clinic was established by Cardiff and Vale UHB to improve pathways for people living with rare, undiagnosed conditions across Wales.

While uncommon on their own, rare diseases affect around 175,000 people across Wales and some are so rare and difficult to diagnose they are known as a 'syndrome without a name' or SWAN.

Having secured £430,000 in Welsh Government funding, the SWAN Clinic will initially run as a pilot for two years and aims to shorten the time patients wait for a diagnosis, improve medical knowledge and foster research.

Dr Graham Shortland OBE the clinical lead for the SWAN clinic, said: "Rare diseases are a significant health problem that are unfortunately associated with poor outcomes. The impact on patients and their families is considerable, with the majority of patients who do receive a diagnosis waiting an average of four years.

"A diagnosis brings hope and reassurance to families and the goal of the SWAN Clinic is to shorten the diagnostic journey, improve access to specialist care and support those who continue to await a diagnosis."

## SilverCloud Wales expands mental health support

SilverCloud Wales has been a really successful free online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) platform for people aged 16+ experiencing mild-to-moderate symptoms of mental health issues since it was launched. The platform is now being rolled out to young people and their families to support the increasing demand for children's mental health services by providing early access to support for those who need it.



Parents and carers can sign up for a free 12-week online therapy programme to help support children and young people aged 4-18 with mild-to-moderate anxiety. Teens aged 16-18 can sign up for a free 12-week online therapy programme, without needing adult consent, for support with anxiety or low mood. [Find out more and sign up.](#)

## Celebrating 20 years of service within Emergency and Acute Medicine

Jennie Curtis recently celebrated two decades of service to Emergency and Acute Medicine with a long-standing service award, presented by Chair of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, Charles 'Jan' Janczewski.



Currently a patient navigator within the Virtual Ward, Jennie has worked within the Emergency and Acute Medicine Directorate at the Health Board for twenty years and has been a supportive figure in the team, working with colleagues through both rewarding and challenging times. In her current role, she is instrumental in ensuring patients are getting the care, intervention and investigations they need.

The virtual ward offers 'wrap-around' support to patients within their homes to ensure they receive care that meets their needs in a timely fashion whilst reducing hospital admission. Working closely with acute medicine consultants and nurses, Jennie is a key point of contact between clinicians and patients and helps to deliver valuable care, advice and information to patients regarding their condition and recovery.

To show the Health Board's thanks and appreciation for Jennie's commitment to safe and effective care, the presentation was an opportunity for her team to celebrate with her and give Jennie the recognition she deserves for the work she has undertaken over the years. Congratulations and thank you Jennie!

## New sound and film installation 'HOSPES' opens at Cardiff Royal Infirmary

The Arts for Health and Wellbeing team is delighted to launch 'HOSPES', an immersive, site-specific installation and online portal



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created by award-winning composer and multimedia artist John Meirion Rea and his team. The installation is open until Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October. [Find out more about the installation and opening times.](#)

## Free Wills Month

Fundraising in memory of a loved one can help the things they found important live on. This #FreeWillsMonth, we are grateful to the friends and families who chose to share the stories of someone special by fundraising for Cardiff & Vale Health Charity in their memory. [Find out more about Gift in Memory.](#)

