

Radiotherapy Services for South East Wales and the development of a Radiotherapy Satellite Centre

1. What are Radiotherapy Services?

Radiotherapy is the use of radiation (X-Rays) to treat cancer.

Radiotherapy has an important role in the treatment of cancer as approximately half of all cancer patients will receive radiotherapy as part of their cancer treatment¹.

2. Why are we talking about Radiotherapy services?

In Wales, as in the rest of the UK, the number of people who will be diagnosed with and treated for cancer is expected to grow by more than 2% each year.

Radiotherapy is an important curative treatment for prostate and breast cancers as these are the most common types of cancer.

Projections suggest that we will see a 66% increase in breast cancer and 28% in prostate cancer between 2014 and 2035.

3. The focus of this engagement

This engagement process is seeking public views on the proposal to open a Radiotherapy Satellite Centre at Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny.

4. Who is involved in this proposal?

Velindre University NHS Trust (VUNHST) and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) are jointly leading this project. Velindre Cancer Centre will continue to provide the Radiotherapy service for all residents of South East Wales and ABUHB will host the Radiotherapy Satellite Centre at Nevill Hall Hospital, which is an addition to the service.

All Health Boards in South East Wales support the plan for a Satellite Radiotherapy centre.

5. How are Radiotherapy Services for South East Wales provided currently?

Radiotherapy treatment for patients in South East Wales is only available at Velindre Cancer Centre in Cardiff. Around 4,600 patients are referred to Velindre Cancer Centre for radiotherapy treatment each year. This service is provided by Velindre University NHS Trust.

Most radiotherapy treatments are delivered using machines known as linear accelerators (linacs); there are currently 8 linacs at Velindre Cancer Centre. Prior to radiotherapy, patients need to have a CT scan for planning their treatment. Specialised techniques are used to accurately treat cancers in different parts of the body.

6. Patient feedback on current service?

Velindre Cancer Centre but that travelling for radiotherapy treatment, usually daily, can be very challenging and stressful. Below are some comments from patients:

“Driving to Velindre all week is exhausting on top of treatment”

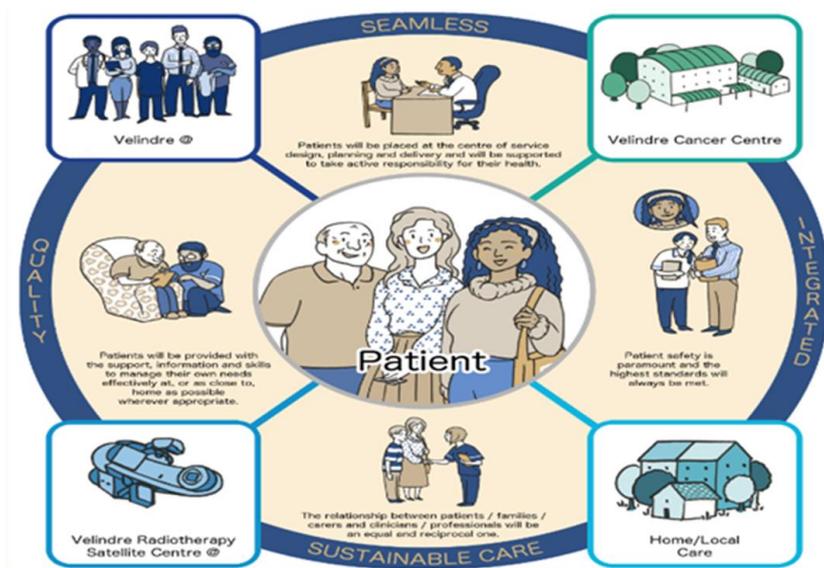
“It is important not to have to travel too far when you are feeling tired and may have to go for lots of appointments”

“Only having treatment for a couple of minutes so it’s frustrating if you have to travel a long way every day for treatment”

“Travelling is more exhausting than treatment”

7. What we have achieved so far

Velindre has been working on plans for a satellite Radiotherapy Centre for several years. The South East Wales’ Transforming Cancer Services programme, developed with a wide range of stakeholders including the public and patients, identified a Radiotherapy Satellite Centre as a critical component of non-surgical cancer services.



8. Why is a Radiotherapy Satellite Centre required?

We believe a Radiotherapy Satellite Centre is required for to improve cancer care in South East Wales because:

- The demand for radiotherapy is predicted to increase and there is a need for an increased number of linacs from 8 to 10
- Clinical outcomes for cancer patients in Wales are worse than in many other countries in Europe
- There is a poor patient experience for patients who have to travel a long way for radiotherapy, usually daily and sometimes for many weeks
- We wish to deliver care more locally where possible
- We can treat more patients in clinical trials
- A networked model – which means a central hub (Velindre Cancer Centre) and satellites such as the one at Neville Hall Hospital – is used by leading cancer centres around the world to deliver good patient outcomes
- Some patients are not receiving radiotherapy treatment when they could benefit from it

We believe a Satellite Radiotherapy Centre providing care closer to home will:

- improve access to radiotherapy
- improve patient experience
- improve quality of care

9. What clinical facilities will be at the Radiotherapy Satellite Centre?

- 2 radiotherapy treatment machines (Linacs)
- A CT Simulator for radiotherapy planning scans
- Clinic review rooms
- Dedicated parking including a drop off zone at the Centre

10. What is the difference between the Radiotherapy Satellite Centre and the Radiotherapy Service at Velindre Cancer Centre?

