



Cyngor Iechyd Cymuned Cwm Taf
Cwm Taf Community Health Council

William Powell AM
Chair Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

30 November 2011

Dear Mr Powell

P04-334 Petition for a New Renal Unit at Prince Charles Hospital

I refer to your letter of the 14th October 2011 which was received electronically on 1st November.

The subject of the petition has been a cause of concern for the CHC for some time. As a result, a visit was arranged in the October schedule of the current monitoring visiting rota.

The Cwm Taf Community Health Council made an unannounced routine inspection to the Renal Dialysis Unit on Thursday 13th October 2011. This was the first visit of Cwm Taf CHC, following a previous visit by the former Merthyr and Cynon Valley CHC. This visit rated the facility very poor with rain penetration being highlighted at that time.

The recent visit was undertaken by two experienced members and the key issues for the visit were:

- Roof appeared unstable, currently leaking, concerned about winter conditions causing further damage and deterioration
- Far too small for the number of patients using service so patient dignity/privacy compromised
- Storage is a real problem.

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg
We welcome correspondence in English and Welsh

Prif Swyddog / Chief Officer: Dr Paul Worthington
Caedeirydd / Chairman: Jeff Moore

This was contained in the Hospital Visiting Monitoring Report. The CHC also complete a Hospital Visiting form and a narrative report. These reports have been sent to the Cwm Taf Local Health Board for a response to our visit.

I will deal with the problems that are numbered in the petition and will respond with reference to the recent monitoring visit reports and the members concerned therewith.

1. No isolation area (which could lead to cross infection).

The report states that the area in general is too small. There is not enough room for the basic function of the unit.

2. Only one toilet for male and female patients.

There is only one toilet for patients in the building. This is for use of both male and female patients. There is a staff toilet which is also used for storage of equipment. This was highlighted in the narrative report and the visiting form.

3. Cramped waiting area.

The internal areas are too small for the number of patients needing the service. There are 52 patients in all registered and the Unit accommodates 13 of them at each session This is a problem during the changeover of morning and afternoon patients because those who have just come off dialysis (4 hrs or so) often wish to use the facilities and those about to start may wish to make themselves comfortable before they start. The space outside the toilet is limited whilst the reception/waiting area has 8 chairs only, and little room for wheelchairs. The unit was designed for approximately a third of the current service provision.

4. Poor air conditioning.

During our inspection the temperature was normal but we were informed that the air conditioning unit had failed in the past week. We understand the system is so old that new parts cannot be obtained and the system has cooling gases which are now outside the legal framework.

5. Unit has been flooded on a number of occasions.

This was recorded as a major problem on this and previous monitoring visits. This is because of the state of repair and structure of the building.

The body of the petition states why action is requested. We have also discussed the issue with the Chief Executive of Cwm Taf Health Board and we are aware they share our concerns and are working actively to find a solution.

The petitioners refer to the increase in patient numbers. As a result a new building is required to cater for this additional increase and more procedures could be undertaken at this unit instead of being undertaken at another facility.

This Unit is situated in a yard area. It is a prefabricated single story building approximately 20 years old. The internal areas are too small for the number of patients needing the service. There are 52 patients in all registered and the Unit accommodates 13 of them at each session. The Unit is open Monday to Saturday and 5 staff are on duty each day.

For your information the ground/estates are the responsibility of Cwm Taf Local Health Board whilst Cardiff & Vale University Local Health Board are the service providers. A private company provides the dialysis machinery plus the nurses who are specially trained to deliver the treatment. Commissioning of the service is the responsibility of Welsh Health Specialised Services.

The Community Health Council is of the view that this Unit needs replacing urgently and there have been plans for the new build, which has been delayed numerous times for different reasons for at least 5 years. I understand that an amended Business Justification Case for a new renal unit has been submitted to the Welsh Government, but there is an issue around the availability of capital funding.

The monitoring visiting team have, as a result of their visit, asked for some urgent repairs and help with some patients comforts prior to any new build. This in particular focuses on the state of the building, new kitchen facilities and supplementary heating.

The CHC monitoring team spoke to 8 of the 13 patients present during the visit and all patients, without exception, praised the staff and consultant for their dedication to them and said that the treatment they receive is first class. It is the general building defects that causes them concern. They wish to see all the promises of a new build come to fruition.

Transport was also a big issue with the patients. Members of the Council have been informed that patients often have to wait up to a half-hour or so for the morning pick-up and at the end of a four and half hour dialysis session they can be waiting as much as an hour and a half. Some are diabetic and will have had only tea and biscuits during their session. Other patients are fortunate to have volunteer car drivers for their pick-ups and these are always on time. However there is no volunteer service on a Saturday. There are no designated car parking spaces and as there are other buildings around the area parking was congested.

Yours sincerely


Jeff Moore
Chair