Both Centres will provide a range of radiotherapy treatments. The Satellite Centre will initially treat patients with prostate and breast cancers, and those having radiotherapy to improve cancer symptoms who may particularly benefit from

having treatment closer to home. Patients with other cancers may have radiotherapy at the Satellite Centre in the future.

Velindre Cancer Centre will continue to deliver very specialised radiotherapy treatments due to the expertise required from many different health professionals on site.

11. Why was Nevill Hall Hospital selected as the preferred site?

A standard consultation process was followed to identify the most appropriate site for the Radiotherapy Satellite Centre in South East Wales.

All Health Boards in South East Wales were asked if they would like to host the centre. Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board expressed an interest in hosting the centre.

An evaluation process (involving Velindre University NHS Trust, Health boards and Community Health Councils) took place to identify the best location that would reduce travel time and improve patient experience.

The process identified that Nevill Hall Hospital at Abergavenny was the preferred choice as its location in the south east Wales region would mean all people needing either the Velindre Cancer Centre or the Radiotherapy Satellite Centre would be within a 45 minute travel distance or less from each centre, which supports the travel distance guidance recommended by the Royal College of Radiologists.

12. Which patients will benefit most?

The Satellite Centre will benefit people receiving radiotherapy treatment across South East Wales as it will provide more facilities to treat patients.

People living in Abergavenny, Ebbw Vale, Merthyr, Monmouth, Usk, Cwmbran and Chepstow, as well as Brecon, Crickhowell and Builth Wells will benefit most from reduced travel times.

13. How many people will benefit?

It is anticipated that every year, the Satellite Centre will provide approximately:

- 3,000 radiotherapy planning appointments
- 1,000 new patients starting radiotherapy
- 9,500 treatment appointments

14. What are the benefits of having a Radiotherapy Satellite Centre?

Benefits include:

- **Improved access to radiotherapy:** due to proximity, an estimated additional 231 patients will receive treatment, including 115 additional cancer survivors
- **Equitable access to radiotherapy:** Local services will promote more equitable access to services.
- **Reduced journey times for patients:** 98% of patients will have a journey time of less than the 45 minutes. It is also estimated that over 6,300 patient attendances per year will require less travel time than currently, saving nearly 3,000 hours of patient travel time per year.
- **Increased access to clinical trials:** local radiotherapy services will enable more patients to be involved in clinical trials.
- **Improved integration** and coordination of services and care between Velindre Cancer Centre and the local health services.
- **Improved patient experience:** An integrated care model that is person-centred and locally available will lead to improved patient experience.
- **Flexibility to increase capacity:** The proposed site at the Nevill Hall Hospital has expansion space to support the installation of two more radiotherapy treatment machines (linacs), if required, to meet an increase in radiotherapy demand in the future.

15. Do clinical staff support these changes?

Yes. The clinical staff in the radiotherapy service – doctors, radiographers and medical physicists – support the proposal for a Satellite Centre and have contributed to development of the plans.

The proposal is in line with National Professional Guidance for Radiotherapy Services.

16. What are the planned timescales?

It is anticipated the Radiotherapy Satellite Centre will open in 2023/24.

17. How you can get involved and have your say

This engagement activity will look to use both digital (online) options, as well as more traditional (offline) options. This engagement activity will include:

- A survey – digital and paper (see below how to request a paper survey)

- Video(s) with radiotherapy teams to explain the proposed service change
- Inclusion of British Sign Language (BSL) within video(s)
- Social media content
- Sharing the survey and engagement opportunities with the Patient Liaison Groups within the network

You can complete the survey [here](#) or attend one of our online public engagement events (listed below) – you can register to attend these events or request a paper copy of the survey by emailing Velindre.comms@wales.nhs.uk

We will be hosting three public online engagement events on:

- Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 11am
- Wednesday 9 June 2021 at 2:30pm
- Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 5pm

As part of our commitment to reaching as many patients as possible, we are also working with Diverse Cymru to ensure that the seldom heard stakeholder groups are able to share their views on the proposed service change. This will be delivered through more traditional channels including completion of the survey over the telephone in their native language for example.

Your feedback will be integral to the ongoing development work for the Radiotherapy Satellite Centre. We will be presenting our findings to the Community Health Council for Aneurin Bevan University Health Board in August 2021 to ensure that the radiotherapy service will meet the needs of our patients in the future.

ⁱ In addition 4 out of every 10 patients cured of cancer are cured by radiotherapy (World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)).